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## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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# PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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## ABSTRACT

The key purpose of professional networking is to build meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships, with other people who can provide assistance and information that would help build or develop in the chosen career. The study investigated the professional networking and career development of library staff in universities in Oyo and Osun States. The study adopted a survey research design with a study population of 222 library staff in six university libraries from which a sample size of 170 respondents was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. A total enumeration of staff in the selected libraries was used. Questionnaire was the main research instrument used for data collection, while data was analysed using frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation together with regression and correlation analysis run on SPSS.

The study revealed that professional networking like NLA, LRCN, CILIP and community of practice were common among the library staff. On their professional development, library staff had the opportunity to attend workshops and conferences, as well as professional meetings. Professional networking enable the staff to easily stay in touch with coworkers and former coworkers and also share career-related ideas and information. Career development was significantly influenced by professional networking among library staff. If used appropriately and widely explored with active participation, professional networking has great potentials to transform and enhance librarians' career. Therefore, library staff in academic libraries are encouraged to actively participate in professional networking and fully engage in their activities in order to enhance their career, while the university management should organize periodic trainings for library staff to enhance their skills and develop their career for effective job performance.

**Key words:** Professional networking, Career development, Library staff, University libraries, Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

In the library environment, the staff, which is made up of the professional librarians, library officers, library assistants and other non-professional staff are the most important components of the library system. Without the staff, the design, implementation and provision of information systems and services cannot be possible. The library staff are specialists in information management and service provision, just like professionals in other careers like

banking, law, health, and so on. These staff are responsible for the selection, acquisition, organisation, preservation and sharing/dissemination of information to meet the specific needs of their clientele. This enormous task requires greater collaborations and networking with professionals in other institutions and across the globe, which could be facilitated through professional bodies like the Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) or Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) or over the Web like LinkedIn.com to form network of professionals. This network enables them to share knowledge and expertise for career enhancement.

Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2007) described career development as an “ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterised by a relatively unique set of issues, themes or tasks”. To understand career development from this perspective, it is:

Necessary to understand not only the sequence of positions one occupies across time, but the linkage between positions, the branching from one position to another, and the interrelationship of factors that cause persons to anticipate, plan for, and implement one position rather than another at any particular point in time (Herr, 1989 cited in Themba, 2010: 23).

Parker and Skitmore (2005) opined that continued career development is paramount to job satisfaction and reduced job turnover regardless of experience levels. To that end, the extent to which individuals feel that they have a direction, or purpose (defined as career path) and the influence this perception has on their jobs and career performances is an important consideration. Meanwhile, with technologies taking control of every profession, employee career development and networking is now becoming easier than ever before. People in all professions are therefore in the habit of establishing connections with each other through professional network, for positive career development.

Networking in workplace is described by the Penn State Alumni Assoc. (nd) as establishing and maintaining informal relationships with people whose acquaintance or friendship could bring advantages such as job or business opportunities. In its simplest form, networking is talking to people, becoming acquainted or friendly with them, and building relationships by getting to know more about them. In professional networking, people want to learn more about others and their jobs and career experiences. Singh (2015) reiterated that networking relationships are reciprocal in which participants in the relationship should get and give something in return such as information, advice, and referrals. Networking provides an employee the opportunity to interact with people of intellect and sound professional

experience or background. In careers like librarianship, the key purpose of professional networking is to build meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships, with other people who can provide assistance and information that would help build or develop in the chosen career.

Professional networking has gone beyond the physical association of people to online association and collaborations. Many online social platforms now provide opportunities for group of professionals to come together and share knowledge and information for career growth and enhancement. One such professional networking service is LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)), a free networking service for professionals. Other social networks such as MySpace ([www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) provide excellent opportunities for social networking as well, not to mention the growing influence of Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)). However, the demographics of LinkedIn are generally better suited for professional networking in a business or government environment (Jacobs, 2009).

Jacobs (2009) concluded that online professional networking can create possibilities that would not ordinarily be available any other way, and the use of such networks can support career, professional, or personal goals, and can also provide useful information on organisational trends. Paxus (2014) outlined the advantages of professional networking which include:

Enhanced employee's interpersonal skills: technology is great for communicating, but there is still need to interact with people and know how to act professionally to enhance career; helps to acquire new business leads. This is a great way to open doors for business and can directly connect with someone that is already in the same industry; promotes career opportunities, as keeping in touch with professional network can expose one to jobs that are not posted online or advertised in newspapers; professional networking builds confidence, because employees are interacting with others on a regular basis. They feel comfortable speaking about themselves, their roles, job responsibilities, as well as professional abilities. By being confident about who they are and what they do, the more successful they will be in handling difficult situations; networking can also be a great personal benefit. Professional relationships can be developed for identifying practical solutions to everyday life in one's personal life; and recognising best practices or industry benchmarks. Learning from what others do is a valuable strategy for all businesses and makes sure that one is on top of the industry with the institutional standards and applications.

Mueller (2010) on professional networking tips mentioned that some great networking goals could include the following: information (about recent/upcoming trends); contacts (making important contacts); connect (connecting with like-minded business owners);

advices (finding help or tips from other business owners); solutions (finding solutions and help for problems); client base (widening the client base); and relationships (establishing and advancing business relations).

According to Edwards (2015), there are many reasons for attending industry-related meetings and joining organizations or community groups. Participation in organized groups allows people to benefit by learning from the experiences of others, continue education through participation in seminars or workshops, and keep abreast of developments or trends in the industry. It allows professionals to meet new people and source candidates for hard to fill positions in companies. Participating in a community group often offers all the same benefits, and the satisfaction of giving back to the community.

Librarianship has been widely acknowledged as a profession all over the world, and the impact of this profession is being felt by many in the society. Therefore, the people working in this profession need to constantly update their skills and knowledge in order to build and develop their career. However, it is observed that a number of library staff are not growing as they should on the career. This no doubt has negative effect on career building and development of library staff. It is against the foregoing that this study investigates the professional networking and career development of library staff in universities in Oyo and Osun States.

### **Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effect of professional networking on career development of library staff in universities in Oyo and Osun States in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. discover the forms of professional networking commonly practiced among the library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States;
2. examine the level of career development among the library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States;
3. find out the relationship between professional networking and career development among library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States

## **Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are as follow:

1. What are the forms of professional networking commonly practiced among the library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States?
2. What is the level of career development among the library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: Professional networking will not have a significant effect on career development of library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Today's organizations are characterised by changing, dynamic environments in which the need for career enhancement or development among library staff has become increasingly important. Obviously, the changing technologies and automation has continue to alter the nature of work tasks of librarians, and requiring them to learn new ways to perform their jobs. New technologies have compelled library staff to learn new skills to be competitive for different jobs (Pulakos, et al. 2001).

Career development means proceeding through the career stages and transitions. Career transitions are normative or non-normative turning phases in the course of an athletic career. Subjectively, they are often associated with stress and uncertainty about whether the situation will change for the better or for the worse. Objectively, transitions normally come with a set of specific demands (related to practice, competitions, communication, and lifestyle) that athletes have to cope with in order to successfully continue in their sport or to adjust to their post-career (Alfermann & Stambulova, 2007).

According to Coetzee and Roythorne-Jacobs (2007), the career development support framework focuses on 21st century practices that influence the outputs at an organisational level such as talent retention; career resilient workforce, competitive knowledge advantage, quality human resource development and career-orientated practices, whilst sustaining profitability. There is a strong acknowledgement that organisational career management is important because of the strong non-monetary factors, which influence the career decisions

an individual makes regarding their work performance and career satisfaction (Yarnall, 1998).

The conceptualisation of career development currently informing policy makers, educators and practitioners is shaped by both traditional and new theories. Importantly, McMahon and Tatham (2008) argued that no single theory can adequately explain the complex process of career development. Career development is no longer considered to be a linear process; it can involve a series of transitions in and out of employment, periods of under- or over-employment, and potentially more than one career change and multiple returns to education (McMahon & Tatham, 2008). This process is commonly conceptualised as a lifelong one in which paid employment is just one major dimension. It involves the continuous development of skills to support the process of managing life and work. McMahon and Tatham (2008) noted that individuals are predicted to need career development services several times across their lifetime. In summary, the 'current career development thinking emphasises the developmental nature of careers and cultivating the career efficacy and resilience of young people to manage a dynamic and elongated career and transition process' (Miles Morgan Australia, 2012, p. 5).

Secker (2008) in a case study of libraries and face book pointed out that many librarians have now joined Facebook for purely social reasons more or less but the study shows that this can overlap into the professional world as it is being used by several professional library groups and for promoting library related events. Boyd and Ellison (2007) examined the history of collaborative tools and key developments that have occurred with social networking sites over the years, as well as functionality and uses of social networking sites. Tripathi and Kumar (2010) stated that library staff use Web 2.0 tools for professional and personal development.

Networking, as a general concept, has always been important for business professionals, whether it entails trading business cards at a conference, exchanging war stories at a cocktail party, or meeting prospective clients or colleagues on the golf course. Networking is particularly important to legal professionals, not only to generate new clients, but also to build an arsenal of topical expertise and professional courtesy (Kriescher, 2009).

Networking, according to Singh (2015), is one of the most effective career development tools that can be continued throughout the professional life of a librarian. Singh defined a professional network as "a kind of social network that is focused solely on interactions and relationships of a professional nature rather than personal, and other non-

business interactions". Jehan (2014) defined networking as "the art of establishing and maintaining informal relationships with people." Networking is very important in any profession. The importance of networking was further affirmed by Jehan (2014) that it "enables employers to fill job vacancies, often by individuals outside of the company learning of the vacancy from someone inside the company".

Professional networking is a network of professional interactions and professional relationships. Many employees (professionals) including library staff tend to be more comfortable with the concept of a social network. Social networking is perceived as natural and authentic while professional networking can easily be perceived as contrived and based on ulterior motives (Schmidt, 2014). Schmidt admitted that a connection maybe able to offer direct help or put an employee in contact with someone who can directly help. Moreover, every professional connection should be based on interactions that involve knowledge sharing and mutual professional development. Library staff, just like employees in other organisations still have a lot to learn about the importance of establishing "connections" through professional networking."

Conferences, workshops and seminars are important forms of professional networking, which could be one of the only ways for librarians to spend face-to-face time with colleagues (Burgess, 2013). Most conferences are usually organised by professional bodies or associations. (Burgess, 2013: 3) further emphasized the importance of conferences and workshops for the professional networking among librarians thus:

Joining a professional organization and attending conferences and workshops are formal ways to stay active in this ongoing conversation, while conversing with co-workers and other fellow librarians about professional issues is more informal.

Vega and Connell (2007) surveyed a variety of librarians to determine their motivations for attending conferences. The top reasons for attending were found to be professional rejuvenation and networking with other librarians. However, these results were not universal – men and older librarians were less likely to go to conferences to feel energized about their careers, and reference librarians had a negative correlation with networking as a motivation. A review of the study points out some inconsistencies in the demographic portions of the survey questions and how they are discussed in the findings, which suggest the survey methodology could have been further refined (Özek, 2009). Though Vega and Connell did not focus on special librarians in the sample, the value special



librarians place on conferences will factor into an overall study of their communication methods and habits.

Davidson and Middleton's (2006) survey looked at professional library associations and the role they play in the professional development and mentoring of science librarians, who often work in small branch libraries or special libraries with very few staff. The main drawback, as identified by the authors, was that participation was solicited chiefly through professional library association distribution lists and through direct invitation to science librarians at certain academic institutions. As a result the sample was biased towards academic librarians and those active in professional associations, while special librarians at, for example, commercial engineering firms or government departments may have been left out if they were not members of the right associations.

Davidson and Middleton (2006) also asked their survey participants about professional development guided by a mentor, such as a more experienced librarian paired with a novice librarian through a professional association. They found that many science librarians do not know about or take advantage of organised mentoring programmes, and that mentoring was more likely to be informal. Hicks (2012) also studied mentoring in a case study of an online forum for Latin American studies subject librarians. These librarians worked at institutions of varying sizes, but were often the only ones involved in Latin American Studies at their organisations – another form of professional isolation. Though the field itself has seen steady growth, training for librarians serving that field has been sparse. Hicks attempted to alleviate this problem with La Cuna, a social networking group intended to connect mentors and younger librarians. Hicks stated that though the site's mission was to provide mentoring, it seemed to be used more as a discussion forum, as those who she had envisioned as mentors were often asking for assistance themselves. In this case, communication amongst a specialised community of librarians was occurring, but the goal of facilitating mentoring was not as successful as expected because the community redefined its own purpose.

Bottorff, Glaser, Todd and Alderman (2008) studied the communication and collaboration patterns among librarians at multi-campus institutions found that librarians in branch libraries felt they had fewer networking opportunities with colleagues within their organization, which was attributed to lack of time, transportation options, and availability for social functions; while they also had less opportunity for professional development.

Cummins and Grothkopf (2002) highlighted the benefits of conferences as a form of professional networking among librarians, such as: enhanced future communications after

meeting colleagues; mix of participants (librarians, astronomers, computer scientists, publishers...) leads to better understanding of the other groups; learning about new products and library management techniques sooner and more effectively than otherwise possible; realization that effective communication among librarians can make more information sources available for user groups; confirmation of strong sense of cooperation and solidarity among librarians; and increased self-esteem and pride in belonging to this professional group.

Participation in organized groups allows us to benefit by learning from the experiences of others, continue our education through participation in seminars or workshops, and keep abreast of developments or trends in our industry. It allows us to meet new people and source candidates for hard to fill positions in our companies. Participating in a community group often offers all the same benefits, and the satisfaction of giving back to the community.

Networking and professional development were overwhelmingly cited as the most important benefits of membership in a professional association. Solo science librarians considered professional associations crucial for keeping up with the field despite the difficulties involved. However, the study focused primarily on professional associations for science and technology specialist librarians. Generalised associations, such as the American Library Association, were not counted, though the study acknowledged that some of the associations named in their survey were special interest groups within these larger associations. It is unknown whether all survey respondents were members of the general organisations, or if so, how they valued their membership. In New Zealand, Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) is the best-known generalised library association, complemented by special interest groups devoted to special librarians and librarians in specific fields. It may be valuable to determine how special librarians in New Zealand value professional associations, both specialised and general in nature (Hornung, 2013).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey research design was adopted for this study because it is one of the most appropriate methods for studying large population; and also, it is one of the most widely adopted methods in librarianship, education and the social sciences.

**Population and Sample:** The target population for the study was library staff which comprised librarians and library officers. The selected libraries included federal and state universities, in Oyo and Osun States. The population of staff in each library was sourced through personal contacts and visits to the libraries. As at the time of this study, there were 4 accredited universities in Oyo State and 8 in Osun State. The population for the study was made up of two hundred and twenty three (223) librarians and library officers in all twelve university libraries in Oyo and Osun States. This population consisted of one hundred and twenty-six (126) librarians and ninety-five (95) library officers.

The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. The universities in the two states were first identified with staff population (librarians and library officers). The next stage involved the purposive selection of three universities which comprises one federal, one state and one private university in each state using balloting method. The last stage was the determination of the sample size from the libraries with a total enumeration due to the small size of population in each of the selected university libraries. This gave a sample size of 170 participants. Table 1 presents the study sample:

**Table 1: Study sample**

S/No	Oyo	Sample	Osun	Sample
1.	University of Ibadan (UI)	78	Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	32
2.	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH)	26	Osun State University (OSU)	16
3.	Ajayi Crowther University (ACU)	8	Bowen University (BU)	10
		<b>112</b>		<b>58</b>

**Instrument:** Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The questionnaire was titled – Professional Networking and Career Development of Staff (PNCDS) Questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into sections. Section A of the questionnaire was designed to capture the demographic variables of the respondents such as sex, age, profession, name of library, marital status, highest educational background and designation, while the other section addressed the objectives of the study. Basically, the questionnaire was made up of Likert-type questions which are measured on a four point scale.

**Reliability of the Instrument:** In order to test for the reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the instrument were pretested on a set of respondents outside the study population, using Babcock University from which a Cronbach Alpha was generated for the instrument with a coefficient correlation of 0.93.

**Data Collection and Analysis:** Data collection was conducted by administering copies of the questionnaire to library staff in six selected academic libraries. This researcher personally administered and collected the completed questionnaire with assistance of some library staff in the study areas. Data was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Scientists (SPSS) software to develop descriptive and inferential statistics. The data consisted of the frequencies, percentage, mean, which were presented in a tabular form.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 170 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in six university libraries in Oyo and Osun states, out of which 156 copies were duly completed and returned and found valid for analysis. This represents a total of 91.7% response rate.

Table 2 showed the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as faculty/department, gender, age, income and marital status.

**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	77	45.0
	Female	79	46.2
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>	OND/NCE/Diploma	18	10.5
	HND	11	6.4
	First Degree	36	21.1
	Masters	77	45.0
	Ph.D	14	8.2
<b>Status/ Designation</b>	Library Officer	42	24.5
	Higher Library Officer	26	15.3
	Librarian II	25	14.6
	Librarian I	37	21.6
	Senior Librarian	15	8.8
	Principal/Deputy Librarian	11	6.4
<b>Department / Section</b>	Special Collection	19	11.1
	Circulation	24	14.0
	IT Section	11	6.4
	Technical Section	27	15.8
	Readers Services	19	11.1
	Reference Section	12	7.0
	Cataloguing Section	25	14.6
	Serials	19	11.1
<b>Membership of Professional Organisation</b>	NLA	100	58.5
	CILIP	6	3.5
	NIM	6	3.5
	LRCN	44	25.8

As shown in Table 2, there were 77(45.0%) male and 79(46.2%) female respondents in the study. Majority of the respondents (77(45.0%)) were Master degree holders while just 11(6.4%) had HND. As for the status/designation, 21.6% of the respondents were Librarian I while only 6.4% were principal/deputy librarians. Most of the respondents (15.8%) were in the Technical Section of the libraries while about 6.4% of them were in the IT section. Nearly all the respondents belonged to one or more professional bodies like NLA (58.5%), LRCN (25.8%), CILIP (3.5%) and NIM (3.5%) respectively.

It could be inferred from the findings that most of the respondents were professional librarians who belonged to at least one professional association, such as Nigerian Library Association which further confirms their participation in professional networking and collaborations.

**Research question 1: What is the form of professional networking that is common among the library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States?**

Table 2 revealed the various forms of professional networking engaged in by the library staff.

**Table 2: Forms of Professional Networking engaged in by the Library Staff**

S/N	Professional networking	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St.D
a.	Membership of professional association (eg., NLA, Library Officers association, CILIP, etc.)	100 58.5%	47 27.5%	5 2.9%	4 2.3%	3.54	.73
b.	Membership of sub-NLA Association, e.g., Medical Librarian, IT Section, Cataloguing & Classification, Association of Women Librarians in Nigeria (AWLIN)	83 48.5%	55 32.2%	12 7.0%	6 3.5%	3.56	.68
c.	Registered as a certified professional with the LRCN (CLN)	87 50.9%	48 28.1%	20 11.7%	1 0.6%	3.38	.79
d.	Membership of online community forum (NLA Forum, ALA)	82 48.0%	64 37.4%	10 5.8%	--	3.42	.74
e.	Collaboration with other professionals through the social media (Face book, LinkedIn, Research Gate, Twitter)	72 42.1%	72 42.1%	11 6.4%	1 0.6%	3.46	.62
f.	Networking with people outside my current scope of practice	67 39.2%	81 47.4%	4 2.3%	4 2.3%	3.38	.65
g.	Maintaining some level of contact with former coworkers to ensure relationships stay fresh and relevant	56 32.7%	82 48.0%	13 7.6%	5 2.9%	3.35	.66
h.	Working on cross-functional or cross-departmental teams	58 33.9%	79 46.2%	14 8.2%	4 2.3%	3.21	.73
i.	Volunteering to work on projects where your specific expertise is needed	64 37.4%	68 39.8%	21 12.3%	2 1.2%	3.23	.72
j.	Creating or joining communities of practice	66 38.3%	60 35.1%	29 17.0%	16 9.4%	3.25	.74

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 2 showed that a majority of the library staff engaged in professional networking through membership of professional association (eg., NLA, Library Officers association, CILIP, etc.) with a mean score of  $\bar{X}$ =3.54, membership of sub-NLA Association, e.g., Medical Librarian, IT Section, Cataloguing & Classification, Association of Women Librarians in Nigeria (AWLIN) ( $\bar{X}$ =3.56) and through Collaboration with other professionals through the social media (Face book, LinkedIn, Research Gate, Twitter) ( $\bar{X}$ =3.46). It was further shown that working on cross-functional or cross-departmental teams ( $\bar{X}$ =3.21) and volunteering to work on projects where specific expertise is needed ( $\bar{X}$ =3.23) were the least forms of professional networking among the library staff.

**Research question 2: What is the level of career development among the library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States?**

The level of career development of the library staff is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Level of Career Development of Library Staff**

S/N	Career development	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St.D
a.	I attend professional meetings often	81 47.4%	55 32.2%	18 10.5%	1 0.6%	3.24	.75
b.	There is opportunity to attend workshops and conferences	68 39.8%	66 38.6%	11 6.4%	10 5.8%	3.39	.72
c.	The library often organise in-house training for staff	67 39.2%	71 41.5%	11 6.4%	6 3.5%	3.24	.85
d.	My direct supervisor takes interest in my career development	51 29.8%	88 51.5%	13 7.6%	3 1.8%	3.28	.76
e.	Each library staff is responsible for their own development	52 30.4%	66 38.6%	36 21.1%	1 0.6%	3.21	.67
f.	I attend and participate in conferences, workshops and seminars frequently	50 29.2%	69 40.4%	33 19.3%	3 1.8%	3.09	.77
g.	I get my promotion as at when due	57 33.3%	35 20.5%	53 31.0%	10 5.8%	3.07	.78
h.	The management does not look inward before recruiting	48 28.1%	54 31.6%	40 23.4%	13 7.6%	2.90	.98
i.	My institution has a formal mentoring programme for jobs like librarianship	48 28.1%	63 36.8%	35 20.5%	9 5.3%	2.72	1.01

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 3 showed that career development level is high among the library staff majority of whom (78.4%) affirmed that there is opportunity to attend workshops and conferences with a mean score of ( $\bar{X}$ =3.39). 79.6% of the respondents also agreed that they attend professional meetings often ( $\bar{X}$ =3.24) and that the library often organise in-house training for

staff with mean ( $\bar{X}$ =3.24) respectively. On the other hand, the least percentage of the respondents (53.8%) indicated that they got their promotion as at when due ( $\bar{X}$  =3.07).

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Ho1: Professional networking will not have a significant effect on career development of library staff in selected university libraries in Oyo and Osun States.

**Table 4: Significant influence of professional networking on career development of library staff**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2536.003	1	2536.003	54.684	.000(a)
	Residual	7141.894	154	46.376		
	Total	9677.897	155			

R =.512

R Square =.262

Adjusted R square =.257

Table 4 reveals significant influence of professional networking on career development of library staff. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions R of .512, multiple R-square = .262 and Adjusted R square = .257. This suggests that the two factors when combined accounted for 25.7% (Adj.R<sup>2</sup>=.257) variation in the prediction of career development of library staff. The other factors accounting for 74.3% variation in the prediction of career development of library staff are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there is a significant influence of professional networking on career development of library staff, F (1,154) =54.684, P < 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore invalid and not accepted.

### Discussion of findings

Findings also showed that a majority of the library staff engaged in professional networking through membership of professional association (e.g., NLA, Library Officers association, CILIP, etc.), membership of sub-NLA Association, e.g., Medical Librarian, IT Section, Cataloguing & Classification, Association of Women Librarians in Nigeria (AWLIN) and through collaboration with other professionals through the social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Research Gate, Twitter. It was further shown that working on cross-functional or cross-departmental teams and volunteering to work on projects where specific expertise is needed were the least forms of professional networking among the library staff.

Livingstone (2010) cited LinkedIn as a social networking site mainly used for professional networking and knowledge sharing.

It was further established that career development level is high among the library staff where majority affirmed that there was opportunity to attend workshops and conferences. Most respondents attended professional meetings often, while the library often organise in-house training for staff. On the other hand, the least percentage of the respondents indicated that they got their promotion as at when due. This finding totally conforms with Idowu (2012) in a study of career management and job performance of library staff in South West Nigeria. The author reported that many of the information professionals engaged in series of activities that can enhance their career development like participation in conferences, workshops, seminars and the likes. This need for career development among library staff was corroborated by Baillargeon and Carlstrom (2013) that academic librarians must acquire and use new skills and knowledge, and deploy current skills and knowledge in new ways if the profession is to remain relevant and successfully respond to faculty, students, administrators and other stakeholders.

The study found that career development was significantly influenced by professional networking among library staff. This corroborates Alonge (2009) that social networking tools could enhance professional, scholastic and social collaboration.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Professional networking, to a very large extent determines the level of career development among library staff. Most library staff engaged in professional networking like NLA, LRCN and NIM, which among other things helps to facilitate the exchange of ideas and information among library staff, as well as enhance professional opportunities. If used appropriately and widely explored with active participation, professional networking has great potentials to transform and enhance librarians' career in academic libraries. Effective networking establishes and facilitates collaborations with senior and experienced professionals in other libraries. It creates an avenue for mentoring, better job opportunities, as well as sharing career-related information. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:



1. Library staff in academic libraries should be encouraged by the management to actively participate in professional networking and fully engage in their activities in order to enhance career development.
2. Library staff in academic libraries should endeavor to update their level of knowledge with most Web 2.0 tools like Twitter, Skype, Facebook, and others which can be used to promote online professional networking and collaboration among colleagues and other professionals for knowledge sharing.
3. The university management should organize periodic trainings for library staff to enhance their skills and develop their career for efficiency and effective job performance.

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