

**Effective Training in Human Resource Management Among Academic Librarians in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*The library is a repository of knowledge with diverse information resources to meet the information needs of clientele. In order to effectively deliver quality service, librarians in academic libraries need to be well trained to acquire necessary skills to meet the challenges of the twenty first century libraries. It is in this light that the paper reviews literature on the role of effective training in human resource management among academic librarians in Nigerian. The paper discusses the concept of trainings and developmental practices, recent trends in librarianship and Maslow's theory (hierarchy of needs) as a theoretical lens for the study. It recognizes the importance of training for academic librarians, the skills, competencies, and training expected of the library personnel were emphasized. Lack of training policy, insufficient funds for sponsoring training programs, staff issues, excessive workload by librarians and insufficient instructors for emerging trends were some challenges hindering academic librarians from obtaining effective training. The paper concluded by putting forward strategies to adopt in training and development of library professionals for global best practice. Evaluation and needs assessment of training needs of academic librarians, the development of training policy and manuals, budgetary allocation for training are recommendation for the implementation of effective Library Services delivery.*

*Keywords: Academic Library, Academic Librarian, Library services, Librarianship, human resource management, training and development, Nigeria*

**Introduction**

The primary responsibility of an academic library is to provide adequate information resources to meet the information needs of clientele which includes students and faculty Staff in the higher institution of learning like the Universities, Polytechnics and College of education. Every tertiary institution needs a functional academic library to provide up to date information resources for research and developmental purposes (Awodoyin, Osisanwo, Adetoro & Adeyemo, 2015). The academic Librarian provides various services ranging from indexing services, cataloguing and classification, customer services, compilation of bibliographies, automation services and the provision of electronic databases to users. Librarians are required to have the requisite skills and training for effective service delivery, thus the adage “library buildings are glorified warehouses without the services of skilled professionals” (Adeniji, Babalola, & Adeniji, 2012).

Training and development constitute an aspect of the human resource management processes in any organization. It is viewed as the most important functions of effective resource management and service delivery in organization (Abban, 2018).

Due to the dynamics of the work environment of the twenty-first century, and the revolution brought about by information technology to increase job performance, new skills are required by librarians to function effectively, hence the need for continuous training and development among library personnel. However, in a study as suggested by Abban, (2018) librarians do not go for training due to inconsistency in sponsorship by their institution, excessive workload, high cost of training and inadequate information on available training. It is perceived that inadequate training can make librarians to be unproductive and unable to provide quality service to their users (Paul Mupa, Tendeukai, Isaac & Chinooneka, 2015).

### **Objectives**

The main objective of the study is to establish the importance of effective training in human resource management among academic librarians in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. review; training and developmental practice for librarians in Nigeria;
2. establish the concept of training and development;
3. identify recent trends in librarianship;
4. ascertain the challenges faced in training and development of librarians in Nigeria; and
5. proposed solutions in humanising the plight of academic librarians within the context of Maslow's theory (hierarchy of needs).

### **Literature Review**

#### **Training and Development Practice for Librarians in Nigeria**

Librarians are the frontliners in service delivery in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The academic librarians are the administrators in the library trained with postgraduate degree in library and information studies with minimum of first degree in related discipline. They teach the use of library and information science as general studies in the university. The academic librarians are heads of libraries, they manage and oversee several divisions or units in the library while other librarians perform technical routines in various departments of the library. The librarian is accountable for the general supervision of library routine and are charged with the responsibility of organizing facilities and tools as well as supervising the staff for optimum performance. They are required to search for relevant staff training and development opportunity for library staff, provide sponsorship and motivate subordinate to enrol for higher degrees. Recently, the advent of covid 19, had also created opportunities for webinars and online training for the acquisition of digital skills. Varlejs (2016) argued that the value and usefulness of library and information services rest on knowledgeable staff. Only staff with the right skill and knowledge of a particular task can do it effectively and efficiently. The continuous change in technologies and growth in professional knowledge requires librarians to increase their awareness and update their skills frequently.

Increasingly, patrons are requesting for efficient services from librarians. In order to meet such information need, there is need for in-house training programs to cope with the expanding information needs of their users. Abban (2018) posits that the ability to keep pace with today's changing environment brought about the advancement in information technology and innovative services, Information professionals should be trained to meet up with their counterpart in developing countries. The continuous training and development of Librarians should be made an integral part of the library management's plans. This would avail librarians the skills to intelligently discharge their duties, which will also improve the institution's

reputation. The proper management of individuals at work in human resource management, has developed to be the main activity in many organizations and it is the concentration for a wide-range activities among this is the management of human resource.

Enga (2017) affirmed that for any company to function effectively, it must have materials, money, supplies, equipment, ideas regarding the good or services to offer the individuals who may utilize it outputs. Human resources are responsible for harnessing other resources for achieving organizational goal. In other to achieve these goals, they need to be trained. Training empowers the recipient with prerequisite knowledge and skills for competence. Posigha & Seimode (2015) submits that professional training and development activities in the library are actions considered for personal and professional growth of librarians. These activities are usually formal or informal. (Ochogwu, 2016) opines that training is more of an informal approach attained by attending conferences, seminars, workshops, short courses, and on-the-job training to renew one's knowledge in his or her area of professional practice. According to Landale (1999), staff training and development constitute integral part of any organization's human resource management processes. It is the most powerful tool of any organization's accomplishment.

Employee training is important to the success and well-being of every organization. Abban (2018) affirms that training and development in management allow the organisational activity to aim directly at individuals, groups, and the organizational performance. With business becoming more competitive, management of organization needs to be proactive in ensuring that staffs are given the right kind of motivation through training and retraining and attract patronage by clientele. A trained staff would perform excellence work at their duty post. Employee training also helps staff to have positive attitudes towards their job. However, Appleton (2018) notes that for an organization to be effective and able to deliver its intended outcomes, its workforce needs to be skilled, competent, and confident. In addition, the nature of libraries, across all sectors, means that they are subject to continual change, especially in today's digital information environment. Similarly, the political and economic environments in which libraries operate mean that they need to be flexible, agile, and continually evolving. For a library to embrace change, its workforce must continually develop its professional and technical skills.

Adekanye (2016) asserts that organizations are responsible for facilitating employee skills acquisition through organizing in-house training or sponsoring staff for external training to improve job performance. This contributes to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Employee training is significant to the success and well-being of every organization. As more information centres compete with others in providing quality service, employee training would play a significant role in equipping employees with vast knowledge to fit to various business environments. In addition, employee training does develop employees' positive attitude to work. According to

Khan & Rafiq (2013) adequate training is becoming part and parcel of every successful organization's policy because training of workforce has now been a basis of getting advantages in the business world. Training, however, either in classroom or from experience helps organization improve the skills of its employee.

### **The Concept of Training and Development**

The concept of training involves the act of imparting skills to the workforce of an organization. It conveys new knowledge and skills to employees to achieve organizational goals and objectives more professionally. The library is a service delivery organization responsible for acquiring, processing, preserving, and making information resources accessible to users. Quality information service delivery requires competent staffing for information processing. Only skilled staff can perform assigned tasks efficiently and effectively within a limited time frame, translating to job productivity; hence there is the need to train staff with the requisite skill for assigned responsibility. Training is a deliberate process undertaken by management to plan programme, improve librarians' performance on the job, aside from the skills learned in library schools. Studies have shown that librarians acquire training on the job by self-development through attendance at seminars and workshops. However, this method of being trained was critiqued by (Grigas 2014), stating that organizations are expected to design and plan in-house training programme for their staff needs tailored to fit the goals and objectives of libraries to enhance job performance. The In-house training programs aim to integrate new employees to work environment while regular staff are opportune to update new skills for improved service delivery. Ubogu (2015) posits mentoring as a type of training and development programme. More experienced colleagues can mentor recruits to acquire skills from their wealth of experience.

Training in an organization aims to keep the staff motivated, boost their morale, and encourage problem-solving among teams that improved job performance. Scholars have posited that routine work is done faster and better by trained staff, leading to productivity and higher turnover. Reynolds et al. (2004) define training "as a set of activities to meet present needs and contrast it, with learning as a course that emphasizes on developing individual and organization. Thus, training is a management tool derived from fostering, developing, and increasing employees' and employers' skills and knowledge base to increase ultimately. Condon (2019) emphasized that development is vested and concentrates on the employee. Training is a short-term reactive process for operational staff, they are impacted with additional skills to perform assign task, while development is designed as a continuous pro-active approach for executives. MBA Skool (2020) argues that training and development is a subsystem of an organization that emphasizes improving the performance of individuals and groups. Training is an educational process that involves the sharpening of skills, concepts, changing attitudes, and gaining more knowledge to enhance the performance of the employees. Excellent and effective training of employees helps in their skills & knowledge development, which eventually helps company progress.

Basumallick (2020) opines that the terms' training' and 'development' are sometimes used interchangeably. He further stated that these terms have different meanings and scope. The term training is used to indicate how employees display their respective attitudes, skills, and abilities in performing specific job. Development, on the other hand, means the growth of the individual in all respects. The term development is associated with managerial personnel, whereas training, is used for operational employees. Training is a short-term guiding process using a systematic and organized procedure by which non-managerial personnel learns technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose. On the other hand, development is a long-term educational process utilizing a systematic and organized procedure by which

managerial personnel learns conceptual and theoretical knowledge for general purposes.

### **Recent Trends in Librarianship**

The introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries, the dynamic nature of the library user, the vast increase of knowledge, and the era of information overload were identified as factors requiring staff training and development (Abban, 2018). In order for librarians to be competent in the use of information technology, training programs should be made a priority by management for librarians to keep abreast with trends in the profession. Furthermore, to achieve efficient service delivery among academic librarians, (Cobbah, 2016; Abban, 2018) suggested attendance at workshops, seminars, on-the-job instructions, formal education, online conferences, in-house retreat for skills acquisition. While the development of self-instruction manuals and participation at professional associations meetings avails librarians the opportunity for networking.

Automation of library services has enabled staff with the requisite skill to provide efficient services to users, while others with limited skills are lagging behind. Isaac-Menard, (2017) posits that insufficient knowledge taught in library schools in the use of ICT can be updated. Training imparts new skills and improves performance, leading to increased profitability due to better utilization of resources. In addition, introducing employees to new skills increases their morale in handling complex tasks such as new technologies. The library has experienced a surge of emergent technologies with the information age; with more services being automated and reliance on on-line services, traditional library skills are being replaced with digital skills. This has led to the need for trained staff to assume new job roles. Isaac-Menard (2017) posits that more graduates librarians are not unemployable because of lack of experience, thus increasing employers' costs to train new employees.

### **Challenges Faced in training and Development of Librarians in Nigeria.**

Training and development programmes for academic librarians is crucial to the development and acquisition of skills set. It expands their knowledge through interactions and exchanging ideas with librarians from other institutions (Abban, 2018). The training sessions enable librarians to learn, unlearn and relearn. However, research has identified that some libraries have challenges with the training and development of academic librarians (Awodoyin et al, 2016; Cobbah, 2016; Abban, 2018; Alemna, 2015). These challenges include inadequate funding for training programs, lack of ICT infrastructure, irregularity in sponsorship of staff, excessive workload, staffing issues, and lack of comprehensive training needs analysis. Other challenges are management style, absence of staff training and development policies, the lack of interest by library personnel and long distance to training program.

The inefficiency of service delivery, poor quality jobs, and lack of motivated library staff have been associated with ineffective training programs in different types of libraries in Nigeria. Some of the challenges identified as factors hindering the training of librarians are discussed extensively in literature. They are absence of policy training document, planned scheduled of training programs, lack of skilled and experienced facilitators, the complacent attitude of library staff and financial constraints in Nigeria. According to (Maiwada & Obaseki 2018, Boro, Obaro, Adina, 2019, Echedom & Ezeogu, 2020). The above factors have hindered the achievement of desired purpose of training staff to improve service delivery, high turnover of quality jobs, and motivated team.

requires a planned program articulated in a policy guide, structured for the needs of each library service. However, this is not obtainable as literature has reported a lack of purposeful design training manuals and policy guides to affect the desired goals and objectives training in libraries. According to Maiwada & Obaseki, (2018), the training of librarians is done indiscriminately, without structured guides and document to cover all aspect of librarian's training needs. This is responsible for low quality and inefficient trainings. The complacent attitude of library staff towards the training program is also a problem identified as a challenge for effective training of library staff. Poorly organized training programs in the past had made library staff contented and not motivated to acquire new skills; hence 'when intuitions organize such programs, they are not beneficial to the targeted staff as cited by (Echedom and Ezeogu (2020). Other scholars also reiterate that the pessimistic attitude of library staff had also slowed down the effectiveness of training programs. According to Maiwada & Obaseki (2018), Library staff attitude to work and training programs is a major drawback to achieving successful developmental programs. Staff in the past have exhibited a lack of interest in knowledge seeking that hindered the desired behavioural change expected of staff training and development programs. It is also observed that unlike professional staff in other professions who are expected to comply with work ethics, some library staff are indolent, use office productive time to discuss with colleagues, some exhibit absenteeism to work and training programs.

Another challenge experienced in the training of librarians by (Boro, Obaro & Adina 2019) is the lack of facilitators for digital skill training. The study revealed that University Librarians in Africa have moderate digital skill staff, which is a challenge to the training and development of staff. In addition, there are few competent and experienced facilitators in evolving library services hence the need for more knowledgeable librarians with a blended training approach in information technology and library skills. The lacked experienced trainer in libraries is a significant problem in human resource training and development. They are expected to have the expertise, skills, and knowledge to equip the early career librarians with digital skills (Abdullah 2009). Also, the lack of purpose-built library buildings in accommodating information communication gadgets is another challenge hindering the accomplishment of training objectives hence the need for renovation of existing library buildings to accommodate ICT gadget and services (Baro et al, 2013). Financial resources are therefore needed for the procurement ICT facilities use during in-house training. This facility enables web-sharing of resources and knowledge during webinars and other on-line training programs.

The lack of funds, non-existence of management policy to guide training and development of librarians, poor staff relationship with management was identified as factors hindering staff training. Funding plays a crucial role in enabling staff to attend both national and international trainings for capacity building. Staff are resistance to change, and the poor responsive management attitude tends to delay realization of training goals (Iwuchukwu & Echedom 2020). It is expedient for management staff to devise strategy of correcting staff attitudinal problem. Insufficient staff strength in university library should also be fixed. Alemna and Asante (2015) noticed that some academic library operates on minimum staffing, this is also a challenge hindering professional staff to attend training and developmental programs because some cannot be spared from their duty post to attend a course, a seminar, or a workshop. So staffing is another major challenge.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Figure 1: The Hierarchy of Human Needs

The theory adopted for this research work is the Maslow theory of needs

Theory tenets are as follows:

Physiological needs,

Safety needs,

Love needs, Esteem needs are the needs required in this research as it can motivate staff to achieve organizational goals.

Self-Actualization needs. Also required in this study as it is needed that inspire librarians or any individual in an organization to be innovative enough to achieve organizational goals.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five levels model of human physiological needs, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization, often represented as hierarchical levels in a pyramid form.

### **Conclusion**

For effective training and development of academic librarians in Nigeria, management should reduce workload, create time for training and development of staff, provide information on training programmes, encourage staff to develop interest in using information communicating tools. There should also be an increase in demand for funding to support the training and development of librarians in academic institutions. Management is expected to carry out primary evaluation and needs assessment, then developed training policy and manuals that are done systematically over a period of time to get the desired impact. Effective training requires a planned program articulated in policy guide structured to fit the needs of each library services; however, this is not obtainable as literature has reported a lack of purposeful design training manuals and policy guides to affect the desired goals and objectives training in libraries. without structured guides and document to cover all aspect of librarian's training needs. This is responsible for low quality and inefficient trainings.

**Recommendations**

1. The study recommends the following as a solution to the challenges faced by Nigerian academic librarians in accessing training and development opportunities by library management.
2. Policy document should be developed for the training of different categories of staff such as newly recruited staff, library support staff and academic librarians. A library committee should be set up to perform needs assessment of staff training needs based on job description. This is achievable through hiring a research consultant to identify and make recommendations to library management, for onward implementation by university librarians to include all heads of department in drafting the policy document.
3. Budget for training needs of staff should be developed yearly by library management for onward approval by university management. The University librarian should make conscientious lobbying effort to get management awareness of librarians' training needs and disbursement of funds towards achieving the goal.
4. Renovation of library building to accommodate information technology gadget that would facilitate staff training. Architects, building engineers in collaboration with ICT expert should be contacted to renovate building that meets these needs implemented by university library management.
5. University management should employ librarians' effort in making a case for employment needs of new staff.
6. More librarians in university library to reduce their workloads thus allowing librarians time to engage in training programmes that would improve service delivery. This is achievable through university.

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