



Relationship Between Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness among Librarians in Universities in South-South, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic academic environment, university librarians are expected to exhibit both high professional competence and exceptional job resourcefulness to meet evolving information demands. This study examined the relationship between professional competence and job resourcefulness among librarians in universities across South-South Nigeria. Specifically, this study seeks to ascertain the extent of professional competence among librarians, assess job resourcefulness, and evaluate the relationship between both variables. A correlational research design was employed to explore associations without manipulation. The population consisted of 248 librarians from 21 government-owned universities in South-South Nigeria. Due to the manageable size, a total enumeration sampling technique was used to include all 248 librarians. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness Questionnaire (PCAJRQ). The questionnaire comprised demographic details and two standardized scales: The Professional Competence Scale and the Job Resourcefulness Scale, which are based on a five-point Likert format. Reliability coefficients were high: 0.93 for professional competence, 0.96 for job resourcefulness, and 0.99 overall. Data collection was carried out by the researcher with the help of five trained assistants. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were used for the first two research questions, while Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for the third. Findings showed that librarians demonstrated a high level of professional competence ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.90$) and job resourcefulness ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.91$), both rated to a large extent. A very strong positive relationship ($r = .807$) was found between the two variables, indicating that increased professional competence is associated with enhanced job resourcefulness. It is concluded that professional competence has a significant influence on job resourcefulness.

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1. Introduction

University librarians in Nigeria must exhibit pronounced resourcefulness, akin to their academic counterparts, to navigate the complexities of the digital era. Rapid technological advancements continually reshape the information management landscape, imposing dual demands: mastery of domain-specific knowledge and agility in adopting emergent digital tools (Elaie, 2016). No longer confined to the role of custodians of physical collections, modern librarians serve as proactive promoters of twenty-first-century library and information services, integrating technical proficiency with traditional stewardship to deliver seamless, user-centered experiences.

In this context, resourcefulness encompasses the capacity to adapt and respond to professional challenges through innovative thinking and practical solutions. Yale (2021) defines resourcefulness as the creative agility required to cope with difficult situations—an indispensable quality for librarians contending with evolving user needs, institutional mandates, and rapidly shifting technologies. Complementing this perspective, Hurt (2022) emphasizes the importance of dexterity in devising expedient, clever solutions under pressure. Within the scope of the present study, job resourcefulness emerges as a critical outcome of professional competence, reflecting librarians' real-time application of knowledge, skills, and creativity to fulfill organizational objectives. Cultivating such competence demands sustained investment in focused training—ranging from experiential workshops and technology boot camps to attendance at conferences—and organizational mechanisms that both recognize high achievers and support those requiring further development.

A resourceful mindset not only fosters creative problem-solving but also underpins broader institutional resilience. Admond (2018) contends that proactive solution-seeking can transform obstacles into opportunities for growth, while Maganga (2016) demonstrates that librarians' resourcefulness significantly influences the overall library environment. Nonetheless, observable variability in resourcefulness often corresponds to disparities in professional competence and challenges related to staff retention. These findings underscore the imperative for universities to ensure that their graduates—especially at the postgraduate level—acquire the dispositions and capabilities necessary to foster resourcefulness from the outset of their careers.

Professional competence itself is a multifaceted construct. Ali and Madukoma (2022) characterize competencies as the amalgam of attributes that enable effective job performance. Lola and Gbaje (2015) distinguish professional competence—encompassing information access, technological know-how, research proficiency, and the translation of knowledge into service delivery—from personal competence, which involves ethics, attitudes, and continuous learning (Marshall et al., as cited in Lola & Gbaje, 2015). Librarian professional competence, as defined by Adubra (as cited in Lazarus et al., 2021), represents the educational and training standards that equip practitioners with the specific knowledge and skills essential for their roles. Mulder and Winterton (2017) further conceptualize it as an integrated capability underpinning sustainable effectiveness, innovation, and creative problem-solving across varied professional contexts. Complementing these definitions, Lazarus et al. (2021) describe competence as a synthesis of theoretical understanding and practical experience, and Oyedokun et al. (2018) frame it as the interplay of applied know-how, behavioral skills, and values fundamental to resourcefulness. Collectively, these conceptualizations affirm that librarians' competencies encompass the requisite knowledge, insight, and abilities to deliver enhanced, value-added services within the information profession.

Empirical research substantiates the critical link between professional competence and job resourcefulness. Uwaifo and Imhansi (2019) found that librarians with advanced professional training exhibit superior adaptive skills and greater effectiveness in addressing workplace challenges. Nwalo and Anasi (2020) reported that librarians with robust ICT competencies are more likely to implement innovative services and respond flexibly to changing user demands. Similarly, Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) demonstrated that a well-developed professional skill set enhances confidence, stimulates creative problem-solving, and fosters proactive service delivery—hallmarks of resourcefulness in academic

libraries. These convergent findings reinforce the imperative for sustained investment in competence-building initiatives to nurture the resourcefulness essential for contemporary librarianship.

While studies have examined various aspects of librarians' professional competencies and resourcefulness individually, there is limited research exploring their inter-relationship within the context of South-South Nigerian universities. This study addresses that gap by employing a total enumeration of librarians in this region to comprehensively assess the relationship between professional competence and job resourcefulness. The main focus of the study is to examine the professional competence and job resourcefulness of librarians in universities in South-South Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. explore the extent of the professional competence of librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria;
- ii. explore the extent of job resourcefulness of librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria; and to establish the relationship between professional competence and job resourcefulness among the librarians in universities in South-South, Nigeria.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the extent of the professional competence of librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the extent of job resourcefulness of librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between professional competence and job resourcefulness among the librarians in universities in South-South, Nigeria?

2. Literature Review

This section explores existing literature on professional competence and job resourcefulness in libraries and is organized based on the objectives of the study.

2.1 Professional Competence of Librarian

Professional competence refers to the education and training that equip librarians with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance (Adubra, as cited in Lazarus et al., 2021). The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL, 2016) defined it as a combination of knowledge, abilities, and behaviour that drive job performance. Similarly, Mulder and Winterton (2017) described it as an evolving, internalized capability developed through theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and contextual application. Chan (2016) expands this by highlighting core competencies such as communication, analytical thinking, technological proficiency, and leadership—demonstrating that modern librarianship extends beyond traditional tasks.

Several empirical studies in Nigeria reflect these frameworks while exposing notable gaps. Okoye (as cited in Lazarus, 2021) found a correlation between knowledge acquired in library school and its application in the workplace but noted a disconnect in translating practical skills to real-life tasks. Ezeani and Ezema (2018) observed that while librarians had basic IT knowledge, many lacked advanced digital literacy skills like metadata creation and digital archiving, limiting their effectiveness in digital environments. Oluwaseye & Adekunmisi (2020) reported that librarians who engaged in continuing professional development (CPD) showed better adaptability and job performance. However, access to CPD programmes was inconsistent due to funding and institutional constraints. Aina and Mabawonku (2017) highlighted challenges among librarians with advanced degrees in applying modern cataloguing and automation tools, citing outdated curricula and limited post-qualification exposure. Ibrahim and Mohammed (2021) emphasized managerial competencies like decision-making and emotional intelligence as often overlooked yet crucial to librarian effectiveness. Ogunrombi & Odunlade (2019)

found that librarians with experience across multiple library sections exhibited broader competencies and higher job versatility.

Despite growing research, gaps remain in how competence is measured. Many Nigerian studies emphasize academic qualifications and technical skills but overlook soft skills, ethics, and adaptive capabilities. Furthermore, few explore how these competencies influence job resourcefulness an essential trait in resource-constrained environments. This study, “Relationship Between Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness among Librarians in Universities across South-South Nigeria”, addresses this gap by examining both the cognitive and applied aspects of competence and their impact on resourcefulness, offering new insights for professional development and policy reform.

2.2 Job Resourcefulness of Librarians

Job resourcefulness in librarianship refers to the capacity to effectively solve problems, innovate, and achieve organizational goals despite limitations in time, funding, or infrastructure. Yale (2021) defines resourcefulness as the creativity and ability to navigate difficult situations, while Viter (2023) highlights it as the skill to identify opportunities and create solutions using limited means. In library contexts, resourcefulness enables staff to deliver services and manage resources efficiently, often serving as a key performance indicator. Resourcefulness is influenced by a variety of organizational and individual factors. Harris-Keith (2019) and Semedo et al. (2016) observe that employees with high job resourcefulness sustain service quality even under constraints. Dolly (2016) identifies factors such as job rotation, motivation, project management skills, teamwork, access to technology, and work-life balance as enablers of resourcefulness. Inman (2021) suggests monitoring resourcefulness for strategic planning, emphasizing its significance for competitive positioning and organizational adaptability.

In Nigeria’s university libraries, specific contextual challenges constrain resourcefulness. Odunewu and

Haliso (2019) found that effective knowledge-sharing behaviour boosts both professional development and job resourcefulness. However, Babalola and Nwalo (2017) reported that environmental barriers like poor internet connectivity and inadequate platforms for collaboration undermine librarians’ ability to be resourceful. Zaheer (2019) further attributes low resourcefulness to a lack of training, toxic work environments, ineffective management, and stress, underscoring the importance of supportive institutional frameworks.

While some studies, such as Neelakandan (2021) and Yang (2018, 2020), emphasize the value of fostering knowledge-sharing cultures in enhancing innovation and job performance, many investigations underplay the impact of socio-economic and infrastructural constraints common in developing nations. These gaps suggest that resourcefulness is not merely an individual trait but is shaped by organizational ecosystems and external factors, which must be considered in capacity-building initiatives. Despite their importance, professional competence and job resourcefulness are often treated in isolation in literature. However, in dynamic and resource-constrained academic environments like Nigeria’s, competence alone may be insufficient without resourcefulness to navigate practical challenges. Similarly, resourcefulness must be rooted in up-to-date knowledge and skills to yield meaningful outcomes. This study, “Relationship Between Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness among Librarians in Universities across South-South Nigeria”, therefore seeks to bridge this gap by investigating how both constructs interact offering insights into how librarians can be both skilled and adaptive in their service delivery.

2.3 Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness of Librarians

Competencies refer to the skills and abilities that lead to successful performance in the workplace, enabling individuals to effectively manage tasks (Abdullahi & Owolabi, 2020). For librarians, professional competence involves knowledge of information resources, technology, management, and the ability to apply this knowledge to provide high-quality services. It requires skills in information

gathering, goal analysis, and systematic planning (Misra & Kumar, 2002; Sahin, 2014). Librarians need to demonstrate high professional competence to be resourceful in their roles. According to Haddow (2022), professional competencies are flexible skills that allow librarians to function effectively and offer value-added services to users.

Job resourcefulness, as defined by Sahin et al. (2015), consists of generic competencies that help librarians adapt to job demands. A resourceful librarian can regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviour to deliver effective services (Kanungo & Menon, 2005). It involves the ability to manage intellectual perspectives and actions to align with the library's goals, enabling librarians to overcome challenges and contribute to the library's success. In conclusion, professional competence and job resourcefulness are keys to librarians' effectiveness, enabling them to adapt to evolving demands and provide high-quality services. Ongoing development of technical and interpersonal skills ensures librarians remain resourceful, resilient, and capable of overcoming challenges, supporting the continued success of library services in a changing landscape.

3. Methodology

3.1 Choice of Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design, which allows for the examination of the relationship between two or more variables without manipulation (Creswell, 2014). The population consisted of 248 librarians from 21 government-owned universities in South-South Nigeria. Given the small population of 248 librarians across 21 universities in South-South Nigeria, a total enumeration sampling technique was used, ensuring all members were included. This method provides a comprehensive, bias-free picture of the population, offering precise insights into professional competence and job resourcefulness. However, it can be resource-intensive, requiring more time and effort for data collection, which could pose challenges in terms of cost and efficiency. A questionnaire titled "Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness Questionnaire (PCAJRQ)" was used as the research instrument for data collection, comprising two parts. Part A of the instrument includes items related to the respondents' biodata, such as age, gender, educational qualification, and work experience. Part B contains two scales: (I) the Professional Competence Scale, adapted from Bolelli and Durmuş (2017), and (II) the Job Resourcefulness Scale, adapted from Doğan and Shin (2015). Each scale uses a five-point Likert response format, ranging from Very Large Extent (VLE), Large Extent (LE), Moderate Extent (ME), Small Extent (SE), to No Extent (NE). Part B of the instrument was modified slightly to improve the validity of the instrument, making it more accurate in measuring what it intends to measure to suit the research objective. The face and content validity of the instrument were established through expert reviews. The instrument was made available to subject matter experts, including library science educators and experienced librarians, who evaluated the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of the items in both scales. Their feedback ensured that the instrument effectively measured the intended constructs of professional competence and job resourcefulness. The reliability of the instrument was assessed, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.93 for Professional Competence, 0.96 for the Job Resourcefulness Scale, and an overall reliability of 0.99. According to Konting (2009), these values indicate that the questionnaire is reliable for the study. The researcher and five assistants visited the universities to administer the questionnaire. The researcher had a brief interactive session with the research assistants that addressed the study objectives, ethical guidelines, and neutral administration techniques to minimize bias. Questionnaires were distributed in a non-invasive manner, with voluntary participation and assured anonymity. Coordination with head librarians ensured minimal disruption and completed copies of the questionnaire were collected on the same day or within an agreed timeframe to ensure high response quality. Data analysis involved the use of percentages and frequency tables, while means and standard deviations were employed to answer research questions. The decision rule was as follows: Very Large Extent (VLE) = 4.51 - 5.00; Large Extent (LE) = 3.51 - 4.50; Moderate Extent (ME) = 2.51 - 3.50; Small Extent (SE) = 1.51 - 2.50; and No Extent (NE) = 1.00 - 1.50.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented in Table 1-7. As in Table 1, a total of 248 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and 223(90%) copies were returned. The response rate of 90% was considered adequate for the study because the standard and acceptable response rate for most studies including humanities, social and management sciences, health sciences, and particularly education is 60% and above (Fincham, 2008; Choi, 2016; Kubai, 2019).

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Number of Questionnaire Administered	Number of Questionnaire Returned	Percentage of Questionnaire Returned
248	223	90%

The data in Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are female, with 141 (63.2%) individuals, of the total sample. In contrast, 82 (36.8%) respondents are male, of the sample. This indicates a higher participation rate among female respondents compared to male respondents, suggesting a gender imbalance in favor of females in the study. Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents based on their highest level of education. The majority of the respondents, 132 (59.2%) individuals, hold a bachelor's degree (B.Sc., B.A., BLIS, or BLS). Respondents with a master's degree (M.Sc. or MLS) make up the next largest group, with 74 (33.2%). A smaller portion of respondents, 17 (7.6%) individuals, hold a Ph.D. The data indicates that most respondents have a bachelor's degree, with a significant proportion holding a master's degree, while those with a Ph.D. are relatively few. This suggests that the sample includes a broad range of educational qualifications, with a predominance of undergraduate-level education.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	82	36.8
Female	141	63.2
Total	223	100.0

Table 3: Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
B.Sc./B.A./BLIS/BLS	132	59.2
M.Sc./MLS	74	33.2
Ph.D.	17	7.6
Total	223	100.0

Table 4 displays the distribution of respondents according to their years of professional experience. The largest groups are those with 6-10 years and 1-5 years of experience, comprising 58 (26.0%) and 56 (25.1%) respondents, respectively. This indicates that more than half of the respondents have up to 10 years of work experience. Respondents with 11-15 years of experience account for 51 (22.9%) individuals. A smaller percentage of respondents have longer work experience: 30 ((13.5%) individuals have 16-20 years of experience and 28 respondents have over 21 (12.6%) years of experience. In conclusion, the data reveals a fairly balanced distribution across different experience levels, with a slight concentration among those with 10 years or less of work experience.

Table 4: Work Experience of the Respondents

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	56	25.1
6-10 years	58	26.0
11-15 years	51	22.9
16-20 years	30	13.5

21 years and above	28	12.6
Total	223	100.0

Table 5 shows the responses on the e professional competence of librarians in university libraries in South-South Nigeria, reveal that librarians demonstrated a large extent of professional competence. This conclusion is based on the decision rule used in the study: Very Large Extent (VLE) = 4.51–5.00, Large Extent (LE) = 3.51–4.50, Moderate Extent (ME) = 2.51–3.50, Small Extent (SE) = 1.51–2.50, and No Extent (NE) = 1.00–1.50. The grand mean score of 4.21 falls within the Large Extent category, suggesting that librarians possess strong capabilities across key areas of professional competence. The standard deviation of 0.90 indicates moderate variability in responses, showing general consistency while allowing for individual differences in skill levels.

Table 5: Professional Competence of Librarians

Num.	Professional Competence Items	VLE	LE	ME	SE	NE	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	I have an understanding of how to evaluate different information sources	115	80	20	1	7	4.32	0.90	LE
2	I have expertise to process various information resources in the library	118	70	29	1	5	4.32	0.88	LE
3	I have the ability to select various information resources in the library	89	103	25	6	0	4.21	0.85	LE
4	I have the ability to manage various information resources in various formats	78	107	28	5	5	4.11	0.87	LE
5	I have an understanding of how to motivate workers toward the attainment of library aims and objectives	139	53	22	1	8	4.41	0.95	LE
6	I am familiar with the sophisticated information tools and technologies used in service delivery in the library	91	73	37	10	12	3.99	1.12	LE
7	I have the ability to retrieve relevant information for library patrons	109	82	25	2	5	4.29	0.87	LE
8	I have expertise to disseminate relevant information in different format to library users	95	94	27	1	6	4.22	0.87	LE
9	I can conduct various researches to find solution to many existing problems in my library	103	64	42	8	6	4.12	1.01	LE
10	I can communicate fluently with colleagues and patrons	95	80	41	7	0	4.15	0.94	LE
11	I can communicate politely with my colleagues and patrons	138	61	17	7	0	4.45	0.88	LE
12	I have the ability to effectively and efficiently handle digital information resources	114	63	28	10	8	4.19	1.05	LE
13	I am capable of using and applying matters of information privacy and security in electronic environment	71	111	35	5	1	4.10	0.77	LE
14	I can disseminate information resources ethically	75	123	19	4	2	4.19	0.74	LE
15	I can organise information resources ethically	114	78	24	6	1	4.34	0.81	LE
16	I can manipulate multimedia information resources	69	62	73	7	12	3.76	1.09	LE
17	I can skillfully adapt to technological changes	93	56	64	6	4	4.02	0.99	LE

18	I can identify materials appropriately to patrons' requirements and their abilities.	142	56	22	2	1	4.51	0.75	VLE
19	I can tailor services and information products to support the patrons' need	104	65	50	2	2	4.20	0.88	LE
20	I understand information-seeking behaviour and facilitate the patrons' successful information retrieval	123	67	28	1	4	4.36	0.85	LE
Grand Mean/Standard Deviation							4.21	0.90	

Key: Very Large Extent (VLE), Large Extent (LE), Moderate Extent (ME), Small Extent (SE), No Extent (NE)

The highest-rated item, "I can identify materials appropriately to patrons' requirements and their abilities" (mean = 4.51, SD = 0.75), falls within the "Very Large Extent" (VLE) range of 4.51 to 5.00. This indicates that librarians are highly proficient in selecting materials that meet the needs of their patrons, demonstrating an essential skill in information service provision. This high level of competence enhances the overall library experience for users, ensuring that their specific requirements are met efficiently.

In summary, the findings indicate that university librarians in South-South Nigeria generally exhibit a high level of professional competence, with most respondents rating themselves positively across the measured indicators. The data reflect strong capabilities in essential areas of librarianship, such as information access, service delivery, and user engagement. Although competence levels are largely consistent, some variation exists, suggesting opportunities for targeted professional development. Notably, the ability to match materials to patrons' needs stands out as a key strength among the respondents.

Table 6 presents the extent of job resourcefulness of librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The findings indicate that librarians demonstrated a large extent of job resourcefulness. This classification is based on the study's established decision rules: Very Large Extent (VLE) = 4.51–5.00, Large Extent (LE) = 3.51–4.50, Moderate Extent (ME) = 2.51–3.50, Small Extent (SE) = 1.51–2.50, and No Extent (NE) = 1.00–1.50. The grand mean score of 4.21 falls within the Large Extent category, indicating that librarians are generally skilled at applying innovative and practical strategies to meet job demands. A standard deviation of 0.91 shows moderate variability, suggesting that while most respondents report similar levels of resourcefulness, there are individual differences in how they respond to job-related challenges.

Table 6: Job Resourcefulness of Librarians

Num.	Job Resourcefulness Items	VLE	LE	ME	SE	NE	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	Decision
1.	As at the time left to finish a library assigned task decreases and I am not able to finish it on time, I try to avoid any distractions and focus	125	75	19	4	0	4.32	0.90	LE
2.	Sometimes I get so excited about my library job that I can't hold back.	110	75	34	2	2	4.32	0.88	LE
3.	While working, I do not get angry if someone interferes with my job in the library.	70	88	45	17	3	4.21	0.85	LE
4.	I always meet up with job demands of my library	112	88	17	4	2	4.11	0.87	LE
5	I am able to work to the close of work in the library	116	52	50	1	4	4.41	0.95	LE
6	When I am provided with alternatives, without thinking further I choose the one that will let me get instant results.	109	84	27	3	0	3.99	1.12	LE
7	I deliver any library assigned to me	122	71	27	1	2	4.29	0.87	LE

8	I possess ability to compete with other library staff	69	110	38	1	5	4.22	0.87	LE
9	When my colleagues in the office are successful, I tell them how much I appreciate them.	128	60	24	6	5	4.12	1.01	LE
10	I share the experience and knowledge I acquired with my library colleagues.	117	81	19	1	5	4.15	0.94	LE
11	When I realize there is a problem in my library, one of the first things I do is to try to completely understand what the problem is.	102	88	29	2	2	4.45	0.88	LE
12	While trying to decide on a probable solution to a problem in the library, I always evaluate the success possibilities of the alternatives one by one.	84	90	42	4	3	4.19	1.05	LE
13	When I am not sure that I will succeed in performing a library job, I avoid doing that job.	44	70	67	26	16	4.10	0.77	LE
14	It is important for me that my goals are neither too easy nor too hard to accomplish.	62	84	61	10	6	4.19	0.74	LE
15	When I am confronted with a problem in my library, generally I am certain I can handle it.	62	90	56	11	4	4.34	0.81	LE
16	I start doing jobs right away as soon as I finish with the planning process.	78	101	38	3	3	3.76	1.09	LE
17	I consider how much time I spend always when I am working.	79	77	33	31	3	4.02	0.99	LE
18	I can generate creative and effective solutions to solve problems generally	121	67	21	10	4	4.51	0.75	VLE
19	Even if there are obstacles in my way, I try to achieve my goals.	126	57	33	7	0	4.20	0.88	LE
Grand Mean/Standard Deviation							4.21	0.91	

Key: Very Large Extent (VLE), Large Extent (LE), Moderate Extent (ME), Small Extent (SE), No Extent (NE)

Among the items assessed, the statement “I can generate creative and effective solutions to solve problems generally” recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 0.75$), placing it squarely within the “Very Large Extent” (VLE; 4.51–5.00) category. This result suggests that university librarians in South-South Nigeria possess a pronounced capacity for innovative problem-solving, which is essential to sustaining seamless library operations and enhancing service delivery. As shown in Table 6, the uniformly elevated mean scores across all job-resourcefulness indicators reflect these librarians’ ability to adapt to emerging challenges, maintain productivity under pressure, and apply creative strategies to resolve issues. Although some variation in responses was observed, the overall profile is one of proactive engagement and operational resilience despite prevailing constraints.

The analysis of professional competence and job resourcefulness (Table 7) yielded a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = +0.807$, denoting a very strong, positive relationship. This finding implies that improvements in librarians’ professional knowledge and skills are closely associated with greater resourcefulness in practice. In other words, as professional competence increases, so too does the capacity for creative, adaptable problem-solving.

These outcomes carry clear implications for policy and practice: targeted investments in continuing professional development, the cultivation of supportive work environments, and strategic integration of information technologies are likely to reinforce both competence and resourcefulness. Such measures not only promise to elevate the quality and responsiveness of library services but also to advance the library profession across the region, thereby promoting more effective information access, resource management, and educational outcomes.

Table 7: Pearson's r Between Professional Competence and Job Resourcefulness of Librarians

Variances	N	Professional Competencies	Job Resourcefulness of Librarians	Decision
Professional Competencies	223	1	.807	Very Strong
Job Resourcefulness of Librarians	223	.807	1	

Decision Rule: .1.00 to 0.30: Weak; 0.31 to 0.50: Moderate; 0.51 to 0.70: Strong; 0.71 and above: Very strong

The findings of this study are consonant with Mulder and Winterton's (2017) conceptualization of professional competence as an integrated capability essential for effective performance. From this standpoint, librarians are expected to manage and deliver information services responsibly, in accordance with established professional codes and values. Moreover, the observed positive association between theoretical knowledge and its application—corroborating Okoye's study (as cited in Lazarus, 2021)—indicates that librarians generally translate conceptual learning into practice. Nonetheless, a persistent gap remains: consistent with Lola and Gbaje (2015), even high levels of theoretical proficiency do not invariably yield flawless practical execution. This divergence is further underscored by Okoye's (as cited in Lazarus, 2021) contrasting observation of no correlation between applied skills and knowledge, suggesting that challenges in applying practical competencies endure. Such a gap highlights the need for reinforced, hands-on training—particularly in advanced technological domains—to bridge theory and practice.

Although the majority of librarians demonstrated substantial job resourcefulness—as characterized by creativity, adaptability, and proactive utilization of available resources (Yale, 2021; Viter, 2023)—considerable individual variability was also evident. Factors such as personal skill sets, organizational culture, and differential access to professional development opportunities critically influence how resourcefulness manifests (Mayo, 2016; Pushpakumari, 2018). While knowledge-sharing and collaboration bolster innovative problem-solving (Okonredo & Popoola, 2016; Ugwu & Ekere, 2018), and creativity further enhances resourcefulness (Aromolaran, 2020), organizational factors do not uniformly elevate resourcefulness across all staff (Gundechea, 2016; Ogunsanwo, 2016). In contexts of minimal institutional support, librarians nonetheless exhibit notable personal resilience and adaptability, indicating that tailored organizational interventions and consistent support are required to foster a more uniform level of resourcefulness.

Finally, a significant, positive relationship between professional competence and job resourcefulness was identified, aligning with Aina's (2017) finding that competent librarians are more effective in resource-constrained environments and Okon and Bassey's (2019) report that competence facilitates innovation and change management. Conversely, Umeh (2016) and Eze and Nwankwo (2020) observed only moderate correlations, implying those external variables—such as institutional support, work culture, and individual motivation—also modulate this dynamic. These insights underscore the importance of a holistic professional-development strategy that integrates targeted competence-building initiatives (e.g., mentorship, experiential workshops, and technology integration) with measures to cultivate a supportive organizational climate, thereby enhancing both individual performance and overall library service delivery.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that university librarians in South-South Nigeria possess exceptionally high levels of professional competence and job resourcefulness, and that these two attributes are closely interrelated. Librarians with well-developed professional skills are better positioned to navigate complex challenges and to mobilize available resources in ways that enhance both individual performance and overall service delivery. Yet, despite this evident strength, the findings reveal persistent gaps in

translating theoretical knowledge into practical application and in mastering advanced technological competencies.

Addressing these gaps requires a multifaceted approach. First, professional development programs must be redesigned to integrate theory with hands-on practice, incorporating experiential workshops and technology-focused training that directly target the identified weaknesses. Second, formal recognition mechanisms—such as regular awards or peer-nomination schemes—should be embedded within library cultures to celebrate achievement, reinforce best practices, and sustain motivation. Finally, strategic investments in modern information-management systems, digital tools, and ongoing technical support are essential to ensure that all librarians have consistent access to the resources they need. By combining these interventions—bridging the theory-practice divide, fostering a culture of recognition, and upgrading technological infrastructure—university libraries in South-South Nigeria will be even more effective in meeting the evolving needs of their academic communities.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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