

Staff development and library services in academic libraries in Bayelsa and Delta States

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Abstract

The study examined staff development and library services in academic libraries in Bayelsa and Delta States. Descriptive survey research design was used for this study, data was collected by means of a questionnaire form one hundred and seventy-one (171) librarians of fifteen (15) academic libraries in Bayelsa and Delta states. The findings arising from the study are: various factors such competition among staff, job challenges, higher qualifications requirements, financial assistance from employers, self-interest, contribute to staff development in the libraries, most of the library staff received training and development through seminars and workshops, orientation courses, in-service and induction courses and regular programmes. The result shows that training and development brings about job efficiency, motivation and satisfaction. The study concludes that training and development have positive influence on library services and as such, should be given priority. It was recommended that there should be a staff development committee for academic libraries, whose responsibility will be to cater for the development of staff in all ramifications.

Keywords: Academic libraries, staff training, motivation, library services, staff development.

Introduction

The success of library operations depends largely on librarians in the library.

Whatever maybe the library goals and objectives, without librarians such goals and objectives cannot be achieved. With the relevant skills and knowledge, arising from staff development, librarians can

perform their various jobs and roles, more effectively and at a higher level. Holley (2013) refers to staff development as programmes of improving staff knowledge, qualification and efficiency with a view to making one more proficient in job performance. Staff training and development are reoccurring

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processes either in the library or in any establishment. In developing countries like Nigeria, staff training and development should be taken seriously, without which knowledge will not expand. Moreover, staff development helps not only the younger libraries, but also the older ones. In the view of Hulton (2010), when gaps exist between the job requirement, job productivity suffers. Thus, it means that once the requirements for each job are understood and staff training and development are geared towards this, productivity will be enhanced by the performance of workers. In essence, staff development occupies an essential place in libraries, which no doubt made Wilson (2008) to conclude that when staff are recruited, the task is not yet over, because such staff must be given adequate training in order to make the library achieve its goals. Library leaders have a critical role to play in

putting teams through training and creating conditions that enable open communication and dialogue. Gates (2010) argued that managing for performance is a key to strategic change that requires attention on how the roles of librarians are defined. This then becomes the basis for development of leadership, teamwork and individual performance with the focus of control resting on the librarians rather than the library managers. A culture of group and individual learning is created through the use of critique, feedback and teaching at all levels of the training and development. Training programmes are tools naturally reach for when seeking to improve individual performance (Ziche, 2014). It can take many forms; the most common is a formal training course, where an individual attempts to add new or to improve existing knowledge and skills. Formal training course includes:

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seminars, workshops and conferences (Straw, 2009) they also encompass formal on-the-job training, where an individual follows a prescribed course of instruction. Professional training also falls into this category. It may consist of a structured programme of education together with in-the-job experience and projects.

In today's library, development has become easier to implement than was previously possible. The more flexible scope of today's job makes this possible. This job role flexibility provides new opportunities in the way staff can be engaged for their own benefit and for the benefit of the library.

Objectives of the study

The study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To identify the factors that contributes to effective staff

development in academic libraries in Bayelsa and Delta states.

- To examine the methods used for staff development in the academic libraries.
- To determine the influence of staff development on library services.

It is hoped that the findings of this work will assist librarians, library managers to have insight into the influence of staff development on academic library services with a view to assisting relevant authorities to plan and develop effective development programmes in Nigerian academic libraries.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of this study is made up of (171) librarians of fifteen academic libraries in Bayelsa and Delta State - six academic libraries in Bayelsa States and nine academic

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libraries in Delta State (See table 1). The entire population of 171 was used as the sample for this study. The research instrument that was used for the study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to librarians in the fifteen academic libraries in Bayelsa and Delta States. The questionnaire sought to obtain data on training and development in the libraries. A total of 171 copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the researcher, a total of 155 completed

copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and found useable. Sample descriptive statistics using percentages and frequency count was used in analyzing the 155 copies of the questionnaire returned.

Findings and discussion:

Out of the 171 copies of questionnaire administered only 155 were found useable for data analysis. The questionnaires found useable are as follows:

Table 1: Percentage of returned questionnaire

S/n	Institutions	No. of Questionnaire administered	No. of Questionnaire retrieved	Percentage %
1	College of Education Library, Sagbama	10	8	80
2	Niger Delta University Library Amasoma	22	20	96
3	Bayelsa State School of Health Technology Library, Ogbia.	7	7	100
4	Federal University Library, Otuoke	10	10	100
5	Federal Polytechnic Library, Ekowe	9	6	68
6	Bayelsa State school of Art and Science Library, Ogbia	9	9	100
7	Delta State University Library, Abraka	55	52	95
8	Delta State Polytechnic Library, Ozoro.	6	5	99
9	Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi uku	7	6	99

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10	Delta State Polytechnic Library, Otefe Oghara	6	5	99
11	College of Education Library, Agbor	5	5	100
12	College of Education Library, Warri	6	6	100
13	College of Physical Education Library, Mosogar.	7	6	99
14	School of Health Technology Library, Ofuoma.	3	3	100
15	Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library, Effurun	9	7	98
	Total	171	155	100

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Response	Percentage %
Male	70	45.2
Female	85	54.8
Total	155	100

From table 2, it is seen that a total of 155 librarians responded to the distributed questionnaire. Of this number 70 (45.2) are male and 85 (54.8%) of them are female.

Table 3: Factors that contribute to staff development

Factors that contribute to staff development	Responses			
	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
Self interest	135	87.1	20	12.9
Good equipment for training	125	80.7	30	19.4
Financial assistance by employer	145	93.6	10	6.5
Technological changes	117	75.5	38	24.5
Short distance between training ground and place of work	95	61.3	60	38.7
Competition among staff	150	96.8	5	3.2
Favorable government [policy	105	67.8	50	32.3
Job challenges	115	74.2	40	25.8

Table 3: shows that 150 (96.8%) respondents agree that competition amongst staff is a factor that contributes to effective staff development, while 5 (3.2%) respondents disagree, 145 (93.6%) agree that financial assistance by employers is a factor that contributes to effective staff development, while 10 (6.4%) respondents disagree.

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(6.5%) disagree and 135(87.1%) agree that self interest is a factor that contributes positively to staff development, while 20 (12.9%) disagree. The result of the study, as shown in table 3, reveals the various factors such as, self interest, competition amongst staff, financial assistance by employers etc contribute to effective staff development in the libraries. These findings concur with Thirlwail (2009) , who identifies encouragement by immediate boss, self interest and financial assistance by employers as factors that contribute to effective staff development.

Table 4: Methods of staff development in academic libraries

Methods of staff development	Responses			
	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
Seminars/workshops	143	92.3	12	7.8
Orientation courses	130	83.9	25	16.1
In-service/induction courses	120	77.4	30	19.4
Part-time courses	145	93.6	10	6.5
Regular programmes	115	74.2	40	25.8
Team work	110	71	45	29

As indicated in table 4, 145 (93.6%) respondents agree that part-time courses are methods of staff development in their libraries, 10 (6.5%) disagree. On the part of seminars / workshops, 143 (92.3%) agreed, while 12 (7.8%) disagreed.

The study shows that part-time courses, seminars/ workshops, orientation courses are methods of staff development in the

libraries. This is in line with Aina (2007) who reported that orientation courses, part-time courses and seminars/ workshops are methods of staff development common in libraries.

Table 5: Influence of staff development on library services.

Influence of staff development on library seminars	Responses			
	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
Enable staff to function efficiently	125	80.7	30	19.4
Increase job motivation and satisfaction	132	85.2	23	14.8
Keep librarians abreast with technical changeses in the library	140	90.3	15	9.7
It makes librarians to be prompt in rendering library services	135	87.1	20	12.9
Enhances services rendered and increase librarians moral	105	67.8	50	32.3
Exposes librarians to the working conditions and environment	118	76.1	37	23.9
It enable librarians take responsibility without fear	145	93.6	10	6.5

As indicated in table 5, 140 (90.3%) respondents agreed that training keep them abreast with technical changes in the library, while 15 (9.7%) disagreed with respect to taking responsibilities with out fear 145(93.6%) agreed and 10(6.5%) disagreed.

It is discovered from the study from the study that training enables library staff to function efficiently, brings about job motivation and satisfaction, keep them abreast with technical changes, makes them prompt in rendering library services, exposes them to working

conditions and environments and enables them take responsibilities without fear.

Conclusion and recommendations

The influence of staff development on library services is clearly defined in this study. This study has shown that staff development has positive influence on library services.

Bearing in mind the fact that the library is the live wire of an academic environment, manpower development becomes an important discourse. The process of bringing traditional societies into the world of contemporary technology is

known as modernization and it has direct link with manpower development. Basic to all modernization is education, but the problem has been to maintain a balance between economic growth and educational advancement. One therefore expects governments development agencies and institutions in Nigeria to do more in developing information infrastructure that can bring effective manpower development that will in turn result in effective services, specifically in libraries.

Based on the finding and conclusion reached, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- The management of academic institutions should grant librarians the opportunities to attend seminars, workshops and conferences.

- In – house training should be encouraged in academic libraries from time to time to update the knowledge of library staff.
- There should be a staff development committee for each academic library, whose responsibility will be to check the effect of training / development on library services.
- Academic libraries should be adequately staffed with qualified personnel as their shortage will have adverse effect on library operations and services.

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