

**Human Resources Development Programmes in Nigerian Academic Libraries: A Comparative Study of Universities in Imo State.**

by  
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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to assess Human Resources Development (HRD) programmes of librarians and para-professionals in Imo State University, Owerri and Federal University of Technology, Owerri with a view to compare the HRD programmes of the institutions under study. The study examined different types of HRD. Related literature was reviewed. To carry out the study, four objectives were stated and research questions formulated from them. Questionnaire was used to collect relevant data from the entire population of 50 librarians and para-professionals. The two University librarians were also interviewed. Percentage tabulation and bar chart when necessary were used to answer the objectives. The study revealed that: the two universities carry out HRD programme and their types of training and development programmes vary. In Imo State University, librarians and para-professionals sponsored themselves for training and development programmes while in FUTO they were sponsored by the university management. The research showed inadequate funding; personal financial constraints, lack of facilities to train with were major problems that affected training and development of librarians and para-professionals in IMSU and FUTO. It was suggested that for effective HRD, each university library should have a written staff development policy; In-service training and short courses should be encouraged; Facilities for training should be provided; adequate fund should be provided for training and development of library personnel.

**Introduction**

Personnel management in libraries is an aspect of library administration that involves planning for human resource needs such as recruitment, selection, human resource development, motivation, performance appraisal. Appleby (1987) sees personnel management as concerned with "the maintenance of human relationships and ensuring the physical well-being of employees so that they give maximum contribution to efficient working". Personnel management is important and University librarians should ensure effective co-ordination and organisation (of staff) in order to achieve the organizational goals. When the right personnel are recruited, the management puts the staff through with the operations of the library through a staff orientation programme and this encourages them for more training to enhance their development.

Human Resources Development (HRD) is a multidimensional and multifaceted management process that cuts across all disciplines. It is the hub of organisational management. Healthfield (2008) defined HRD as "the frameworks for helping employees develop their personal and organisational skills, knowledge and abilities." Proper management and development of personnel aids in organisational development. The library as an organisation argues Ranganathan "is a growing organism". Kent, (2003) stated that it needs proper organisation, management and development of both the

resources and the personnel. If these are put into proper perspectives it will aid the library to achieve the objectives of the parent body (University) which is teaching, learning and research. HRD in library is of paramount importance especially in this era of information technology. Moreover, since most personnel employed in the library do not have the basic professional qualifications; it becomes important that they should be trained in line with the organisational needs.

Different authors based on their perceptions have defined HRD variously. For example, Bateman and Zeithamal (1993) defined training as "teaching lower-level employees how to perform in their present jobs while development involves teaching managers and professional employees skills needed for the present and future jobs". However, training in librarianship should keep all the staff aware of whatever is happening in the library. In addition, Ile (2000) sees training as being "concerned with the teaching of specific skills for carrying out a definite assignment". All new staff therefore needs some kind of induction training for their jobs. Although they may have learnt all the new library techniques at the library school, it is only at the workplace that they have the opportunity to put theories into practice.

HRD is important in academic libraries because no matter how carefully applicants are screened, gaps always exist between what employees know and what they should know. Training is the only

thing needed to fill this gap. HRD improves current performance and provides suitable and qualified personnel to meet present and future needs. Moreover, a well-trained staff at whatever level will serve to enhance the quality of the organisation's services. The reception and handling of the individual member of the community is of utmost importance and library staff should not forget that they are employed to serve the community readership. Librarians are the image makers or public relation officers of the library. They should be properly developed. Training therefore, must be an integral part of the library managements' plans. It is not good whatsoever to have a marvelously stocked library without maximum exploitation of its resources because of inadequately trained staff. HRD can take different forms. This can either be through some formal training scheme, like attending library schools, seminars, conferences and workshops or informally by engaging the staff in on-the-job training programmes, visits to other libraries to learn new skills and special talks or training by experienced or specialist librarians. Despite the benefits of staff training and development there are some impediments that hinder its effective practice in academic libraries. HRD has the ultimate purpose of making an employee to be better skilled and to perform maximally in the library. The focus of this study is therefore on Human Resources Development programmes (HRD) of University libraries in Imo State.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What are the types of training and development programmes organised at the Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri?
2. Who are the sponsors of training and development programmes in the Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri ?
3. What factors militate against effective training and development in the Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri ?
4. In what ways can training and development of library personnel be improved upon in the Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri

#### **Objectives of the study**

- 1 To ascertain the types of training organised for library personnel at the Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri.
- 2 To identify sponsors of the HRD programmes in the two university libraries.
- 3 To identify the factors affecting HRD of library personnel in the two institutions.
- 4 To make recommendations on how to improve HRD of library personnel based on the result of the findings.

#### **Scope of the study**

The study covered the two university libraries in Imo state, namely Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) and Imo State University (IMSU), Owerri. These universities have libraries attached to them. Imo State university has a library staff strength of 46 personnel, comprising 6 librarians 5 para-professionals and 35 support staff (Imo State University Library, Fact Sheet 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2004) while Federal University of Technology library has a staff strength of 86 personnel consisting of 27 librarians 19 para-professionals and 40 support staff as at the time of this study. Librarians and para-professionals will be used for the study and are referred to as library staff. IMSU has a total of 11(6 librarians and 5 para-professionals) while FUTO has a total of 46 (27 librarians and 19 para-professionals). The two University librarians were also included.

#### **Review of related Literature**

Rue & Byars (1989) and Igbokwe (1998) are of the view that personnel could be developed on-the-job and off-the-job. Dube (2008) carried out a study on relationship between in service training and on-the-job training. He identified in service training and on-the-job training as training programmes, but differentiated them by noting that in service training is conducted on students still at technikon while on the job-training is conducted on newly appointed employees or employees that want to upgrade their skills. In addition to that Ifidon (1998) listed "simple orientation programmes, organised visits, seminars and conferences, participatory management, short courses and formal professional library education as different ways library staff can be developed". These programmes can only be sustained if management is in full support of it.

Writing on the responsibility for personnel development, Ifidon (1985) opined that “the responsibility should be shared between the staff, the University or the institution”. Asomugha (1982) and Ekoja (1996) recommended institutional funding or funds by local and international agencies. The quality of each library service is judged by the reception accorded to individual readers by the staff, therefore training and development programmes should meet the organizations demand for people. Robinson (1988) enumerated the benefits of training as follows; Effective training brings about an increase in knowledge required in the job, knowledge of the structure and business aims of the organization. Their attitudes towards the work and management of other employees can be improved by training. It also helps to improve safety standards. Castelyn (2005) stressed that there are a lot of benefits for both the employer and employee; to the employer there is improved efficiency, accurate but difficult-to-measure output, and a skilled workforce. To the employee there is job satisfaction, greater opportunity and also personal development, all of which result in an improved service to the community.

Despite the recognition of the importance of libraries by Nigerians, (National Policy on Education, 1981) HRD in libraries still shows progressive deterioration. Egungwu (1992) identified Lack of complete top management support, inadequate funding, poor organisational climate, resistance to developing subordinates as the factors affecting HRD. Otto and Glaser (1970) identified top managements’ attitudes to training based on their willingness to vote the necessary funds to the activity as a problem to HRD programmes. Any programme must be checked periodically to know how worthwhile it is. Evaluation tells us how worthwhile the training and development has been in respect of the total benefits accrued from it by the organization. Kirkpatrick cited in Otto and Glaser (1970) divided evaluation of training programmes into four categories. Namely, reaction evaluation is how well the trainee liked the programmes; learning evaluation is how well the programmes are learned, behaviour evaluation asks the question what changes in the on-the-job behavior has occurred as a result of the training, while result evaluation requires concrete evidence that the training actually produced improvement for the organization. Dvorin (1972) stated that training could be

evaluated based on the following criteria: participants’ reactions, changes in participants’ knowledge and/or skills, what new knowledge or skills were acquired and demonstrated. Changes in participants’ attitudes. Changes in job performance. Organizational performance or results, ways it contributed to achieving specific organizational goals.

HRD as an important aspect of personnel management has to be given a face-lift. It should be planned in such a way that both the organizational needs and individual needs should be achieved Raseroka (2004) observed that budgetary allocations to libraries are not given the needed constant support by their institution. For HRD to function effectively this issue must be well addressed. Dubrin (1993) and Kubr and Prokopenko (1989) stressed the importance of identifying the training needs of employees before embarking on such programmes.

#### **Research Method**

A two-part questionnaire developed by the researcher was used in data collection for the study. The first part consists of demographic information of the respondents such as sex, educational levels, years of experience and status, the second part was designed to elicit information on HRD programmes, sponsorship, impact on the personnel and the problems hindering effective HRD in university libraries. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all the 57 librarians in the two university libraries in Imo State (11 for IMSU and 46 for FUTO). Based on the number of personnel in IMSU one may argue that the number is not encouraging based on the type of library and the clients they serve.

The returned copies of the questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics. Fifty out of a total of 57 librarians completed and returned their copies of the questionnaire, 9 (81%) from IMSU while 41(89%) is from FUTO. See table 1

Table 1: Analysis of the returns rate of the Questionnaire

Library Name	Questionnaire			Interviews		
	Number distributed	Number returned	Percentage	Number interviewed	Number returned	Percentage
IMSU	11	9	81%	1	1	100%
FUTO	46	41	89%	1	1	100%

Table 2: Types of Human Resources Development programmes

Training & development programme	N=9 IMSU		N=41 FUTO	
	Responses	Percentage( %)	Responses	Percentage (%)
Orientation	6	66.7%	35	85.3%
On the job training	3	33.3%	32	78%
Job rotation	4	44.4%	30	73.2%
In-service training	4	44.4%	18	43.9%
Study leaves and fellowships	0	0%	30	73.2%
Visit to other libraries	3	33.3%	0	0%
Seminars	4	44.4%	35	85.3%
Conferences	1	11.1%	35	85.3%
Electronic mail workshops	1	11.1%	0	0%
Workshops	4	44.4%	35	85.3%

From the table a total number of 11 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to librarians and para professional staff of IMSU and 9 representing (81%) was returned, the remaining 2 were not returned, at FUTO 46 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 41 representing (89%) were returned in usable form. The remaining 5 were not properly completed. The interview schedule for the University Librarians of IMSU and FUTO were completed and returned.

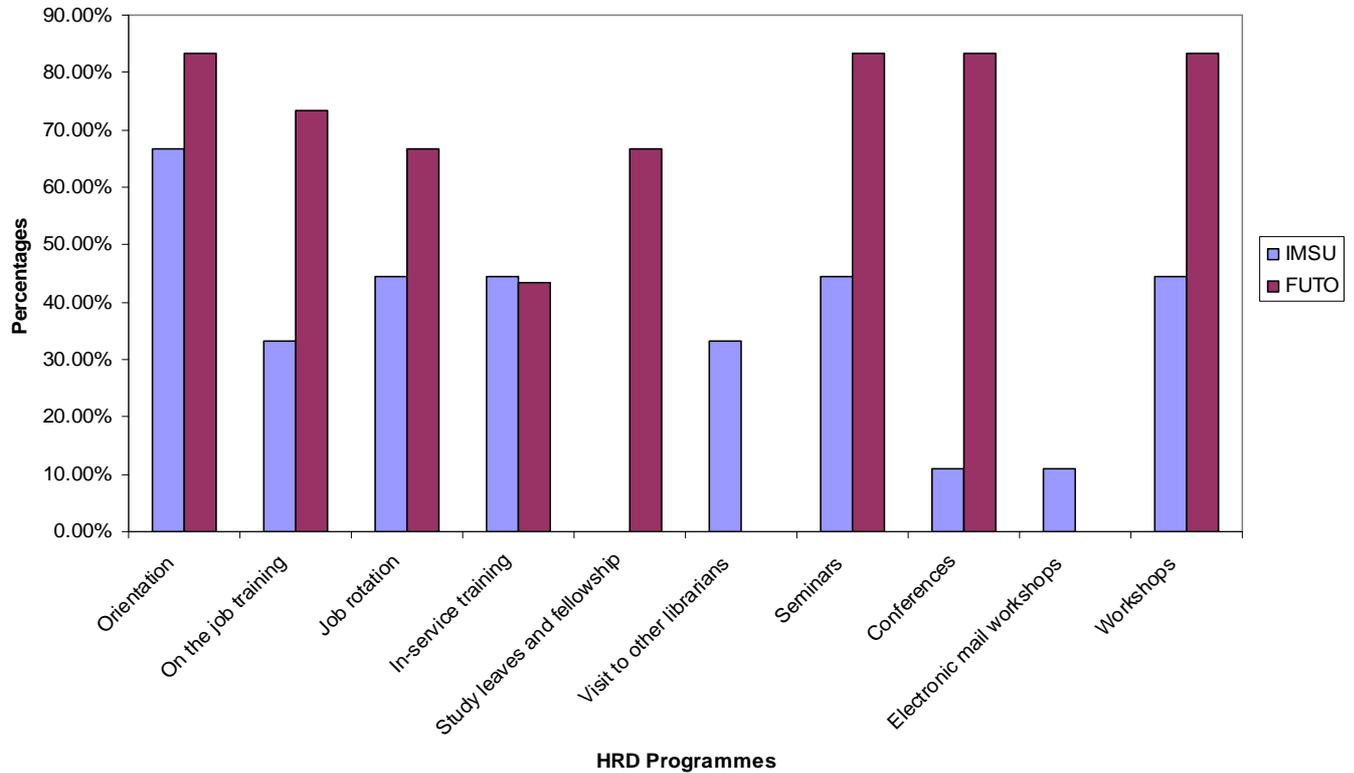
In response to the question on the types of training and development programmes organized by Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library Owerri, the responses are more than the respondents because the respondents were expected to tick more than one option. The data collected and analyzed as shown in table 2 above, revealed that for IMSU the responses for orientation ranked highest with 6 representing (66.7%) followed by job rotation, in-service training, seminars and workshops having 4 (44.4%) each. The others in their descending order from the responses are; on the job training 3(33.3%), visit to other libraries 3(33.3%), conferences, electronic mail workshop 1(11.1%) each, and study leave and fellowship have no rating. For FUTO orientation, seminars, conferences and workshops ranked 35(85.3%) each. The others are as follows, on-the-job

training 32(78.0%), job rotation; study leave/and fellowship has 30(73.2%) each, in-service training has 18(43.9%). The table shows that electronic mail workshop and visit to other libraries are not practiced in FUTO library.

These programmes can be seen to have been identified by the studies of Ifidon (1985), Igbokwe (1988) and Rue and Byars (1989). Though these forms of training are carried out in these two universities, one may see them as not being enough considering the issue of ICT as was put by Lelo (1993) that things have changed in information handling, and information specialist should be trained to use these technologies. Fig 1. explains this more.

From the interview with the University Librarian of IMSU, it was deduced that they organize; job rotation, orientation, workshops, seminars conferences and in-service training. He stated that any staff involved in in-service training takes full responsibility of the cost of the programme throughout its duration. In FUTO the University Librarian responded that they organize orientation, seminars, workshops, conferences, on-the-job training, study leave/and fellowship and in-service training. The institution sponsors staff members that are on study leave.

Fig.1 Types of HRD programmes in IMSU and FUTO



From the diagram FUTO has more training programmes than IMSU. This could be seen from the scoring of each of the training programmes.

Table 3: Sponsorship of HRD programmes in the university libraries under study

Sponsorship	IMSU		FUTO	
	Responses	Percentage	Responses	Percentage
University management	2	22.2%	35	85%
Individuals	5	55.6%	14	34%
Government	2	22.2%	8	19.5%

In response to who sponsors HRD programmes in the Imo State University Library and the Federal University of Technology Library, Owerri, the responses are more than the respondents because they are free to tick more than one. From the data analysed in Table 3, it was observed that for IMSU, 2(22.2%) responded that university management and government sponsor the programmes, 5(55.6%) responded that individuals sponsor themselves. From the analyses, it can be deduced that individuals sponsor themselves because a greater percentage responded to it. This corroborates the response of the university librarian that staff sponsor themselves with little support from management. Despite the importance of training and development programmes no specific fund is budgeted for it. At FUTO, the staff responded thus; university management 35(85%), individual 14(34%) and government 8(19.5%). This shows that the university management sponsors staff for the programmes. These tally with the response of the university librarian that, the university authority sponsors the staff and that fund is budgeted for it. He also stated that training and development is important for the library especially as new technologies are being introduced into librarianship. Librarians should therefore acquire adequate training for them to be relevant in this era.

Based on the analysis, library staff in IMSU sponsor themselves for training programme while the university management sponsors FUTO library staff members. The finding of the study from FUTO is in agreement with the study of Ifidon (1985) that the responsibility of staff development programme should be shared between the university authority and the individual. This is contrary to what is happening at IMSU library.

The analysis on Table 4 below shows that, despite the fact that they are state and federal institutions they have similar problems but with a slight difference in some areas. For IMSU seven (7) factors were identified as militating against training and development programmes, they are: managers do not give adequate support, inadequate funding, lack of sincerity in performance appraisal, there is no written staff development policy, personal financial constraint and inadequate facilities to train with, while at FUTO five factors were identified they include; managers do not give adequate support, inadequate funding, there is no written staff development policy, personal financial constraint and inadequate facilities to train with. . From the response of the interview, the University Librarians agreed to these factors and added that where the spending is not commensurate with the feedback, it will be discouraging to sponsor staff to such programmes. The study of Egungwu (1992) identified these factors as problems

**Table 4: The Factors that militate against effective HRD programmes in IMSU and FUTO**

Factors	Responses			
	IMSU	%	FUTO	%
Managers do not give adequate support	7	77.7%	29	70.7%
Inadequate funding	9	100%	35	85.3%
Managers always resist to develop their subordinates	4	44%	16	39.0%
Lack of sincerity in performance appraisal	7	77.7%	14	34.1%
There is no written staff development policy	7	77.7%	21	51.2%
Personal financial constraint	9	100%	37	90.2%
Inadequate facilities to train with	7	77.7%	29	70.7%
It is not required for promotion	1	11.1%	4	9.7%
Staff does not have adequate time to participate	2	22.2%	9	21.9%
Librarians are not interested in the programme.	2	22.2%	9	21.9%

Fig. 2: Factors that militate against effective training and development in IMSU and FUTO

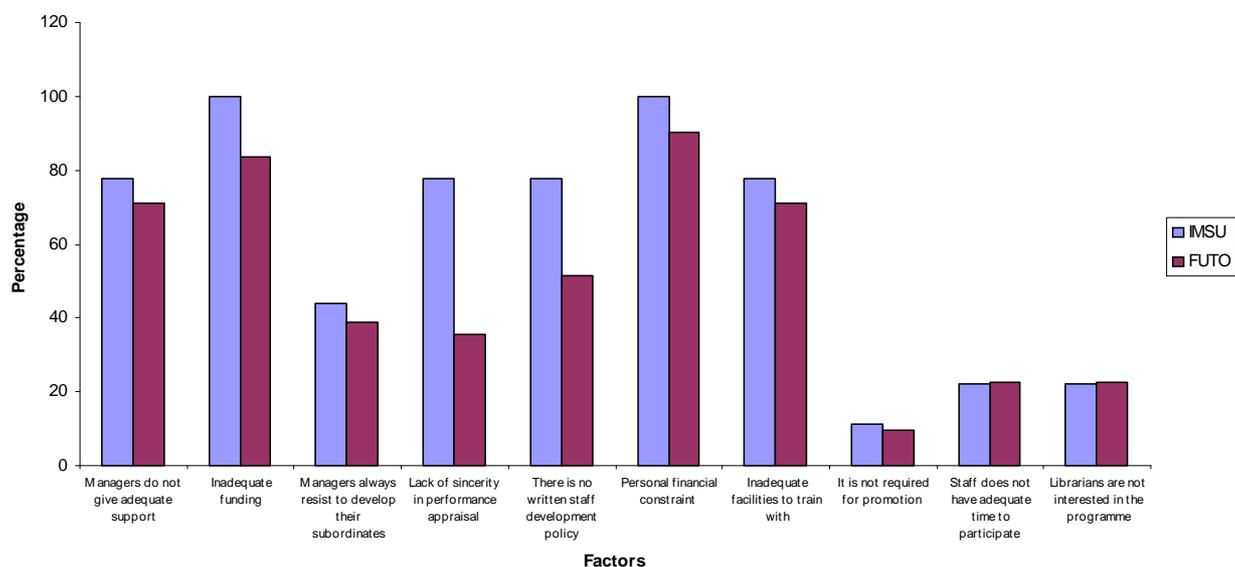
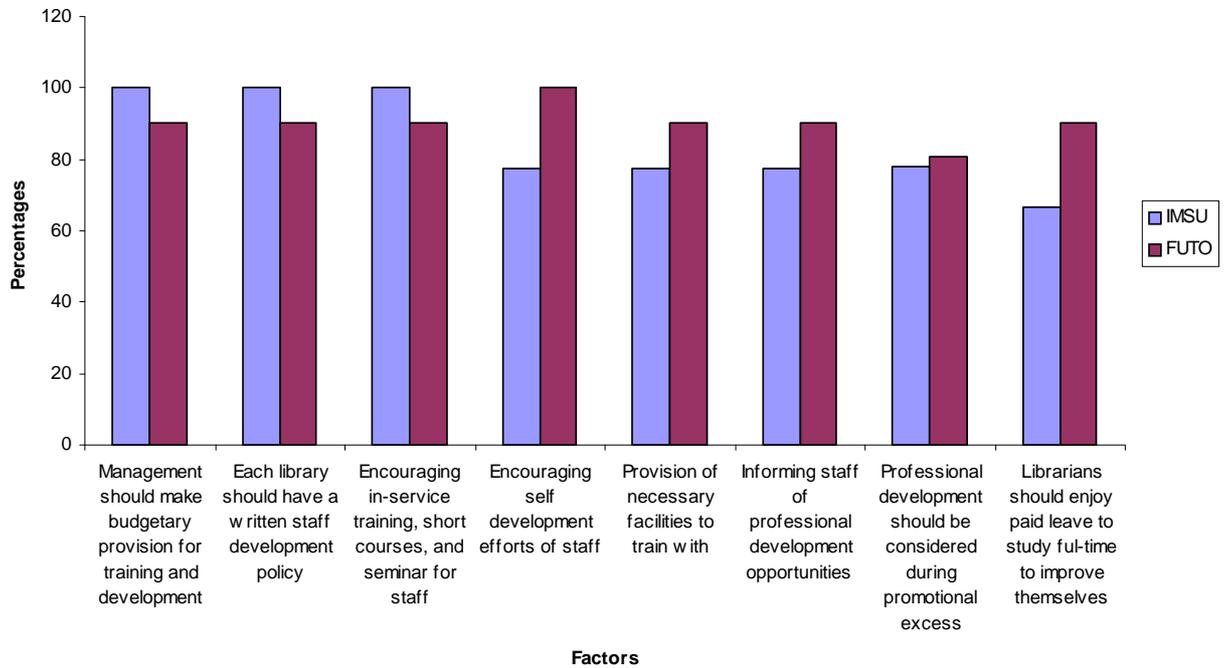


Figure 2 shows the major six factors that affect training and development programmes in IMSU library while four were seen as the major factors that affect HRD in FUTO library

Table 5: Factors that can improve HRD of library personnel

Factors	Responses			
	IMSU	%	FUTO	%
Management should make budgetary provision for training and development.	9	100%	37	90.2%
Each library should have a written staff development policy.	9	100%	38	92.6%
Encouraging in-service training, short courses, and seminar for staff	9	100%	38	92.6%
Encouraging self development efforts of staff	7	77.7%	41	100%
Provision of necessary facilities to train with	7	77.7%	38	92.6%
Informing staff of professional development opportunities	7	77.7%	37	90.2%
Professional development should be considered during promotional excess	7	77.7%	33	80.4%
Librarians should enjoy paid leave to study full-time to improve themselves	6	66.7	39	95.1%

Fig. 3: Suggestions on how to improve training and development of library personnel in IMSU and FUTO



Factors

The data analysed in Table 9 above, shows that their suggestion as to ways of improving HRD programmes are similar in the two university libraries as a result they are treated together. The factors include: management should make budgetary provision for training and development; each library should have a written staff development policy, encouraging in-service training, short courses and seminar for staff, encouraging self-development efforts of staff, provision of necessary facilities to train with. Informing staff of professional development opportunities, professional development should be considered during promotional exercise, librarians should enjoy paid leave to study full-time to improve themselves. From the response of the interview, the IMSU University Librarian agreed to these factors and added that librarians should show interest in learning, and current library and informal science journals should be made available to update their knowledge. FUTO University Librarian also noted that those trained should endeavor to utilize the skills acquired and management should avoid being parochial in decisions on who to send for training.

This finding supports Raseroka’s (2004) observation that budgetary allocation to library is not given the needed constant support by their institution. Each library should have a written staff development policy. They should encourage in-service training, short courses and seminar for staff; encouraging self development efforts of staff and provision of necessary facilities to train with. This is illustrated in Fig. 3 above.

**Conclusion**

This study assessed and compared training and development programmes in two different university libraries (IMSU and FUTO). Objectives were formulated and research questions drawn from the objectives. Consequently, the objectives of the study were achieved and the research questions answered. These research questions guided the study both in literature review and data collection. Data collected were analysed using tables, percentages and bar charts. Though these two university libraries carry out training and development programmes, the level of attention is not encouraging. Considering the issue at stake Information Communication Technology (ICT), modern forms of training should be advocated.

The study identified some factors militating against effective training and development and suggestions on ways of improving it made.

The academic libraries studied are not homogeneous, each of them is unique and its uniqueness has greatly affected the quality of the library as well as their characteristics. University management owes it as a duty to develop their staff and equip them to meet up with the challenges in this information age.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made in the light of the findings and the discussion that followed.

1. Modern forms of training programmes should be incorporated into the types of training and development programmes organized in these libraries. Considering the issue of new technologies, librarians should be trained on how to use and work with these new technologies.
2. Government should provide adequate fund for staff development programmes. This will make them to learn more and also motivate them to work harder.
3. Library management should make it a priority to train and develop their staff regularly both librarians and management staff.
4. Library personnel should be versatile and look out for training programmes that can help them to develop themselves. Since we are talking of electronic libraries, this will enable them to meet up with the challenges of the future and avoid being thrown out of their jobs.
5. Librarians who are sponsored for any training programme should impact the knowledge to others who were not opportune to attend, by way of seminar/workshops.
6. Library management should organize conferences, workshops, seminars within the institutions to benefit everybody.
7. Librarians should also research and publish in reputable academic journals since they have acquired academic status and this will help them to know the current happenings in librarianship.
8. There should be a written staff development plan to guide management in training their staff.

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