

Assessment of Non-Professional Staff Training programme In Nigerian University Libraries.

by

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Abstract

The study identified training and development for non-professional staff in Nigerian University Libraries, the categories of staff that are enjoying the training programme, the relevance of the course contents, and the effect of the training programme for non-professional and job performance. The method adopted for the study was survey research method. The data collected were analyzed and presented in frequency tables and percentages. The study found that staff training and development is a necessary tonic for effective and efficient services because with training, it enables the staff to acquire and possess the necessary skills, capabilities, and attitude needed for efficient performance of their jobs. The type of training available to them include job orientation, formal in-service training, job rotation, typewriting, computer training, Factors like lack of finance, poor remuneration for teachers, delay in releasing the results, lack of basic teaching facilities, lukewarm attitude of staff militate against effective establishment of training programmes.

Introduction

The establishment and development of academic libraries in all parts of the world is very necessary for the development of their parent institutions – the Universities. According to Olanlokun and Salisu (1993) this type of Library started in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe and America with the founding of Universities in those continents. The far Eastern University Libraries followed much later and according to Salisu (2002) academic Libraries are recent phenomena in the developing countries of Africa. For instance, Aguolu (2002) stated that Nigeria had the first academic library with the founding of the University of Ibadan in 1948. No other university came into existence until the independence year when the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) was established in 1960. The University of Ile Ife now Awolowo University in 1961, both Ahmadu Bello and Lagos Universities in 1962. New Universities sprang up in the seventies in response to the yearning of the people for higher education. This trend continues up till today. The National University Commission (2011) indicated that there are 112 approved universities in the country; by this, it means that there are no less than 112 university libraries. It must be realized that University Libraries being an integral academic parts of the University generally emerged simultaneously with their parents institutions. Hence there are as many university Libraries as there are universities in Nigeria. Tabs (2003) define academic library as an entity in a post-secondary institution that provides all the following:

An organized collection of printed or other materials or a combination thereof. A staff trained to provide and interpret such materials is required to meet the informational, cultural, recreational, or educational needs of clientele. An established schedule in which services of the staff are available to clientele. The

physical facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff and student.

In order to provide users with excellent services, the university libraries in Nigeria need a staff well vast in all facets of their work: This is because librarians perform unique role in the society which no one else can exactly do. This is why Kenerson (1997) stated that all categories of library personnel in all types of library have needs to learn; often for a number of reasons. The daily task and major issues that confront individuals require them to apply their knowledge and skill appropriately to each situation. He further stated that universities are experiencing a profound change as a result of automaton of its holdings as well as its net-working capabilities to the world of information resources. Indeed, technology is the primary driving force behind this rapid rate of transformation. The catch phrase according to Zhang (2004) is “do more with less” has forced University Libraries to place a high priority on the continual growth and development of their staff. Notwithstanding the importance of collections and services, the staff remains the libraries most important and expensive resource. In support of this, Meggison (2001) stated that the success or failure of libraries’ activities depends largely on human resources at its disposal. University libraries have been significantly influenced by these transformations Abifarin (1997) opines that staff training programme is an important factor in motivation. If we are able to engage people through training, its impact on them and the library is immeasurable.

The National Universities Commission NUC (1996) in its draft manual on University Libraries stressed that:

“The Librarian should ensure regular training and development of all his staff, He should encourage illiterate staff, if any, to go

for adult literacy classes to ensure their retention and progress in a 'book' institution such as the university library. The librarian should encourage all staff, when appropriate, to go for higher education. Library Assistant for diploma in library science, Graduates for Master's and doctorate degrees, Short courses for administrative and secretarial staff. Sponsorship for any training should be based on hard work. The librarian should encourage staff to participate in continuing education programmes. The staff should be sponsored to conferences, seminars and workshops; they should be encouraged to participate actively by presenting papers. The library staff seminar papers usually help the staff in these external seminar/workshop and conferences".

The manual also notes that:

"There is so much professional expertise available locally and internationally that the librarian should tap these sources for training his staff. Through staff exchange between his staff and those of other institution, his staff should be able to gain additional experience and knowledge from experienced hands in other library situation."

Whether it is university, public or special library, the need for proper training and development cannot be over-emphasized. There is no doubt that training and development in its entirety is beneficial to both the employee and the organization. The organization can better meet its goals by providing employees with new knowledge necessary for performing the job satisfactorily when an employee also performs poorly, the reason may not be that he or she does not want to do the job well. What he/she needs is training.

Statement of Problem

The importance of staff training and development has since been realized by most Nigerian libraries, particularly, academic libraries. This led to most of the libraries to establish in-house training and development programmes to train and ensure the development of their staff particularly the non-professionals. While the professional and Para-professionals obtain their degrees and diplomas respectively before joining the library and are made to attend seminars, conferences and workshops outside the library as continuing education, the non-professionals are left with no option. Therefore, the in-house training programme is essentially created to

cater for this category of staff According to Reevly (1976), the need for such training is obvious. The professional and paraprofessional staff have little time for training staff in the variety of skills needed in a particular area and is then reluctant to rotate their staff to give them wider experience. This limits the usefulness and the awareness of the non-professional staff. They feel there is no interest in their future so they often move to other jobs.

The only standards available for promotion are formal education and the supervisor's assessment. Studying privately for the General Certificate of Education may just not be possible for some junior staff but an internal training programme gives another means of evaluation for promotion and encourages staff to learn about the total operation of the library. It is also noted that no study has been conducted on assessment of training and development programme in Nigerian university libraries in existing literature on staff training and development.

Research Questions

The research seeks to find answers to the following research questions

1. What types of training programmes are available for non-professional staff in Nigerian university libraries?
2. What are the course contents of the training programmes for non-professional staff in Nigerian university libraries?
3. How relevant are the course contents of the training programmes to nonprofessional staff in Nigerian university libraries?
4. What are the challenges of the training programmes in Nigerian university libraries?

Objective of the study

1. To find out the type of training programme available for the development of non-professional staff in selected university libraries.
2. To examine the course contents of the training programmes in the selected university libraries.
3. To find out the relevance of the course content of the training programmes for non-professional staff in the selected university libraries.
4. To find out the challenges of the training programmes in the University Libraries.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research method. A survey, according to Obioma (1988:51), is “a type of research method involving among others specifying the properties of a given phenomenon including aspects of the problem being investigated in a study through the use of sample. In the same vein, Osuala (1987:180) noted that ‘survey research study both large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence and distribution. The population of this study comprises all the university libraries in Nigeria. According to National University commission (2011) there are 36 Federal, 36 state and 40 private universities in the country, making a total of 112 Universities in Nigeria. Obviously, all of them have libraries. But the population of this study is limited to the university libraries that are conducting staff training and development programme. According to Ajidahun (2007) there are twenty one (21) Nigerian university libraries that are conducting staff training and development programme during the period of this study, out of which fourteen (14) are Federal-owned universities while the remaining seven (7) are State-owned universities . The Non-professional staff members in these university libraries were used as subject to form the target population of the study. At the period of this study, Ajidahun (2007) stated that there are (306) non-professional staff members currently undergoing the training programme and (120) teaching staff in the 21 Nigerian university libraries totaling (426) that formed the population of the study. In this study, the researcher used questionnaire and interview as instruments for data collection. Direct evidence from the literatures reviewed also shows that questionnaire is usually the instrument used for data collection in studies of this nature (Young 1971, Goodson, 1994).

Literature Review

Aina (1992) differentiated between training, education and development. He said that in training, employees must master the special technology used by their organization before they can perform their tasks satisfactorily. This now entails the acquisition of knowledge and skills and this is sometimes needed when the employee is new to the organization. Training therefore is the acquisition of technology which permits employees to perform according to standard and it *is a* discipline or systematic action which causes people to acquire new skills and knowledge and predetermined behavior. He also expressed the view that education is different from *training* in that education deals with human development activities which are designed to improve the overall competence of the employee in a

specified direction and beyond the job currently held. It also *goes* beyond the current job to the next. It entails preparing people for life. Development, according to him, is concerned with preparing the employees so that they can move with the organization as it develops changes and grow. Development programs to him, give participants opportunities to enrol in evening classes that will enable them to acquire new horizons, new technologies and new viewpoints .Thus, he stressed what management will gain in training its employee, of which some of the gains that are tangible and could be measured directly in terms of naira and Kobo while others are intangible. Thus it pays to *train* employees and it costs more not to train. Library conferences, *seminars*, workshops are organized for library staff to enable the staff keep abreast with societal and technological changes.

In the same vein, Zakari and Obi (2005), pointed out multitude of training and programs that are available to all cadres of employee, although other characteristics may be used. These programs are most often distinguished by who participates (for example, managers or non-managers) where the programs are conducted (on-the-job or off-the-job) and what employee's ability is being changed, (technical skills and knowledge, interpersonal skills and attitudes or conceptual skills and knowledge). The abilities gained by the employee in any of these programs can be used to reduce current or future performance deficiencies. Library Assistants constitute the majority of library workers, and play *important supporting* roles to the profession. According to Baker (1987), non-professional grades are often the bridge between management and public; in the eyes of the readership it is the assistant standing behind the counter or sending the standard overdue notice who often *epitomizes* the library, and it *is on his or her* performance, especially in interactive situations, that much of a library's standing may rest. In recent years, much time and effort has, rightly, been expanded on the development of education and training of professional library staff. Training of assistants, however, needs to form an important part of this process; lack of instructions at the support *staff level* will inhibit *the* delegation of *routine tasks* by senior staff for no other reason than that their subordinates are insufficiently well equipped to do the work effectively.

The *term* "non-professional" is derogatory, for while in many ways it sums up the position of library support staff; it also implies a lack of knowledge or expertise. This could not be further from the truth, for library assistants need to become *extremely skilled in*

most of the work they do. Nor is it true to say that "junior" staff are not interested in their work. The desire to find out more about their jobs and "why they do what they do" has often been demonstrated in those libraries which do organize training schemes for their non-professionals. Training can also have a good effect on the morale of support staff. Some regard themselves as "the lowest of the low" without career prospects or even the chance to undertake a variety of routines; instruction and staff development can do much to alleviate this problem, for it will both stimulate interest in their work and show them that they *are* taken seriously enough by the management to warrant such training. According to Oberg (2004) training of support staff is therefore needed by the professional and the non-professional. Similarly, Ampitan (1997) stated that all categories of library personnel ranging from the library attendant, typist to the chief executive of the library need training often for a number of reasons. The daily tasks and major issues that confront individual workers require them to apply their knowledge and skill appropriately to each situation. The standard for personnel performance and institutional accountability are increasingly demanding, and without consistent and deliberate efforts, obsolescence is inevitable. Technological and societal changes are rapid and unavoidable and inevitably affect libraries and their personnel. The above needs, according to Conroy (1978) have prompted increased interest in staff development and training for library personnel to the point where these are now *central*, rather than peripheral concerns.

Considering the fact that at the moment, computerized library have no need of personnel who are not computer literate. It should, however, be stressed that schemes of instructions *cannot in themselves* eradicate the worst of a deficient staff structure- professionals undertaking the work of non-professionals and vice versa though they may create an awareness or the need for change. Similarly, programmes for the instruction and education of library assistants, need to form part of an overall career structure for people under taking non-professional work if such training (at least at the higher levels) is to be taken seriously by both trainer and trainees alike. Training and development of library staff members, as stated by Conroy (1978) is that human resources training affirm the ability of both the individual and the library to grow; it prepares the individual and the library for the future, enabling each to the growth of the other.

The purpose is to assure that library personnel are motivated, productive and skilled in their jobs and that they understand and can implement library

purpose and policies to its parent organization. Rao and Rao (1977) looked at training as learning activities carried on for the primary purpose of helping members of an organization. He indicated that the training objectives in libraries include the following:

- i. To prepare the employee both new and old to meet the present, as well as the changing requirements of the job and the library.
- ii. To prevent obsolescence in Libraries.
- iii. To impart the new entrants the basic knowledge and skill they need for an intelligent performance of definite job in their present positions by exposing them to the latest concepts, information and technique and developing the skill they need in their particular fields.
- iv. To assist employees to function more effectively in their present positions by exposing them to the latest concepts, information and techniques and developing the skill they will need in their particular fields.
- v. To build up a second line of competent officers and prepare them to occupy more responsible positions.
- vi. To broaden their minds of senior managers by providing them with opportunity for an interchange of expediences within and outside with a view to correcting the narrowness of outlook that may arise from over specialization
- vii. To develop the potentialities of people for the next level job.
- viii. To ensure smooth and efficient working of departments.
- ix. To promote individual and collective morale sense of responsibilities.

These developments should include both induction or orientations and education and training on continuous basis. Odoye (1988) argued that "...the general aim of any education and training will be to create conditions in which people are able to learn most effectively and apply their learning in library service". Another purpose of training and development that is especially relevant to organizations that are rapidly in cooperating new technologies is making the current work force flexible and adaptable. If an organization can increase the adaptability, training and development can also increase the lead commitment to employees in the organization and increase their perceptions that the organization's good place at turnover and absenteeism thus increasing an organization's productivity, increasing recognition that training and development can benefit society by enabling individuals to be productive and contributing members of organizations. Zakari (2003) identifies

that internet has been discovered to have great potentials for facilitating the administration of information based outfits and that this could be done through training of the available human resources. Jucius (1983) argues that the development of employees through training and organizing management development programs is for the best interest of the organization. Failure by the organization to engage informal training and development programs will make it bear some cost arising from the fact that all employees that are hinder to not possess the skills, abilities and aptitudes equal to jobs to be done. He further highlighted the benefits of training. Akpan (1979) emphasized the importance of training as follows "an untrained man in the modern world may...be a menace to the society. He is a quack; he knows only the "how". Hence if there is any trouble anywhere, breakdown in machine or mistake in a ledger, all he can do is to fumble and patch up the trouble any-how, leading to more serious breakdown or a greater confusion. Really, there is no place for the untrained worker or even the intelligent amateur".

There is no doubt that training and development is entirely beneficial to both the employee and the organization. The organization can better meet its goals by providing employees with new knowledge and skills or else, the employee may be lacking skills and knowledge necessary for performing the job satisfactorily. When an employee also performs poorly, the reason may not be that he or she does not want to do the job well. What the employee then needs is some types of training. That is why Tijani and Obi (2001) stated that the fundamental purpose of training is to provide for the organization's manpower needs. In a nutshell, training is the bedrock of any meaningful development and

university libraries need to equip themselves with relevant programmes to meet the challenges of having quantitative nonprofessional staff members. By so doing, it must increase or facilitate the development of their nonprofessional staff members. Its aim is to help avoid persistent and economically damaging shortages of skills, which could inhibit development. It is significant to state that training is aimed at task or job improvement.

Findings and Discussion

Types of Training Programmes Available for Development of Non-professional Staff in Selected University Libraries

Most of the Nigerian University Libraries studied have one reason or the other for staff training programmes. An attempt was made to find out the type of training programmes available in the university libraries. Table 1 below shows the types of training programme conducted in Nigerian university libraries. Types of training programmes available for Non-Professional staff in Nigerian University Libraries.

Table 1 above, revealed that (Ahmadu Bello University 50(23.6 %,) shows how popular the staff training is while University of Ilorin had 14(6.3%) on Job routine/ orientation shows that each university had different priority in training their staff on different aspects. These agree with Creth (1989) that states that a successful programme is an integral part of the library's operations

Course Contents for Non-professional Staff in Nigerian University Libraries.

The usefulness of the course content as it affects their job in various university libraries were discuss in table 2 below.

Table 1: Training programme available in University Libraries in Nigeria.

Type of Staff development	Study Areas											
	ABU.,Zaria		UniMaid		UniLorin		UI		UNN		UniBen	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
On-the-job Training	40	23.6	25	13.7	8	3.6	7	3.29	9	3.6	5	2.5
In-Service Training	50	29.5	18	9.9	9	3.6	10	4.7	9	3.6	5	2.5
Workshop/Seminar/conference	32	18.8	21	11.55	10	4.5	11	5.5	9	3.6	5	2.5
Job Routine/Orientation	40	23.6	25	13.75	14	6.3	9	3.6	9	3.6	5	2.5
In-house Routine/Orientation	12	7.08	28	15.4	6	2.7	10	4.5	8	3.2	5	2.5
Personalized Training	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.94	1	0.4	-	-
Job Rotation	48	29.32	40	23.6	14	6.3	12	7.08	9	3.6	5	2.5
Continuing Education	34	20.06	13	7.15	9	3.6	14	6.3	9	3.6	4	2
Refresher Course	18	10.62	18	10.62	8	3.6	6	2.82	9	3.6	5	2.5
Vestibule Training	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.94	1	0.4	-	-
Apprenticeship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.4	-	-

Table 2 Course Contents and their Adjudged Usefulness in University, Libraries in Nigeria.

Course Content	Very useful		Partially useful;		Useful		Not useful		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Library Organization	32	54.40	-	-	14	23.80	-	-	9	15.30
Reference Services	37	62.90	8	13.60	10	17.00	-	-	-	-
Circulation Procedure	35	59.50	6	10.20	12	20.40	6	10.20	-	-
Human Relations	40	28.00	-	-	19	32.30	-	-	-	-
English Language	45	76.50	1	1.70	8	13.60	-	-	-	-
Typewriting/Computer	22	37.40	9	15.30	20	34.00	-	-	8	13.60
Operating System	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communication Skills	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Time Management	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Relevance of the course content of Training Programmes for Nonprofessional Staff in University libraries in Nigeria.

Table 3 :Relevance of the Course Contents of the Training Programme:

Course Content	Very Relevant		Relevant		Not Relevant		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Library Organization	36	61.20	10	17.00	-	-	15	25.50
Reference Services	41	69.70	14	23.80	-	-	-	-
Circulation Procedure	28	47.60	17	28.90	-	-	7	11.90
Human Relations	34	57.80	10	17.00	6	10.20	-	-
English Language	37	62.90	18	30.60	-	-	-	-
Typewriting/Computer	27	45.90	16	27.20	2	3.40	-	-
Operating System	6	10.20	15	25.50	23	39.10	-	-
Communication Skills	36	61.20	11	18.70	-	-	-	-

Table 2 above, shows that English Language was rated highest among the course content with 45 (76.50%). Followed by Human Relations with 40(28.00%) as very useful course for the non-professional staff members. This goes to show that the importance of these courses for these categories of staff. This is particularly needed as Creth &Duda (1989) put it that duties once considered to be professional in nature are now being assigned to support staff. As such, they need good communication and Human Relations skills to carry out these duties.

In the above table, Reference Services with 41(69.70%) was rated as the most relevant of the training. Reason is that here is when the staff interact

with readers. While library organizations and English Language had 36 (61.20%) and 37(62.90%) respectively. This goes to show the emphases placed on this particular subjects. They need good expression for themselves in communication and library organization is the backbone of library profession. This confirmed most of the Braden, Hall, and Britton(1980) results that the trends toward more involvement of support staff in higher levels of cataloguing and more involvement of support staff in original cataloging were noted by Eskor in comparing survey results with those of Braden et al (1980 pp.388-390).

Challenges of the training programme in University libraries in Nigeria.

Table 4 **Barriers Impeding Non-Professional Staff Benefiting from Library Training Scheme in University Libraries in Nigeria.**

Challenges	Strongly agreed		Agreed		Strongly disagreed		Disagreed		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Lack of time	18	30.60	7	11.90	13	22.10	15	25.50	2	3.40
Cost of training	6	10.20	19	32.30	13	22.10	2	3.40	1	1.70
Location/distance not convenient	8	13.60	7	11.90	24	40.8	1	1.70	2	3.40
Lack of interest in some topics	9	15.30	7	11.90	20	34.00	13	22.10	-	-
Training will not result in promotion or upgrading	7	11.90	7	11.90	36	61.20	3		-	-
Lateness on the part of lecturers	7	11.90	4	6.80	16	24.00	5	8.50	-	-
Inadequate funding	8	13.60	26	44.20	5	8.50	1	1.70	1	1.70
Lack of entry qualification	24	40.80	6	10.20	4	6.80	6	10.20	2	3.40
Lack of written training policy	12	20.40	16	27.20	4	6.80			2	3.40
The time between one course and another is too far	10	17.00	24	40.80	3	5.10	4	6.80	3	5.10
Lateness in the release of examination results	8	13.60	7	11.90	5	8.50	15	-	-	-
The course contents are too advanced?	20	34.00	8	-	3	-	1	-	12	-
The Entry requirement too high?	5	8.50	18	-	26	-	2	-	1	-

Table 4 above revealed that lack of entry qualification is rated highest with 24(40.50%), strongly agreed. This is true because most of them cannot read for GCE once they get job, and lack of time with 18 (30.60%) shows that most of them are engaged in many things that prevent them from creating time for study. The course content with 20(34.00%) is considered to be too high for their level because some are dropout of secondary schools

while some are primary 6 certificate holders. The entry requirements scored 5(8.50%) This agrees with Creth (1989) that recruitment process in library is often part of a larger personnel system with specific hiring rules and procedures. Legal guidelines for equal employment, affirmative action, union contracts, and so on also define the process

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that the Non-professional staff training should be given more emphasis and priority since they are the majority in the library and they have no background in carrying out their work successfully, they therefore need training. In the programme, more emphasis should be given to courses like human relations, English Language and Information and communication technology (ICT) because the trends in libraries are on ICT. If not they will be irrelevant to the system. The entry qualification should be relaxed in such a way that more staff can be trained according to their job specifications. The Nigerian University Libraries should put in place a consistent and well-articulated sufficient funds by the university authority for the training of library staff.

Staff on their own should create avenues for training themselves especially on computer appreciation. More courses should be included in the training programme. Courses like Audio Visual, History of Library, and Computer Appreciation. The classrooms and materials for the training programme should be improved upon.

Chalk board should be replaced with marker board. The teaching staff involved in the training programme should be well remunerated and be paid promptly. There should not be delay in releasing the results to students after completion of the course.

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