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## Collaboration among Library and Information Science Educators in West Africa: Benefits, Challenges and Opportunities

**Ngozi Blessing Ukachi**

Research and Bibliographic Department, University of Lagos Library, Akoka- Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria

[ukachingozi2001@gmail.com](mailto:ukachingozi2001@gmail.com)



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### Abstract:

*Collaboration as a phenomenon is germane to educational success. This is because it creates a platform for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and skills. This study is concentrated on collaboration among library and information professionals in West Africa. It established perception of LIS Educators in West Africa about collaboration, identified areas of collaboration and the extent of LIS Educators engagement in it. The levels of collaboration (whether institutional, local, national or cross-national) among LIS Educators in West Africa, the benefits associated with collaboration as well as factors militating against collaboration among them were found out. The study concluded by recommending among others that LIS Educators should develop and maintain positive disposition and attitudes towards collaboration. Those who are presently having problems with where and how to connect with collaborators especially at the international levels should join and participate in professional social media networks such as; LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Academia.org, etc.*

**Keywords:** Collaboration, Library and Information Science, Library and Information Science Educators, West Africa

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### Introduction

Collaboration, as a concept could be viewed from different perspectives. While it could be generally seen to merely mean “an association between two or more people for the purpose of producing something”, in this work, collaboration is defined as “a relationship between two or more people who have agreed to work together or carry out an activity that will be of mutual benefit to them and the society”. Collaboration can also be interchanged with such other terms as; partnership, cooperation and teamwork. The pivotal thing is that no matter the angle from which it is looked at, the benefits associated with connections and collaborations among professional colleagues can never be over-emphasized. The benefits ranges from

opportunities to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences, to mentoring and gaining exposure to happenings in other institutions including, nations.

Collaboration, cooperation and partnership are becoming common phenomenon in the educational system following the manifold gains associated with them in the areas of: curriculum development, teaching and learning, exchange of expertise and experience, and designing of policy and procedure of assessment. Sharing similar opinion, Perez (2015) stated that effective collaboration improves teacher's performance as well as the student's performance. He gave an instance of the experience at a High School in Ohio where 20% increase in mathematics score was recorded from students whose teachers participated in constant collaboration. It indeed exposes educators to improved services which leads to stronger and improved pedagogy.

However, collaboration as a concept has in the past received minimal attention and acceptance until recently when technological innovation triggered the introduction of online tools such as; Google forms, now, Google drive, wikispaces, etc, which are helping in facilitating it. Moreso, some scholars and educators who have single-handedly been able to achieve success tend to be solitary to collaboration and view it as a waste of time. They negate the popular belief that an effective school or education environment is one where the training of the students is accepted by all the educators as their collective responsibility.

Educators in the field of Library and Information Science just like the practicing librarians globally are embracing the phenomenon of collaboration. This is evident in the upsurge of collaborative research works and teachings, exchange programs, curriculum planning and development, organization of trainings, workshops and conferences, among others. This study therefore is carried out to determine the extent of collaboration taking place among LIS Educators in West Africa, including their opinion on the benefits of collaboration. Factors that pose as challenges as well as the available collaboration enabling opportunities will be established.

### **Statement of problem**

The benefits associated with collaborations among professional colleagues can never be over-emphasized. This ranges from opportunities to exchange ideas, knowledge and experiences, to mentoring and gaining exposure to happenings in other institutions including, nations. Library and Information Science educators in Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia and some other West African countries do collaborate in the areas of teaching and research at personal/individual, institutional and cross-national levels. However there is dearth of literature on studies carried out in the area of collaboration among all West African Library and Information Science Educators. It is presently assumed that the extent of collaboration among the West African LIS educators is at its lowest ebb considering the varying benefits associated with collaboration. This assumption is however yet to be empirically established. The need to fill this gap in knowledge necessitated this study which is concentrating on all LIS Educators in West Africa. The study will identify the areas and extent to which West African LIS Educators have collaborated, benefits associated with their collaboration, challenges to their collaboration and finally highlight the existing multifarious collaboration enabling opportunities including recommendations on the ways of overcoming the challenges.

## **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study is to establish the extent of collaboration among LIS Educators in West Africa as well as the challenges to their collaboration with a view to making recommendations that will enable more effective collaboration among them.

The specific objectives are to;

1. Establish perception of LIS Educators in West Africa about collaboration
2. Identify areas of collaboration and their extent of engagement in them
3. Determine the levels of collaboration (whether institutional, local, national or cross-national ) among LIS Educators in West Africa
4. Find out the benefits associated with their collaboration
5. Identify the factors militating against collaboration among these professionals

## **Research questions**

The study has the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of LIS Educators in West Africa about collaboration?
2. In which areas have they collaborated and to what extent?
3. What is their level of collaboration?
4. What are the benefits associated with their collaboration?
5. What are the factors militating against collaboration among these professionals?

## **Significance of the study**

The findings of this study will be of benefit to LIS Educators, students, the university communities, the general public, and researchers.

This result of the study will reveal the benefits associated with collaboration hence, sensitizing LIS Educators on the need to collaborate for enhanced effectiveness and resourcefulness. This will lead to stronger and improved pedagogy on the side of the educators. The outcome of this study is expected to bring about improved academic performance on the side of the students thereby equipping them to favourably compete with counterparts globally.

Furthermore, the outcome of this study will reveal the benefits associated with collaboration and also bridge the gap in knowledge about the existing available enabling opportunities for collaboration. This will place the LIS educators on a good platform to collaborate thus, enabling increased collaboration among LIS Educators in West Africa. The entire university community would also find this study very relevant as its outcome would lead to increased research productivity and improved standard of education in the universities.

Other researchers especially in the field of Library and Information Science who will want to carry out further researches in this area of study will also find this study very relevant as it will contribute in solving the problem of dearth of literature in the area and also enhance discipline specific curriculum resources.

## **Scope of the study**

This study is concentrated on collaboration among Library and Information Science Educators. Collaboration among educators in other disciplines of study was not covered in this work. The geographical scope for the study is limited to West African. This part of Africa was selected for the study because it has greater number of library schools and by implication Library and Information Science Educators.

## Literature review

Library and Information Science profession just like so many other professions in recent time has been experiencing modifications and paradigm shifts in both theory and practice resulting from the technological evolution. The evolving roles have made it pivotal that they should embrace collaboration in order to pull force together and subdue the challenges associated with the new roles. Collaboration according to Ocholla (2008) is a process where two or more individuals or organizations deal collectively with issues that they cannot solve individually. In the terms of Maluleka, Onyanha and Ajiferuke (2015), collaboration can build partnerships and help empower researchers to accomplish projects that were never going to be easy to do individually. In the area of research, collaboration brings together experiences, skills, knowledge and the technical know-how of different researchers into one particular project.

Collaboration among LIS educators could take diverse patterns and also apply to varying areas of LIS education. It could take the models of: consulting, coaching and teaming (Fishbough, 1997 cited by Suntisukwongchote, 2006). Ochalla (2007) opined that collaboration could take place in the areas of research, teaching, curriculum development, research supervision and publications. Corroborating with this statement, Chaudhry (2007) states in his paper on "Collaboration in LIS education in South-East Asia" that LIS schools in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are collaborating in the area of exchange programme and knowledge-sharing in the use of new media and digital technologies. This according to him, has helped them diversify the range of courses and services that they offer. Other examples of collaborative activity include: joint research, faculty and student exchange schemes and visiting fellowships, conferences and workshops, shared online resources, shared repository of teaching materials, electronic forums, and learning accreditation or standards initiatives (Al-Suqri, 2010 and Al-Suqri, Saleem, & Gharieb, 2012). Sacchanand (2012) also asserts that collaboration among LIS educators could take place in the areas of; Information literacy instruction, Curriculum planning and development, and Teaching/learning process.

Collaboration as a practical phenomenon has numerous benefits associated with it. It is speedily advancing following its ability to enable the realization of efficient and effective education programs and activities among the academics globally, including in the field of library and information science. Onyanha & Ocholla (2007) noted the benefit of collaboration by documenting that securing research grants is to a large extent becoming increasingly pegged on whether the intended research would be conducted collaboratively. Al-Suqri (2010) stresses that the potential benefits of collaboration for enhancing the quality and diversity of LIS education and tackling specific problems being faced by the discipline, such as limited resources, have been well documented in the literature. He recorded that by sharing knowledge, resources and expertise through networking and other forms of collaboration, LIS departments can expand the range of courses, training and services they offer and keep up to date with developments and changes in the profession. Other benefits documented by Kigongo-Bukenya & Musoke (2011) include: the ability to pool knowledge and expertise, make optimum use of available resources, minimize costs and avoid duplication of effort. According to Sacchanand (2012) collaboration has attracted the attention of academics in the field of library and information science because it results in building 21st century professional skills in the students and also enable quality and meaningful professional education. Generally, collaboration is important for the advancement of Library and Information Science (LIS) as a science and a profession. It strengthens the ability to achieve the mutual goal of LIS schools and academic libraries thereby, increasing the quality of teaching, learning and research.

Al-Suqri, Al Saleem and Gharieb (2012) enumerated the benefits of collaboration to include:

- Exchange of expertise and professional knowledge
- The ability to move freely between departments delivering courses and training
- Access to a wide base of human resources, courses, research and jobs
- Reduced duplication and costs in the design and implementation of research
- Increase in publication outlets
- Improvement in skills and the quality of education

Abioye (2013) affirmed that collaboration has been widely acknowledged as a potent means for meeting the challenges of LIS education and that it presents immense opportunities for growth in LIS education. He reiterated that the essence of collaboration among LIS schools is to jointly tackle the problems and challenges of LIS education that are common to them so as to achieve mutually beneficial results.

However, there are some factors that pose as challenges to effective collaboration at the local and cross-border levels. These include weak IT infrastructure, low internet connection speeds, low IT proficiency, psychological factors that sometimes affect willingness to share resources and work collaboratively, etc (Singh & Wijetunge, 2006, Al-Suqri, 2010, Kigongo-Bukenya & Musoke, 2011 and Abioye, 2013).

According to Al-Suqri, Al Saleem and Gharieb (2012) challenges to effective collaboration include:

- Differences in the perceptions and perspectives of departmental staff regarding education and research
- Failure to appoint suitable people to lead collaboration projects, e.g. those who don't have a strong personal interest in their outcomes
- Reluctance to share information or expertise due to a lack of familiarity with and trust in faculty in other universities
- Lack of knowledge about other LIS programs in the region
- Lack of awareness of the potential benefits of collaboration
- Initial enthusiasm, but failure to follow through

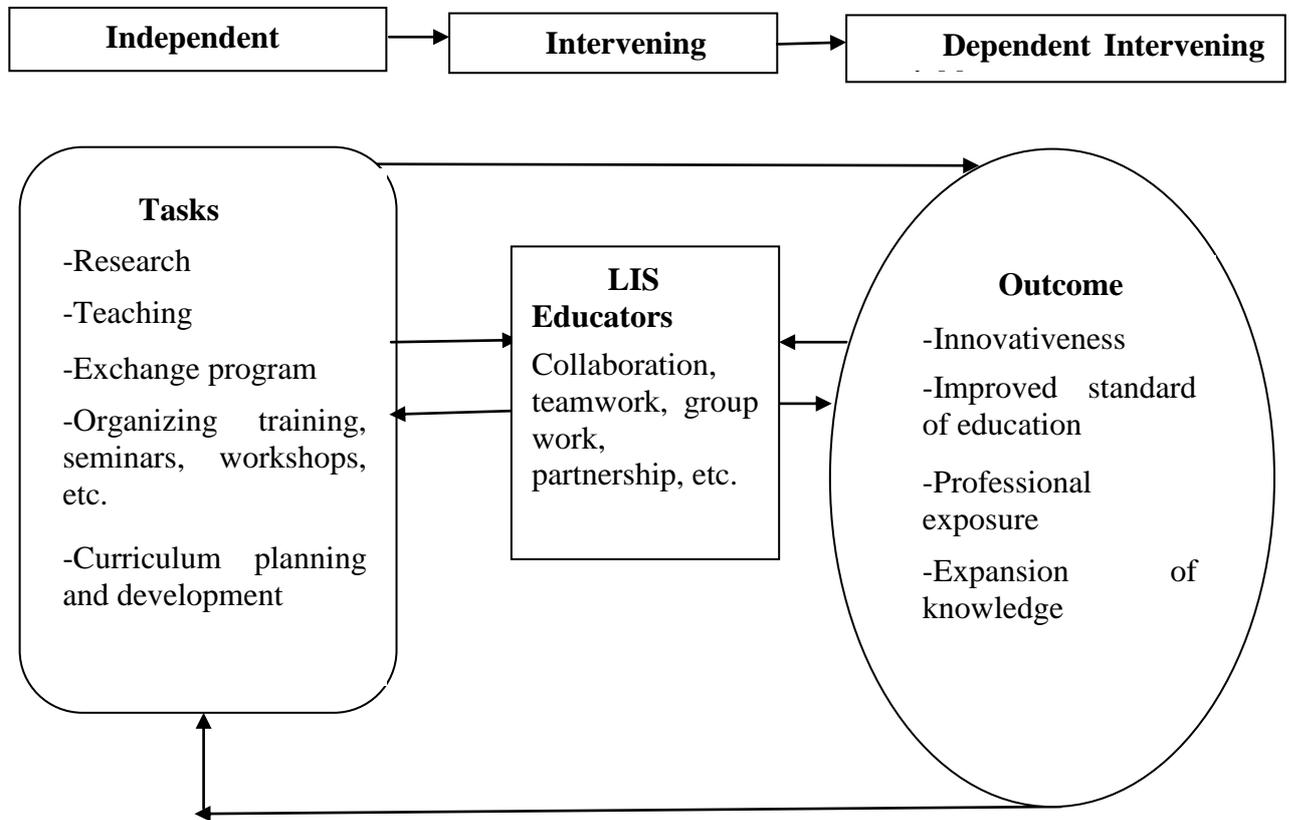
Sacchanand (2012) also highlighted the following as barriers to collaboration: incompatible organizational structure, the complicated and bureaucratic procedures, inter-institutional communication, time consuming process, absence of real commitment of one or some partners.

From the literature review carried out, there is yet to be in existence a study that specifically dwelt on collaboration among all the Library and Information Science Educators in West Africa. The only related study to this present one is the study carried out by Abioye (2013) on "Enhancing library and information science education through cross-border collaboration: the experience of University of Ibadan and University of Ghana". The study differed from this present one based on the area and scope of the study. It only studied two universities. It is therefore this gap in knowledge that this particular study is being carried out to fill.

### **Conceptual model**

In the behavioural and social sciences, models are designed to simulate the efforts that represent certain aspects of the real world. They identify particular variables with possible linkages among them in a way that clarifies, simplifies and promotes understanding. The understanding of the models can thus contribute to the truth and accuracy of the real system.

For the establishment of the benefits of collaboration among LIS Professionals, the conceptual model below is applied to describe the kind of relationships that exist:



**FIG. 1: Conceptual model for opportunities and benefits of collaboration among Library and Information Science Educators (Researcher-constructed)**

### Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study which involved all the LIS Educators in West Africa. Random sampling technique was adopted in selecting available LIS Educators in the institutions for the study. The instruments for data collection was researcher structured questionnaire. The “Survey Monkey” online software was used as a platform for administering the questionnaire. The three Survey Monkey tools of e-mail invitation, social media post, and web link tools were all utilized in contacting the respondents. Firstly, the email invitation was sent to all identified LIS Educators in West African Universities via their email addresses, professional listserves, professional yahoo groups and Google groups. The email invitation contained a link directing them to the web-page for participating in the study. Secondly, the social media link was posted to both individual and professional facebook groups of all known LIS Educators in West Africa. Thirdly, the researcher also adopted the strategy of copying the web link created by Survey Monkey and pasting/ posting same in the individual as well as group facebook chat boxes of all the LIS educators in her friends’ contact. The reason for using all the three tools was to ensure that majority of the LIS Educators are reached. The questionnaire collection period

lasted three weeks. Data collected were analyzed using the SurveyMonkey analysis tool to generate simple percentages, frequency count and weighted average. The result is presented in tables and figures.

## Result and discussion of findings

### Questionnaire distribution and response rate

A total number of 113 questionnaires were sent out to respondents while 70 being 79% of the responses was received.

### RQ1. What is the perception of LIS Educators in West Africa about collaboration?

To establish perception of LIS Educators in West Africa about collaboration, a table indicating varying likely perceptions was provided for the respondents on a four-point Likert's scale. They were requested to indicate the ones applicable to them. Their responses is provided in Table 1 below

**Table 1: Perception of LIS Educators in West Africa about collaboration**

| Perception  | SD             | D              | A              | SA             | Total | Weighted Average | Decision |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------|------------------|----------|
| I do better when I collaborate  | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 4.29%<br>(3)   | 60.00%<br>(42) | 34.29%<br>(24) | 70    | 3.27             | SA       |
| Collaboration enables me to gain more knowledge   | 0.00%<br>(0)   | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 42.86%<br>(30) | 55.71%<br>(39) | 70    | 3.54             | SA       |
| It enables me to acquire new skills   | 0.00%<br>(0)   | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 45.71%<br>(32) | 52.86%<br>(37) | 70    | 3.51             | SA       |
| It provides opportunity for sharing ideas and knowledge                                   | 0.00%<br>(0)   | 0.00%<br>(0)   | 38.57%<br>(27) | 61.43%<br>(43) | 70    | 3.61             | SA       |
| It provides a decisive platform for us to accept or reject a phenomenon in the profession | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 5.71%<br>(4)   | 58.57%<br>(41) | 32.86%<br>(23) | 70    | 3.27             | SA       |
| It provides mentoring opportunity   | 0.00%<br>(0)   | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 52.86%<br>(37) | 44.29%<br>(31) | 70    | 3.46             | SA       |
| I hate it because the collaborating partner can steal my knowledge                        | 50.00%<br>(34) | 44.12%<br>(30) | 4.41%<br>(3)   | 1.47%<br>(1)   | 68    | 1.57             | D        |
| It interferes with my privacy by letting my partner know much about me                    | 42.65%<br>(29) | 52.94%<br>(36) | 1.47%<br>(1)   | 2.94%<br>(2)   | 68    | 1.65             | D        |
| It is necessary for making the profession better  | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 1.43%<br>(1)   | 41.43%<br>(29) | 52.86%<br>(37) | 70    | 3.54             | SA       |

**Note: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree**

The responses revealed that they all respectively strongly agree that it; provides opportunity for sharing ideas and knowledge, enables them to gain more knowledge, necessary for making the profession better, enables them to acquire new skills, provides mentoring opportunity, and that they do better when they collaborate on a weighted average scores of 3.61, 3.45, 3.54, 3.51, 3.46, 3.27 respectively. Similarly, they all strongly disagree that they

hate it because the collaborating partner can steal their knowledge (1.57) and that it interferes with their privacy by letting their partner know much about them (1.65). The implication of this result is that LIS Educators in West Africa appreciate and are knowledgeable about the benefits inherent in collaboration.

**RQ2. In which areas have they collaborated and to what extent?**

To identify the areas of collaboration and the extent to which LIS educators engage in them, the respondents were provided with a table that captured varying areas of collaboration and requested to indicate the one that is applicable to them. Their responses are provided in the Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Areas of collaboration and the extent of engagement**

| Areas of collaboration  | Never          | Fairly         | To high extent | To a very high extent | Total | Weighted Average | Decision       |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------|------------------|----------------|
| Research  | 4.41<br>(3)    | 41.18%<br>(28) | 26.47%<br>(18) | 27.94%<br>(19)        | 68    | 2.78             | To high extent |
| Teaching  | 10.29%<br>(7)  | 36.76%<br>(25) | 35.29%<br>(24) | 17.65%<br>(12)        | 68    | 2.60             | To high extent |
| Exchange programme  | 39.71%<br>(27) | 42.65%<br>(29) | 10.29%<br>(7)  | 7.35%<br>(5)          | 68    | 1.85             | Fairly         |
| Organization of workshop, conferences, seminars, training, etc.   | 7.25%<br>(5)   | 33.33%<br>(23) | 36.23%<br>(25) | 23.19%<br>(16)        | 69    | 2.75             | To high extent |
| Creating awareness on sensitive professional issues like: Librarians Day, open Access Day, AIDS Awareness Programme, etc. | 13.24%<br>(9)  | 35.29%<br>(24) | 33.82%<br>(23) | 14.71%<br>(10)        | 8     | 2.59             | To high extent |
| Curriculum planning and development   | 41.79%<br>(28) | 32.84%<br>(22) | 22.39%<br>(15) | 2.99%<br>(2)          | 7     | 1.87             | Fairly         |
| Library Collection Development  | 19.40%<br>(13) | 31.34%<br>(21) | 35.82%<br>(24) | 13.43%<br>(9)         | 7     | 2.43             | To high extent |
| Catalogue card production (Production of Union Catalogue)   | 41.18%<br>(28) | 16.18%<br>(11) | 29.41%<br>(20) | 13.24%<br>(9)         | 8     | 2.15             | To high extent |
| Software acquisition  | 20.59%<br>(14) | 38.24%<br>(26) | 23.53%<br>(16) | 16.18%<br>(11)        | 8     | 2.40             | To high extent |
| Inter-library loan services   | 41.79%<br>(28) | 28.36%<br>(19) | 17.91%<br>(12) | 11.94%<br>(8)         | 7     | 2.00             | To high extent |
| Resources sharing   | 17.39%<br>(12) | 34.78%<br>(24) | 23.19%<br>(16) | 21.74%<br>(15)        | 9     | 2.58             | To high extent |

The responses in Table 2 above revealed that the respondents unanimously accepted that they collaborate in all the areas indicated in the table except for exchange programme and curriculum planning which got fairly acceptance rating of 1.85 and 1.87 weighted average.

**RQ3. What is the level of collaboration (whether institutional, local, national or cross-national) among LIS Educators in West Africa?**

To determine the level of collaboration (whether institutional, local, national or cross-national) among LIS Educators in West Africa, the respondents were provided with a table that had the options of institutional, local, national, and cross-national and requested to indicate the one that is applicable to them. The responses is tabulated in Table 3.

**Table 3: level of collaboration (whether institutional, local, national or cross-national) among LIS Educators in West Africa.**

| <b>Level of collaboration</b>        | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Institutional level                  | 66% (46)   | 44% (23)  |
| Local (within locality or state)     | 54% (38)   | 46% (32)  |
| National level                       | 29% (20)   | 71% (50)  |
| Cross- national/ International level | 6% (4)     | 94% (66)  |

The result in table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents have collaborated at the institutional level (66%) that is, with colleagues in their respective institutions. On the other hand, the least collaborative experience they have had is at the Cross- national/ International level which only 4 respondents accepted. The factors responsible for this poor collaborative activity at the Cross- national/ International level could be a resultant effect of poor ICT facilities including low bandwidth and other Internet connectivity problems which tend to affect communication between individuals and groups. This finding corroborates with the outcome of some other researcher’s work such as Singh & Wijetunge, 2006, Al-Suqri, 2010, Kigongo-Bukenya & Musoke, 2011 and Abioye, 2013.

**RQ4. What are the benefits associated with their collaboration?**

To ascertain the benefits associated with their collaboration, they were provided with a table and requested to indicate the ones applicable to them. Their responses is provided in Table 4. Below.

**Table 4: Benefits associated with their collaboration**

| Benefits  | S<br>D       | D            | A              | SA             | Total | Weighted<br>Average | Decision |
|---|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------|---------------------|----------|
| Collaboration creates room for professional interaction   | 0.00%<br>(0) | 0.00%<br>(0) | 43.48%<br>(30) | 56.52%<br>(39) | 9     | 3.57                | SA       |
| It paves way for exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experience   | 0.00%<br>(0) | 0.00%<br>(0) | 43.48%<br>(30) | 56.52%<br>(39) | 9     | 3.57                | SA       |
| I see it as a platform for quick innovation   | 0.00%<br>(0) | 0.00%<br>(0) | 62.86%<br>(44) | 35.71%<br>(25) | 0     | 3.39                | SA       |
| It is a mentoring platform  | 1.43%<br>(1) | 1.43%<br>(1) | 58.57%<br>(41) | 37.14%<br>(26) | 0     | 3.36                | SA       |
| It exposes you to happenings in other institutions especially when you are collaborating with someone from outside your institution | 0.00%<br>(0) | 4.29%<br>(3) | 35.71%<br>(25) | 60.00%<br>(42) | 0     | 3.56                | SA       |
| It creates room for the improvement of the profession   | 0.00%<br>(0) | 0.00%<br>(0) | 52.17%<br>(36) | 46.38%<br>(32) | 9     | 3.49                | SA       |
| Collaboration provides a platform to gain support for initiatives   | 0.00%<br>(0) | 0.00%<br>(0) | 63.77%<br>(44) | 36.23%<br>(25) | 9     | 3.36                | SA       |
| It positions LIS Trainers to deliver improved lectures to the library students  | 0.00%<br>(0) | 2.90%<br>(2) | 57.97%<br>(40) | 39.13%<br>(27) | 9     | 3.36                | SA       |

The outcome in table 4 revealed that the entire respondents strongly agreed on all the options provided in the table. Creating room for professional interaction and paving way for exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experience attracted the highest weighted average scores of 3.57. This is followed by exposure to happenings in other institutions especially when the collaboration is with someone from outside ones institution (3.56). The implication of this result is that LIS Educators in West Africa are aware of the numerous benefits associated with collaboration.

**RQ5. What are the factors militating against collaboration among these professionals?**

The respondents were equally provided with a table that had options related to factors that could militate against collaboration among LIS Educators. They were requested to select from the options the ones that they accept. Their responses is presented in table 5 below.

**TABLE 5: Factors militating against collaboration among lis educators?**

| Militating factors                        | SD           | D              | A              | SA           | Total | Weighted<br>Average | Decision |
|---|--------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------|---------------------|----------|
| Fear of having unsuccessful collaboration | 7.14%<br>(5) | 34.29%<br>(24) | 51.43%<br>(36) | 7.14%<br>(5) | 0     | 2.59                | A        |
| Disagreement on assignment of roles       | 7.14%<br>(5) | 27.14%<br>(19) | 61.43%<br>(43) | 4.29%<br>(3) | 0     | 2.63                | A        |

| Militating factors   | SD             | D              | A              | SA             | Total | Weighted Average | Decision |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------|------------------|----------|
| Previous experience of a Collaborator not carrying out his assigned role   | 2.86%<br>(2)   | 24.29%<br>(17) | 58.57%<br>(41) | 14.29%<br>(10) | 0     | 2.84             | A        |
| Desire for independence and privacy  | 5.80%<br>(4)   | 30.43%<br>(21) | 46.38%<br>(32) | 17.39%<br>(12) | 9     | 2.75             | A        |
| Divergence professional philosophies with intended collaborators           | 2.99%<br>(2)   | 22.39%<br>(15) | 61.19%<br>(41) | 11.94%<br>(8)  | 7     | 2.87             | A        |
| Confidence that I can do better alone                                      | 8.57%<br>(6)   | 30.00%<br>(21) | 42.86%<br>(30) | 18.57%<br>(13) | 0     | 2.71             | A        |
| Lack of trust and confidence on other people                               | 2.86%<br>(2)   | 17.14%<br>(12) | 64.29%<br>(45) | 15.71%<br>(11) | 0     | 2.93             | A        |
| Challenge of cultural and religious background                             | 4.29%<br>(3)   | 42.86%<br>(30) | 42.86%<br>(30) | 10.00%<br>(7)  | 0     | 2.59             | A        |
| Problem of inter-institutional communication                               | 4.29%<br>(3)   | 21.43%<br>(15) | 60.00%<br>(42) | 14.29%<br>(10) | 0     | 2.84             | A        |
| Complicated and bureaucratic procedures associated with collaboration      | 1.45%<br>(1)   | 24.64%<br>(17) | 57.97%<br>(40) | 15.94%<br>(11) | 9     | 2.88             | A        |
| Ignorant of where and how to connect with collaborators                    | 7.14%<br>(5)   | 25.71%<br>(18) | 55.71%<br>(39) | 11.43%<br>(8)  | 0     | 2.71             | A        |
| Lack of confidence in my abilities to perform well in a collaborative work | 20.00%<br>(14) | 37.14%<br>(26) | 35.71%<br>(25) | 7.14%<br>(5)   | 0     | 2.30             | A        |

Table 5 which captured the responses on the factors militating against collaboration indicates that all the respondents agreed to the entire options provided. Lack of trust and confidence on other people (2.93) attracted the highest score. Complicated and bureaucratic procedures associated with collaboration (2.88), Divergence professional philosophies with intended collaborators (2.87), Previous experience of a Collaborator not carrying out his assigned role (2.84), Ignorant of where and how to connect with collaborators (2.71) and Confidence that I can do better alone (2.71) are also part of the options agreed upon by the respondents.

### Conclusion and recommendations

Collaboration among educators is pivotal to excellent performance and outcome. It benefits the educator and by extension, the students also. This study on collaboration among library and information science educators in West Africa has established the various benefits associated with collaboration. It revealed the perception of LIS Educators on collaboration which includes among many others that it provides opportunity for sharing ideas and knowledge. The extent of collaboration which is mainly institutional as well as the factors militating against collaboration were established to include; Complicated and bureaucratic procedures associated with collaboration, Ignorant of where and how to connect with collaborators, etc. To ameliorate these problems which have had negative impacts on effective collaboration, the following recommendations are made;

Library and Information Science Educators should develop and maintain positive disposition and attitudes towards collaboration. This is necessary because it is difficult to get the best from a course that you are not committed to. No man is an Island, hence, we need each other to be able to make library and information science an honourable discipline.

Library and Information Science Educators who are presently having problems with where and how to connect with collaborators especially at the international levels should join and participate in professional social media networks such as; LinkedIn, ResearchGate, academia.org and also participate in online professional groups such as Yahoo and Google groups. Another enabling opportunity to collaboration is online publishing of our research works and other activities. This gives one exposure to the global world thereby linking such a person up with those that share similar subject and research areas of interest with him.

The government and management of higher institutions should make available in their institutions ICT facilities necessary for collaboration and effective communication. Such will encourage the educators and aid them in the practice.

Collaboration should be encouraged at the institutional level via the establishment of joint supervision of students and shared lecture delivery.

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