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**Professional Development Practice through Continuing Education:
Insights from University Library in Bangladesh**



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Professional Development Practice through Continuing Education: Insights from University Library in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to present the exact scenario of continuing education among University library professionals of Bangladesh and the challenges they face.

Methodology: The study utilizes a mixed-method design, including a questionnaire and interviews, to collect data from 97 participants working in 18 large university libraries in Bangladesh. Data was collected over three months, specifically from February to April 2024.

Findings: The study provides valuable insights into the demographics of the participants, their roles and responsibilities within the library, and their engagement with various CE programs over the past ten years. Participants showed a strong interest in CE, with seminars, workshops, and training programs being the most attended activities. In the term of CE, most of the participants (90) showed interest in computer applications in LIS in their choice list.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: There has been no prior research on continuing education practices among Bangladeshi university library professionals. This study offers insights for improving professional development in Bangladeshi university libraries by identifying key training needs and effective CE programs, while also highlighting policy gaps in supporting library professionals.

Keywords: *Professional Development, Continuous Education, Library Professionals, Professionalism, Bangladesh*



Introduction:

As technology advances and the Internet grows, the field of librarianship continually evolves, impacting both practices and the diverse information needs of patrons (Rafiq et al., 2017). To keep up with these changes, life-long learning or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is essential for professionals in librarianship, helping them stay updated through formal courses or everyday work practices, much like other fields such as medicine, law, education (Collin et al., 2012) and nursing (King et al., 2021). This ensures that librarians can adapt to new technologies and effectively serve the increasingly diverse needs of their communities. Long & Applegate (2008) also mentioned that the area of library practice experienced the most rapid transformation over the last decade in information technology, sea changes, especially with regard to the internet and its many applications. In this time of change, increased attention to providing outstanding customer service in a short time. Continuing education is the most efficient and effective approach for librarians to stay up with these changes and to remain abreast of trends and advances in the field (Cooke, 2011) to become more expertise, and exercised professionally (Rafiq et al., 2017).

In continuing education, individuals continue their learning after completion of formal education, which upgrades the performance of professionals (Weingand, 1999) and enables them to become experts as well as bring up to date in a particular area of knowledge or skills (Weingand, 1999). Any professional cannot work based on five years or less than five years of academic education. Instead, they are expected to practice their profession for more than 30 years. It is essential for librarians in continuing education to keep up to date with relevant knowledge not just in their field, Library and Information Science (LIS), but also in the domain in which they work. To fulfill this key information role, and to do better performance in the modern workplace, new practicing library professionals require two main types of competencies, professional and personal (Wan et al., 2012). Professional competencies include having in-depth knowledge of the information resources' contents, as well as the ability to filter and critically evaluate them. They also include providing excellent guidance and assistance for library and information service users, identifying information needs, and creating and promoting value-added information services and products (Larsen, 2005). Continuing education tends to solve the practical problems that professionals face in their professional lives (Harake & Hadagali, 2015). The librarian would need some professional training after obtaining their formal education. These programs may be conferences, seminars, symposia, workshops, refresher courses, computer-based instructions, distance learning, professional talks, and so on.

Weber & Wittpoth (1999) emphasized that continuing education should be seen as an integral component of a conventional educational system which was the responsibility of the state. Lack of adequate skills, continuous education, and training in the workplace results in lower activity among professionals. Lower productivity will also in turn lead to a poor image for the organization, as an organization's success is largely based on the skills and expertise of the employee (Alemna,

2001). Some experts believe that a professional's knowledge and skills are outdated within five years of leaving academic formal education, while others believe that a librarian's education becomes outdated nearly immediately (Alemna, 1993). At this time, CE is in the best interests of almost all professionals working in the information industry.

The research on Continuing Education (CE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for library professionals lacks exploration in several areas. There is limited focus on the specific barriers faced by professionals in developing regions. The impact of CE programs on improving daily practices and library services remains underexplored. Additionally, there is insufficient research on the role of institutional support in motivating professionals to engage in CE, especially in rural or resource-limited areas. These gaps highlight the need for more region-specific and policy-focused studies.

Research Objectives:

This study aims to identify the current practice of continuing education among university library professionals in Bangladesh and the challenges they face. From these, a series of focus objectives were developed:

1. To understand the actual situation of continuing education among university library professionals in Bangladesh.
2. To find out what technologies training needs and prioritized areas that need to be updated for the present and future.
3. To investigate what are the challenges and constraints to involvement in continuing education activities

Literature Review:

Different scholars have emerged and investigated various themes related to continuing education at different times. In this article, some research studies examined continuing education about Library and information professionals. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is easy to recognize but difficult to define, as it encompasses both formal and informal practices aimed at employees' growth beyond their initial training. The variety of approaches makes it challenging to conceptualize, as it involves both developing professional expertise and gaining experience through learning (Collin et al., 2012). The phrase "continuing education" is referred to by many specialists using different words such as adult education, continuing professional development, continuing professional education, professional development, further education, workplace and lifelong learning, vocational training, industrial training, or labor training (Ramaiah & Lakshman Moorthy, 2002). While CE is predominantly used in North American library literature, CPD is a more popular term in other parts of the world (Broadbent & Grosser, 1987). This study used the phrase continuing education (CD) rather than continuing professional development (CPD). In the

field of library and information science, Continuing Education (CE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are commonly used terms to encompass all activities to enhance knowledge, skills, and competencies for professional effectiveness throughout their careers (Rafiq et. al. 2017).

CE has long been recognized as essential to the professional advancement of library and information professionals all around the world. CE is accepted as standard practice in the profession in developed countries like the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Therefore, it is expected that in a situation of less development such as in Africa, CE should be taken even more seriously because if a job becomes tedious, it cannot be performed effectively and efficiently (Prytherch, 1986). CE is a vital instrument that enables the creative energy, talent, and skills of professionals to keep abreast with current advanced knowledge in providing possibilities for implementing cutting-edge technologies in library and information practice (Alemna, 2001). In Shaheen Majid's study on continuing education (CE) in Southeast Asian library and information science schools, six specific areas were identified as preferred to learn: internet products and services, web page design, knowledge management, design and management of databases, online searching, and records management. Broadbent & Grosser (1987) grouped continuing education practices into six primary categories: organization profile, the participant's role within the organization, the support provided by the organization, educational and professional background, recent participation in continuing professional development, and identified needs for further professional development. Ashiq and Warraich (2024) highlight that this pioneering study in Pakistan explores the perceptions of LIS professionals regarding the core concepts of data librarianship, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development to acquire data-driven skills and effectively implement data-focused library services. In order to maintain competence and remain relevant, LIASA (2021) professed to ensure that registered members retain and continuously develop their: (1) Professional knowledge; (2) professional skills; (3) professional values, ethics and attitudes; and (4) competence achieved during years of study.

Alemna (2020) conducted studies in Ghana to determine the attitudes of library professionals towards CE. The findings revealed that most library professionals in Ghana are exposed to opportunities of CE through conferences, workshops, and seminars. There is a need for additional studies on the effectiveness of these CE programs in enhancing professional knowledge and skills. Tyrell (2015) described the influence of a Continuing Professional Development (CDP) policy on library professionals' seeking of CE. The study found that library professionals were highly motivated toward seeking CE, but having a CDP policy or not had no very influential effect on them. Ferri (2021) established the way academic library professionals envision lifelong learning and what role they perform in its advancement. The study revealed that library learning professionals relate life-long learning to formal education and barely think about any other aspect of learning and development. Hamid and Soroya (2015) carried out a critical analysis of emerging

trends of CE programs in Pakistan for LIS professionals. It revealed that software-based problems filled training sessions with less focus on issues of library marketing and communication skills. [Matteson, Schlueter, and Hidy \(2013\)](#) studied the status of CE in management among library professionals. The study found that mid- to senior-level library professionals had average or low management knowledge, emphasizing the need to improve management skills in libraries.

In Bangladesh, various studies have been done on the status of continuing education for library and information professionals, their reasons, importance, benefits, and effectiveness. [Islam \(2018\)](#) conducted a study among post-graduate students of Rajshahi University, focusing on Bangladeshi library professionals' attitude towards continuing professional education. The study highlighted the positive impact of continuing professional education on skill development, better job opportunities, and career advancement. [Majid \(2004\)](#) researched the South Asian countries' continuing professional development (CPD) programs, including Bangladesh. The study indicated that CPD activities supported by LIS schools were limited, reflecting the significance of more emphasis on professional development programs. [Singh, Rind, & Sabur \(2021\)](#) researched teacher development in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan with an emphasis on continuous professional development. The study was intended to support teacher professional development based on various methods and institutional settings. [Akram & Chakma \(2012\)](#) authored Bangladesh's continuous education in terms of an Education in Emergencies (EIE) pilot project. The study focused on school preparedness and response actions during natural disasters.

Methodology

Study design

This study employs a sequential mixed-method design to investigate library professionals' continuing education practices and challenges in Bangladesh. This study aims to investigate the continuing education practices of library professionals in Bangladesh and explore the challenges they face in accessing professional development programs. The research employed mixed method approaches to gathering the required information, utilizing a questionnaire to collect quantitative data and conducting semi-structured interviews to obtain qualitative data from respondents. The following table illustrates the alignment between the research objectives, the corresponding methods.

Table 1:*Research Objectives Mapping*

| Objective | Method | Data Collection Method |
|--|--------------|------------------------------|
| RO 1: To understand the actual situation of continuing education among university library professionals in Bangladesh. | Quantitative | Survey (with Questionnaire) |
| RO 2: find out what technologies, training needs, and prioritized areas need to be updated for the present and future. | Quantitative | Survey (with Questionnaire) |
| RO 3: investigate what are the challenges and constraints to involvement in continuing education activities. | Qualitative | Interviews (Semi-structured) |

Data collection

The data of this study were collected from library professionals working in 18 large university libraries in Bangladesh for three months, specifically from February to April 2024. As we employ both purposive and random techniques, 120 questionnaires were sent over the first two weeks of February 2024. In the study, 120 questionnaires were distributed, and out of these, 99 were returned within the specified timeframe. However, 21 participants declined to take part in the study for various reasons, such as being too busy, the library not being suitable for inclusion, or not providing any response. Of the 99 returned questionnaires, 97 were usable, with a response rate of 80.8%. The remaining two questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete or incorrect data. Data collection involved distributing survey questionnaires electronically through email and online survey platforms. Participants were given a specific timeframe to complete and return the questionnaires, ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent. On the other hand, the interview schedule was sent to library professionals who have worked in the same libraries for more than three years. A total of 23 online and offline interviews were conducted using interview questionnaires during the entire data collection period.

Data collection tool:

Two primary data collection components using a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used in this study for collecting data. The questionnaire aims to gather broad ranges of data, including demographic data, CE program experiences, and professional development areas of interest. In addition, the semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity for participants to articulate their challenges and experiences in a more profound manner.

Questionnaire overview:

The survey consists of 3 sections with a total of 21 questions. The first section is general information about the respondents such as gender, age, and educational background. There are questions in the second section that deal with continuing education practices and area of interest. The third section consists of short-answer open-ended questions to be answered in a paragraph in responding to challenges in CE. Response types are multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions.

Interview:

The semi-structured interview was employed to get data on barriers and challenges in accessing continuing education programs by the respondents with three parts. The introduction was established in part one, where the respondents were asked questions on how they had experienced getting into the programs. Part two involved exploratory questions for an understanding of challenges experienced and suggestions for enhancing access to continuing education. The third part involved a summary of the interview, noting down the response of the respondents.

Data analysis:

The Quantitative data collected was analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to cross-tabulate the responses of the participants using SPSS [version 26]. For qualitative data that were collected through semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis was utilized instead. This approach helps identify key themes and patterns related to the challenges and constraints faced by university library professionals in Bangladesh when participating in continuing education activities.

Findings and Discussion:

In the first section of the survey, participants were asked about their background information. This data was used to get an overall picture of the participants and to analyze the results of the survey.

Table 2:*Demographic Profile*

| Demographic Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 59 | 54.5 |
| | Female | 38 | 45.5 |
| Professional Status | Librarian/Chief Librarian | 9 | 9.27 |
| | Additional/Deputy Librarian | 33 | 34.1 |
| | Assistant Librarian | 29 | 29.9 |
| | Technical/ Section officer | 19 | 19.5 |
| | Junior Librarian/ Cataloguer | 7 | 6.8 |
| University Types | Private University | 51 | 52.5 |
| | Public University | 46 | 47.4 |
| Professional Experience(year): | Up to 3 | 14 | 14.4 |
| | 4-6 | 21 | 21.7 |
| | 7-10 | 37 | 38.1 |
| | 10 above | 25 | 25.8 |
| Educational Qualification | Masters (LIS) | 47 | 48.4 |
| | PGD (LIS) | 38 | 33.0 |
| | Others | 20 | 20.6 |
| Salary | Up to 25,000 | 14 | 14.4 |
| | 26,000-50,000 | 56 | 57.8 |
| | 50,000 above | 27 | 27.8 |

Table 2 reveals that among the surveyed individuals, 54.5 % are male, while 45.5% are female. In terms of professional status, the majority consists of assistant library professionals (29.9%) and additional/deputy library professionals (34.1%), followed by chief librarians and junior librarians. Almost evenly, 52.5% of the population is employed in private university libraries and 47.4% in public university libraries. Educational qualification indicates that 48.4% hold a Masters in Library and Information Science (LIS), followed by 33.0% with a Postgraduate Diploma (LIS). In addition, the table includes information about professional experience and salary (table 2).

Role and responsibility within the organization

Participants were asked to mark their level of formal responsibility within the organizational structure on a scale ranging from lower to upper, which was adopted by Broadbent, M., & Grosser, K. (1987). This study examined potential differences between senior and junior librarians in terms of their ongoing CD needs. In terms of organizational hierarchy, senior librarians like the chief

librarian were considered upper-level positions, while junior librarians like catalogers were considered lower-level positions.

Table 3*Hierarchical Role Distribution among Library Professionals*

| Categories | Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Category 1 | lower level | 19 | 19.6 |
| Category 2 | lower-middle level | 29 | 29.9 |
| Category 3 | mid-level | 33 | 34.1 |
| Category 4 | upper-middle level | 12 | 12.3 |
| Category 5 | upper level | 4 | 4.1 |

The majority of participants worked in mid-level positions (34.1%), while a significant number were in lower-middle-level positions (29.9%). Lower-level positions were represented by 19.6% of participants, while upper-middle and upper-level positions were less common, accounting for 12.3% and 4.1% respectively. Long, C. E., & Applegatel, R. (2008). Adopted

Table 4*Areas of Responsibility Among Library Professionals*

| Responsibility | Responses | Percentage | Notes |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|---|
| Administrative and management | 19 | 19.6 | Director/Chief librarian, Associate/Assistant Director, Department head/ Section Head |
| Technology and Digital Services | 15 | 15.5 | Technology related activities |
| Public Service | 36 | 37.1 | services jobs (reference, subject specialist, or circulation) |
| Processing/ Technical Service | 13 | 13.4 | technical services, resources processing, or electronic/ digital resources |
| Organizational/ Official | 14 | 14.4 | Official task |
| Total | 97 | 100.00 | The respondent gets a chance to select one |

The distribution of responsibilities in the library setting is depicted in the provided table, which offers insights into the various roles and positions, along with the corresponding number of responses and percentages. It reveals that 19.6% of the 97 respondents are responsible for administrative and management tasks. In addition, 15.5% are involved in technology and digital services, 37.1% are engaged in public service roles, 13.4% handle processing/technical services, and 14.4% are responsible for organizational/official tasks.

Participation in CE

The table provided offers valuable insights into participants' engagement with continuing education activities over ten years. Participants were presented with a predetermined list of activities, as Horner (1987) outlined and Broadbent & Grosser, (1987) adopted, and asked to record their attendance history for each activity.

Table 5

Participation Frequency in Professional Development Activities

| <i>Program type</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Once</i> | <i>2-5 times</i> | <i>More than five</i> |
|--|----------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Courses (<i>In-house, full/part-time, evening, etc.</i>) | 36 | 28 | 6 | 2 |
| Conference/ Seminars/ workshops | 74 | 52 | 18 | 7 |
| Current Awareness (<i>Book, Magazine, Journal, etc.</i>) | 87 | 12 | 26 | 49 |
| Professional library association meeting | 47 | 15 | 25 | 12 |
| Training | 82 | 22 | 31 | 19 |
| Paper for publication/ Undertaking Research | 39 | 21 | 11 | 7 |
| Visit other libraries | 71 | 12 | 17 | 42 |
| Distance learning | 62 | 33 | 22 | 7 |
| Networking with Expert | 76 | 23 | 27 | 26 |
| Special Project Work/ Assignment | 24 | 12 | 7 | 5 |
| Planned job rotation | 26 | 17 | 4 | 5 |

In terms of overall participation, conferences, seminars, and workshops attracted the highest number of participants (74), followed by current awareness activities (87) and training programs (82). Participants attended professional library association meetings and courses most frequently once. However, conferences, seminars, and workshops saw more sustained engagement, with a notable proportion attending 2-5 times or more than five times. Distance learning and expert networking also showed varying degrees of participation. Special projects and research had generally low levels of participation. Visiting other libraries and job rotations reflected mixed patterns of participation. In general, participants were highly interested in professional development, with seminars and conferences as the most popular and interactive activities.

Perceived areas need for CE

The study indicates that the areas of participants' preference through CE courses that they deem need to be improved are some. A list of 31 specific areas, taken from (Rafiq et.al., 2017), was utilized and presented to participants to indicate their areas of preference. In addition, librarians' dual education background and work location can be the cause of professional development and networking (Hallam et. 2023).

Table 6*Perceived Areas of Need for Continuing Education (CE)*

| Rank | Areas | Responses | Percentage |
|-------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Computer applications in LIS | 92 | 94.8 |
| 2-3 | Library automation | 89 | 91.7 |
| 2-3 | Electronic collection management | 89 | 91.7 |
| 4 | Digital preservation | 87 | 89.6 |
| 5 | Web development | 82 | 84.5 |
| 6 | Collection management | 81 | 83.5 |
| 7 | Digital library | 76 | 78.3 |
| 8 | Computer applications in research (SPSS, Endnote, Nvivo, etc.) | 72 | 74.2 |
| 9 | Collection development | 69 | 71.3 |
| 10 | Information management | 62 | 63.9 |
| 11-12 | Reference resources and services | 61 | 62.8 |
| 11-12 | Evaluation of library services | 61 | 62.8 |
| 13 | Information Literacy | 60 | 61.8 |
| 14 | Indexing and abstracting | 56 | 57.7 |
| 15 | Database design | 55 | 56.7 |
| 16 | Knowledge management | 54 | 55.6 |
| 17 | Human resource management | 51 | 52.5 |
| 18-19 | Business communication skills | 43 | 44.3 |
| 18-19 | Computer networks | 43 | 44.3 |
| 20 | conservation Marketing of library and information services | 39 | 40.2 |
| 21 | Learning Technologies | 32 | 32.9 |
| 22 | Preservation and Conservation | 31 | 31.5 |
| 23 | Archival management | 26 | 26.8 |
| 24 | Media information management | 24 | 24.7 |
| 25 | Project management | 22 | 22.6 |
| 26 | Research design & methodology | 20 | 20.6 |
| 27 | Information seeking behavior | 15 | 15.4 |
| 28 | Planning and management of library buildings | 13 | 13.4 |
| 29-30 | Record management | 12 | 12.3 |
| 29-30 | Information policy | 12 | 12.3 |
| 31 | Financial management | 7 | 7.2 |

Among the top 31 (Thirty-one) topics from the most popular subject category was computer applications in Library and Information Science (LIS), which was chosen by 94.8% of the respondents. Other highly ranked choices that followed were library automation, electronic collection management, digital preservation, and web development, which all received a lot of

votes. These results indicate an evident need for technological competence, online resource management, and contemporary library practices in CE programs. 17 topics were selected 50 or more times, confirming the necessity of integrating tech-oriented education in library staff professional development.

Usefulness of CE program

The usefulness of Continuing Education (CE) programs was highly rated by participants, reflecting their effectiveness in contributing to professional development.

Table 7

Usefulness of Continuing Education (CE) Programs

| <i>Program type</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Median</i> | <i>Mode</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|----------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Seminars/workshops | 97 | 4.30 | 4.00 | 5 | 0.956 |
| Professional library association meeting | 91 | 3.85 | 4.00 | 4 | 0.754 |
| Training | 97 | 4.20 | 5.00 | 4 | 1.011 |
| Paper for publication/ Research/Conference | 90 | 3.67 | 4.00 | 4 | 0.763 |
| Visit other libraries | 93 | 4.15 | 4.00 | 4 | 0.982 |
| Distance learning | 95 | 4.21 | 4.00 | 5 | 1.024 |
| Networking with colleagues | 87 | 4.11 | 4.00 | 4 | 0.976 |
| Short Course | 92 | 4.25 | 5.00 | 4 | 1.887 |

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 denotes "Very useless" and 5 indicates "Very useful," seminars/workshops received the highest average rating of 4.30, closely followed by training programs with a rating of 4.20. These two types of programs were seen as the most beneficial for enhancing skills and knowledge. Other types of CE programs, such as professional library association meetings (mean = 3.85), paper publication/research/conferences (mean = 3.67), and visiting other libraries (mean = 4.15), were also perceived as valuable for professional growth, with ratings indicating their usefulness. Distance learning (mean = 4.21) and networking with colleagues (mean = 4.11) were viewed favorably, highlighting the importance of flexible learning formats and peer connections in supporting development.

In addition, short courses received a mean rating of 4.25, emphasizing their effectiveness in providing targeted learning opportunities. The standard deviations of the ratings indicate varied opinions on the effectiveness of different program types, with short courses showing the highest variability (1.887), while professional library association meetings and paper publication/research/conferences showed relatively lower variation.

Challenges and Barriers

In a focus group comprising 23 LIS professionals from various university libraries in Bangladesh, participants were purposively selected to ensure representation from university libraries. The focus group session ranged from 30 minutes to 5 minutes, during which participants engaged in discussions regarding challenges and barriers to attending continuing education activities. Table 8 provides an overview of their perspectives and quotes related to challenges and barriers. The focus group of LIS professionals identified multiple challenges in attending continuing education programs, including limited training options, low motivation, time constraints, insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, personal obstacles, and location limitations. The study addressed the importance of diverse and accessible training opportunities, recognition, and mentorship for motivation. Flexible schedules and financial assistance were suggested to overcome time and funding barriers. The need for an organizational culture and policies that value continuing education activities in promotion was underscored. Work, family, and personal responsibility management was a shared issue. Furthermore, the lack of programs in non-metropolitan settings was an issue for distant professionals. Addressing these issues would enhance continuing education effectiveness and access for LIS professionals.

Table 8

Findings of interviews

| <i>Theme</i> | <i>Respondents Quotes</i> |
|--------------------------|--|
| Lack of Training Options | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Young library professionals have been actively seeking training opportunities for continuing education, but they indicated the opportunities are very limited. ● The scarcity of appropriate technological and practical courses in libraries is a concern, and the high cost of these courses only further complicates things. ● Library professionals are deprived of training opportunities, which demotivates their professional development and does not enable them to keep up with evolving technologies and good practice. Organizations should invest in diverse and available training opportunities to support library professionals' development, good practice, and achievement (A Chief Librarian of a University Library) ● Encouraging collaborations with professional groups, universities, and online course providers can help bridge the training gap. Libraries also need to look into inexpensive options such as webinars, online courses, and peer-led workshops to enable continuous skill development for all professionals, regardless of budget constraints. |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Lack of Motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of motivation deters enthusiasm towards continuing education. In the absence of proper encouragement and incentives, it is hard to be motivated and actively seek professional development. ● It will be hard to stay motivated where there is neither reward nor attention for engaging in continuing education. ● The lack of available mentors or library head support to receive guidance and motivation for professional development. ● Low motivation among professionals is a major barrier, leading to decreased participation in training programs, workshops, and certification courses. When individuals do not see a direct benefit to their career progression or workplace improvement, they are less likely to invest time and effort in lifelong learning ● A culture of continuous learning requires active institutional engagement, recognition, and incentives to inspire professionals to develop their skills and stay updated with emerging trends in librarianship. |
| Time Constraints at Work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heavy workload of library professionals leaves no time for CPD, which makes it difficult to learn new skills and technology ● In the opinion of some library professionals, flexible working hours or leave for study may be a possible solution in assisting continuing education. This would allow one to allocate particular time to studying or obtaining a degree. This flexibility helps employees attain a good work-life balance and keep working towards their career goals. ● Some librarians believe that one of the principal solutions to breaking this issue is embracing flexible work arrangements or study leave options. Through facilitating employees to plan dedicated time to study, attend workshops, or pursue studies at higher levels, institutions can foster a culture of continuous professional development. This flexibility not only enhances the acquisition of skills but also allows librarians to be abreast of current developments in the field. ● Additionally, integrating on-the-job training—e.g., microlearning modules, in-house training sessions, and short online courses—would likely allow specialists to upskill without necessarily affecting their workflow significantly. Libraries also offer the chance for peer learning, with workers learning from one another through structured discussion forums or mentorship programs. |
| Lack of funding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As one librarian put it, "Inadequate funding hinders access to the training and resources we must have to remain up-to-date in our profession." This was echoed by many of the respondents, who observed that a lack of funds limits their range for Continuing Education (CE), so they lose out on relevant workshops and improve their skills. The issue of limited resources was seen as a significant barrier to professional growth and progress in the library profession. ● This limitation not only prevents them from being up-to-date with the latest developments in the profession but also their career progress and professional development. ● To address this issue, institutions would have to look for alternative sources of finance, such as grants, sponsorships, and partnerships with professional |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| | <p>associations. An investment in low-cost online training, peer workshops, and internal training programs may also offer an avenue to close the funding gap and allow all library professionals to participate in continuing learning opportunities.</p> |
| Lack of Support from Institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of a supportive organizational culture that impedes motivation to undertake further education. • They expressed discouragement due to lack of institutional support in going to conferences or professional development courses. • There is a lack of policies or programs in organizations that are involved in continuing education. • Some of the respondents feel that their contributions in continuing education are not being rewarded for promotions within their firms, and this can discourage them from taking further education. For instance, a respondent has attended different courses and participated in different conferences to improve their skills and knowledge, but the company does not consider this when making promotion decisions. |
| Facing Personal Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library professionals find it challenging to balance work, family, and personal responsibilities. There is a need to determine ways of prioritizing and time management to enable the pursuit of continuing education opportunities. • Balancing family duties with further education is always challenging since it takes considerable time and effort. • Institutional and effective time management are needed to address this challenge. Employers can assist by offering flexible learning choices, e.g., self-paced online studies, night or weekend classes, or training at the workplace within working hours. Facilitating an environment in which supervisors understand individual difficulties and permit study leave or schedule adjustments can also raise professional development participation levels. |
| Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The geographic location of Continuing Education (CE) programs, which are predominantly conducted in a central city like Dhaka, presents a significant barrier for professionals from other locations, rendering it inconvenient for them to attend such programs. • Professionals working in rural or remote areas struggle to access continuing education programs due to the limited local availability. They might have to travel long distances or pay higher fees to participate in workshops or training programs • To surmount this obstacle, there is a need for organizations and institutions to expand the reach of CE programs by offering virtual training sessions, hybrid models of learning, and localized workshops, not capital-based. For example, online training and webinars can be an effective solution for working professionals in remote locations, allowing them to get trained without traveling. In addition, collaboration with neighborhood libraries or community centers to provide local events could bring learning opportunities closer to residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods. |

Discussion:

The study outcomes shed light on the sincere contribution of library staff Continuing Education (CE) programs to their professional development. Library professionals actually find value in CE, seminars/workshops, and training activities being the most beneficial to them. These activities encourage those skills that are so necessary in the new evolving library environment, e.g., technology and online services. Particularly in libraries where direct instruction is not feasible at all times, online tutorials have a broader reach than that of a typical instruction unit. Tutorials can provide library information and instruction in information literacy and electronic orientation of the library 24/7 (Shahzad et al., 2023).

It is necessary that the libraries catch up with the new trends and develop accordingly. This also entails factoring in to ensure that the current staff are synchronized with the trends and introduce new criteria parallel with the new trends while hiring new staff (Kandeil et al., 2023). The differences in the levels of participation in different CE activities suggest that while most professionals are involved in conferences, seminars, and workshops, others are discouraged from participating in more technical programs such as job rotations or projects.

This difference may be due to availability, time constraint, or perceived inappropriateness of some programs. Higher job satisfaction has been associated with greater engagement in CPD schemes, and hence professionals participate when they are satisfied in their professional lives (Ndlovu et al., 2023). Also, greater demand for CE in library automation, digital preservation, and web development suggests that library staff are keen to acquire their technological skills, which are becoming essential rapidly in modern library contexts.

The findings show that library directors need to assign topmost priority to these high-demand fields so that CE courses can be tailored according to the evolving needs of the profession. In general, the study reconfirms the place of CE programs in ongoing professional development, yet also isolates the issues of accessibility, enrollment, and program variety to be resolved in order to advance their maximum potential. A properly trained employee can perform their duty to the best of their ability due to the boost in skills. Please the users impressively, it gives a person more confidence and confident employees perform incredibly on their tasks (Moonasar, 2024).

Conclusion:

Overall, this research underscores the importance of CE within continuing education for library professionals working in university libraries in Bangladesh. The research findings indicate that library professionals are eager to learn but encounter various challenges in getting Continuing Education (CE) opportunities. This underscores the need for well-designed CE programs that break down these barriers so that library professionals can update their skills, remain abreast of technological advancements, and engage actively in shaping the library profession. By understanding their needs, preferences, and challenges, the stakeholders can design and implement

customized and effective CE programs that enable library professionals to remain current, enhance their competencies, and contribute to the growth of the library profession. The stakeholders are encouraged to create an enabling policy framework for CPD, offering a combination of formal and informal learning opportunities for meeting the diverse needs of library professionals. Upcoming studies on continuing professional development of library professionals in Bangladesh may explore a few important themes. One such theme would be examining the impact of national and institutional policies on CPD practices and implementation. Comparative analysis of CPD practice among other professionals would provide feedback on areas of strength and areas for improvement. In addition, studies can also investigate the barriers to library professionals in accessing CPD opportunities and their implications for career developments. Future research would be focused on investigating the intricacies of CPD, with emphasis on the shattering of barriers and qualitative methods for gaining in-depth understanding.

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