



IJMRD 2015; 2(2): 553-557
www.allsubjectjournal.com
Impact factor: 3.672
Received: 04-02-2015
Accepted: 22-02-2015
E-ISSN: 2349-4182
P-ISSN: 2349-5979

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Staff training and development programmes in Nigerian university libraries: The case of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

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Abstract

This study examined the staff training and development programmes in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike library. It sought to find out the staff training and development programmes obtainable in the library, attitude of the staff towards staff training and development programmes, factors that influence staff selection for the training and development programmes, potentials of staff training and development programmes in the library and factors affecting the staff training and development programmes. A descriptive survey design was used for the study with a population of 59 library staff which was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires. Percentages, mean scores and frequency tables were used in analyzing the data. The findings revealed that the staff training and development programmes obtainable in the library includes; conferences, workshops, seminar, on the job training, job rotation, visit to other libraries, study leave, etc. with regards to attitude of the staff towards staff training and development programmes, the study showed that the staff are motivated by the absence of discrimination during selection process, when new skills are to be acquired from the training, when they are being sponsored by their organization and when there is adequate facilities for the training programmes. It was also envisaged from the finding that majority of the respondents rejected the view that their selection for participation in staff training and development programmes are done through favouritism, length of service, qualifications obtained, number of publications and through gender but accepted that their selection process is through the programmes's relevance to their job description. Sense of belonging in the running of the library, improved efficiency, recognition from other organizations, skilled workforce, confidence in staff, opportunity for growth and collaboration with colleagues among others are some of the potentials of staff training and development programmes in the university library. It was also discovered that the factors that affect staff training and development programmes includes lack of fund, personal financial constraints, lack of time, lack of sponsored programmes, lack of training facilities, and absence of promotion after participation. The study concluded by recommending that library administration has a lot of task to perform in ameliorating these challenges in order to ensure adequate participation of staff in staff training and development programmes.

Keywords: Staff Training, Development Programme, Library Staff, Libraries

Introduction

The university library plays a central role in the university education system through the services they render to their host community one of which is the provision of essential information resources for learning, teaching and research. The extent to which the university carries out its basic objectives depends largely on how effectively the library and the library staff support them through their services. The necessity of highly competent library staff that will effectively satisfy their information needs especially in this digital era where information provision has taken a new dimension can never be overemphasized. This invariably calls for constant staff training and development which prepares them to carry out their job satisfactorily and prepare them also for greater responsibilities (Bratton and Gold, 1999) [1]. Staff training and development is one of the major human resource activities known generally to improve human attitude towards better performance on the job and also for preparing for advancement and higher responsibilities. The administration of academic library can never be complete if the process of creating, training and development programmes are not in existence in the structure of the library. These processes are to ensure proper and adequate services to the library. It is also necessary to formulate a definite personnel policy on how training of staff in the library should be done. It is very important to note that training and development are things of progress for the advancement of the

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academic life of institution considering the role of the library in an academic institution Nwachukwu (1998) [12] indicated that employees in any organization require training and development when there are indications of the following factors: new development in the field, low productivity, lack of interest, negative attitude to work, new employees, new positions, high rejects or low quality of output and high incident of accidents. He maintained that whenever these conditions are experienced among staff, that the organization should consider organizing staff training. Laurie (1999) [8] also state that career development is no longer just a haphazard system of promotions, moves and occasional training programmes, rather it is a long term organizational strategy for assisting employees in optimizing their skills and advancing their education. He further posits that staff training is a veritable tool for the motivation of every staff in a system of which the library situation is no exception being a place where knowledge is built upon and provided.

Objective of the Study

The broad aim of the study is to examine the staff training and development programmes in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Library. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Find out the staff training and development programmes obtainable for the library staff
- ii. Examine the attitude of the staff towards staff training and development programmes
- iii. Ascertain the factors that influence staff selection for the training and development programme
- iv. Discover the potentials of staff training and development programmes in the library
- v. Determine the problems affecting the staff training and development programmes.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study encompasses staff training and development programmes in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. However the study has following limitations.

- (a) The study is limited to Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Library.
- (b) The study involves only the Library Staff.
- (c) The study is limited to staff training and development programmes obtainable in the library.

Literature Review

Training is an essential tool for developing staff in their field of endeavour. Onuoha (1991) [13] refers to training as the teaching of employees on how to perform in their present jobs. Banjoko (2002) [2] sees training as an organized procedure by which people learn knowledge or skills for a definite purpose. He further asserts that training is not a thing for newly employed staff only but it is also for old staff so that they can be acquainted with the changes in the world. Williams, James and Susan (1999) [18] made it clear that training and development include all attempt to improve performance by increasing an employee's ability to perform through learning and that the process of creating training and development programmes includes:

- Assessing the organization's needs and employees skills to determine training needs
- Designing training activities to meet the identified needs
- Evaluating the training effectiveness

Zasshi (1989) [20] in describing the Japan Library Association's role in staff training and development programmes stated that since library services are changing to meet up with current trends, there is every need for a rise in training needs of staff of the library. This in other words will ensure that staff are kept abreast with current innovation in information retrieval, storage and dissemination.

Bratton and Gold (1999) [1] also has it that staff training and development in organization is concern with the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills, techniques, attitudes and experience which enable a staff to make his most effective contribution to the combined efforts of the team of which he is a member. The focus of staff training and development happens to be centered on the organization's future staff requirement and on the growth needs of individuals in the workplace. This is why Cole (2002)[3] believes that staff training and development is seen as any learning activity, which is directed towards further needs, rather than present needs and which is concerned more with career growth than immediate performance. Yusuf (2000)[19] equally stated that staff training and development helps the staff or participants to keep abreast with the recent developments thereby updating their knowledge and skills so as to be able to cope with the new challenges. In collaboration with the above view, Tucker (1995) stipulated that the training needs of individual employees should be assessed within the context of the organization's strategic goals to ensure employees performance competency and development. This rightly shows that identifying training needs of a staff in an organization must come from the organization's aim so as to bring out staff that will contribute to achieving the organizational goals. Hence, peretomode and peretomode (2001) [14] emphasized that training and development are geared towards improving upon works performance with the ultimate aim of achieving set organizational goals.

Tucker (1995) explains that in United Kingdom, a staff training scheme is used to ensure total commitment of organization in staff training and development. He explains that the scheme helps organizations to regularly review training and development needs of employees, taking appropriate action to meet those needs and evaluating the investment in training and development so as to asses achievement and improve future effectiveness. Lyon (1995) [10] in line with the above explains that as the pace of technological change accelerates and various management trends come and go, librarians have to work harder to keep their skills relevant. He also acknowledged various continuing professional development programmes for strengthening employees' skills for the future. Lawes (1996)[9] also flowing on the same concepts, stated that there are major influences for change currently affecting the library and information profession and therefore needs to be analyzed to identify the training initiatives to meet emerging and future needs. He identified these influences as downsizing, outsourcing, organizational development,

empowerment, technological advances, resource sharing and the move towards an end user emphasis in information services. These change influences has important implications for the role of information professionals and for emerging priorities in the training and development of information managers.

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study with a population of 59 library staff who were all used for the study. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire and the data was analyzed using percentages, mean scores and frequency tables.

Analysis of Data

Table 1: Distribution and Return Rate of Questionnaire by Institution

S/N	Population	Number of Respondents	Number distributed	Number Returned	Percentage Of Return %
1.	Michael Okpara University Library Staff	59	59	52	88.1

From the table 1 above, a total number of fifty-nine (59) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents but fifty-two (52) were returned and correctly filled. This indicates a percentage of 88.1 which the researcher considers appropriate for use.

Table 2: Staff Training Development Programmes Obtainable in the MOUAU Library

S/N	Items	Yes	No
1	Conferences	√	
2	Seminar	√	
3	Workshops/Symposia	√	
4	On-the-job Training	√	
5	Induction/Orientation	√	
6.	Job rotation	√	
7	In-service training programmes	√	
8.	Study leaves and fellowship	√	
9.	Visit to other libraries	√	

Table 2 above shows the number of staff training and development programmes obtainable in Michael Okpara University Library. The programmes ranges from conferences, seminar, workshop/symposia, on-the-job training, induction/orientation, in-service training programmes, study leaves/fellowship and visit to other libraries.

Table 3: Attitude of Staff Towards the Staff Training and Development Programme

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1.	Absence of discrimination during selection process	39	13	-	-	3.7
2.	When new skills is to be acquired	37	14	1	-	3.8
3.	When selection is by qualification/rank	-	-	13	39	1.3
4.	When it is sponsored	42	10	-	-	3.8
5.	When organized in a new area	-	4	28	20	1.7
6.	When the theme of the programme reflect with my present job description	28	20	4	-	3.5
7.	Adequate facility for the training	28	20	4	-	3.5

From table 3 above, majority of the respondents indicated that their participation are motivated by the absence of discrimination during selection process, when new skills are to be acquired from the training, when they are sponsored by their organization and when there is adequate facilities for the training programmes. This can be viewed through their various mean scores of 3.7, 3.8, 3.5, and 3.5 respectively. However, few of the respondents were of the opinion that they are motivated through selection of by qualification/rank and when organized in a new area. This is indicated by the mean scores of 1.3 and 1.7 respectively.

Table 4: Factors that Influence Staff Selection for the Training and Development

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	By Favouritism	-	1	37	14	1.8
2	By Length of Service	-	1	12	39	1.3
3	By Qualification	4	8	20	20	1.9
4	By number of Publication	-	-	34	18	1.7
5	Through gender	-	-	32	20	1.6
6	Its relevance to job description	32	20	-	-	3.6

From table 4 above, majority of the respondents rejected the view that their selection for participation are done through favouritism, length of service, qualifications obtained, number of publications and through gender as they have mean scores of 1.8, 1.3, 1.9, 1.7 and 1.6 respectively but accepted the view that their selection process is through the programmes's relevance to their job description as its mean score rated 3.6.

Table 4: Potentials of Staff Training and Development Programmes

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	It gives staff sense of belonging in the running of the library	39	10	3	-	3.7
2	It results to improved efficiency	36	16	-	-	3.7
3	There is recognition from other organization	21	30	-	1	3.4
4	It provides for a skilled workforce	41	11	-	-	3.9
5	It gives confidence in the workers	41	11	-	-	3.9
6	It brings over working of the staff	-	1	44	7	1.9
6	It provides opportunities for staff growth and career development	50	2	-	-	4.0
7	Encourages collaboration with colleagues	38	9	1	4	3.7
8	It encourages fraud	-	-	36	16	1.7

From the table above, majority of the respondents agreed that the benefit of staff training programmes includes having sense of belonging in the running of library, improved efficiency, recognition from other organizations, skilled workforce, confidence in staff, opportunity for growth and collaboration with colleagues. The mean scores recorded are 3.7, 3.7, 3.4, 3.9, 4.0 and 3.7 respectively. However, they rejected the view that it brings about overworking of staff and the encouragement of fraud in organizations with mean scores of 1.9 and 1.7 respectively.

Table 5: Factor Affecting Staff Training and Development Programmes

S/N	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	There is lack of fund	30	22	-	-	3.6
2	There is personal financial constraint	30	22	-	-	3.6
3	There is lack of time	31	21	-	-	3.6
4	There is lack of sponsored programmes	34	18	-	-	3.7
5	There is discrimination in the selection criteria	-	5	37	10	1.9
6	There is lack of necessary training facilities	10	37	5	-	3.1
7	There is lack of interest on the part of librarians	-	-	37	15	1.7
8.	The management do not engage on training of their subordinate	-	-	37	15	1.7
9.	There is absence of staff promotion after participation	44	8	-	-	3.8

From table 5 above, majority of the respondents were of the view that factors affecting staff training and development include lack of fund, personal financial constraints, lack of time, lack of sponsored programmes, lack of training facilities, and absence of promotion after participation. These recorded mean scores of 3.6, 3.6, 3.6, 3.7, 3.7, 3.1, 3.8, and 3.8 respectively.

On the other hand, few of the respondents were of the view that discrimination in the selection process, selection by number of year in service, librarians and the management's lack of interest in developing staff are the problems of staff training in their library. They had low mean scores.

Findings

The study has presented findings on staff training and development in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Library. Findings revealed that the staff training and development programmes obtainable in the Library ranges from conferences, seminar, workshop/symposia, on-the-job training, induction/orientation, in-service training programmes, study leaves/fellowship and visits to other libraries. This collaborates with Umeji (1997)^[17] who asserted that there are different types of staff training and development programme and went further to categorize them into four forms which includes orientation training, on the job training, off the job training and outside the job training respectively. This indicated that the library staff are exposed to different kinds of training and development programmes in their library from which they gain knowledge for effective work performances. The survey also found out that the staff are motivated by the absence of discrimination during selection process, when new skills are to be acquired from the training, when they are being sponsored by their organization and when there is adequate facilities for the training programmes. With regards to factors influencing selection process, it was envisaged from the finding that

majority of the respondents rejected the view that their selection for participation in staff training and development programmes are done through favouritism, length of service, qualifications obtained, number of publications and through gender but accepted that their selection process is through the programmes's relevance to their job description.

The finding also revealed that the benefits of staff training programmes includes staff sense of belonging in the running of the library, improved efficiency, recognition from other organizations, skilled workforce, confidence in staff, opportunity for growth and collaboration with colleagues among others. This finding seems to be in agreement with Ugboke (1998)^[16] who posited that a lot of benefits are derivable from staff training and development one of which is improved efficiency as a result of well trained library work force. It was also discovered that the factors that affect staff training and development programmes includes lack of fund, personal financial constraints, lack of time, lack of sponsored programmes, lack of training facilities, and absence of promotion after participation. This is in line with the findings of Ifidon (1985)^[7], Egungwu (1992)^[4], Gbosi (1999)^[6] and Meggison (2001)^[11].

Conclusion/Recommendations

The developmental situations going on in the world has seriously affected different organization especially in the library. Various information acquisition and dissemination keeps changing thereby rendering the library's old system obsolete in the realm of information services. It is therefore

pertinent that staff of libraries ranging from the library attendant to the professional librarians engage in staff training and development programmes. Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The library administrator should make adequate arrangements to provide the necessary fund for sponsoring training programmes.
- The university librarian should make necessary arrangement to organize study leave and visit to other libraries by staff for more improved skills
- The university librarian should adequately arrange the selection process of the workers to participate in training programmes in order to eschew favouritism in selection process having known the relevance of staff training programme to job satisfaction.
- The government has a hand in the educational services in the country and therefore should make clearly defined policy in staff training and development and among all provide adequate fund needed for proper implementation of the training programmes in university libraries.
- The library staff should increase their willingness in training to obtain skills within and outside the university library which will help in the development of their personal skills and initiatives.

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