

LIBRARY STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN KEBBI STATE, NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

By

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Abstract

Staff training and development are the bedrocks of any library services. Apart from meeting the manpower needs of the library, staff training and development enable the library to sustainably meet the information needs of its users in the ever changing information technology driven world. The research assessed the level of qualifications of staff in some libraries in Kebbi State. It examined the extent of library staff training and development in the State from 1991 to 2018. The adequacy or otherwise of professional staff in the libraries under study was also assessed. Survey method was used in the conduct of the research. Ten copies of questionnaire were administered to the librarians of the organisations under study. All copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned accordingly. The findings of the research revealed that from 1991 to 2018, the libraries under study trained eighty-seven staff. It was also found that most of the libraries under study did not have adequate staff to provide services to users. It was observed that inadequate funding was the major constraint of the libraries in staff training and development. The research concluded by giving some recommendations for improvement. These include making regular staff training and development an important aspect of the Library development policy, provision of sponsorship for training, conferences, seminars and workshops among others.

Key Words: Library, Staff Training, Staff Development, Kebbi State

Introduction

The creation of Kebbi State in 1991 has given rise to high demand for Library and Information Science professionals to meet the existing and potential needs of the State. This is obvious because in addition to the libraries that were inherited from the former Sokoto State, both State and Federal Government established several institutions, ministries and parastatals in different parts of the State. These trends did not only necessitate the need for more professionals, but informed the need for training and retraining of the existing workforce. The increasing user population and high demands for information have made staff training and development mandatory. The need for staff training and development in libraries is even more compelling with the emergence and introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in library management and service delivery. In fact, for libraries and librarians to remain relevant as well as compete favourably in the 21st century, staff training and development are indispensable. Hence, the need for all institutions, ministries and parastatals to make library staff training and development one of their top priorities.

Statement of the Problem

Staff training and development are the most fundamental ingredients for the attainment and sustenance of any organizational goals. For any library to achieve its goals therefore, staff training and development must be sustainably and vigorously pursued. The creation of Kebbi State in 1991 has given rise to establishment of many educational institutions as well as ministries and parastatals. These establishments need the services of professional librarians in order to facilitate the attainment of their goals and sustainably cope with increasing demands. Unfortunately, however, it has been observed that all type of libraries in Kebbi State lack adequate professionally trained librarians to man the libraries as well as efficiently and effectively provide services to meet the ever-increasing and ever-changing needs of library clientele. This problem poses a very serious threat not only to the services provided but to the survival of the libraries. The questions, therefore are, do the libraries in Kebbi State have adequate professional librarians to provide services to their clientele? What challenges do the libraries in Kebbi State face in the training and development of librarians? How can the challenges be addressed in order to facilitate professional staff training and development in the State? This research is designed to address these and similar questions with a view to addressing the problem of gross inadequacy of professional librarians in the State for maximum productivity.

Objectives of the Research

The research objectives are as follows.

- i. To identify the number of staff trained by the Libraries from 1991 to 2018.
- ii. To identify the number of Library staff that are currently on training.
- iii. To assess whether the libraries have enough professional to man its various divisions and provide efficient services to users.
- iv. To identify the challenges faced by the librarians in professional staff training and development.

To make appropriate recommendations on how to improve the condition of library staff training and development in Kebbi State.

Research Questions

This research was designed to address the following questions.

- i. How many staff did the Libraries train from 1991 to 2018?
- ii. How many Library staff are currently on training?
- iii. Have the Libraries enough professionals to man their various divisions and provide efficient services to users?
- iv. What challenges do the Libraries face in professional staff training and development?
- v. What appropriate measures can be taken to improve the condition of library staff training and development in Kebbi State?

Literature Review

As the title suggests, staff training and development in Kebbi State cover all types of libraries. This is because, all libraries require the services of well-trained librarians to succeed. Abban (2018) observes that staff training and development constitutes one aspect of the human resource management processes in any organisation. It is the most powerful tool of any organisation's success. He further highlighted that training and development of an employee is therefore regarded as one of the most important functions of effective resource management and service delivery. According to Nyama (2008), staff development is a major aspect of conditions of service in establishments. In order to realize the goal of any organisation or establishment, staff development

is always pursued vigorously. The same staff development that operates in various faculties and departments in the university is applicable to staff of the library including librarians. While narrating his working experience, Abban (2018) expresses that the library's environment is changing greatly as time passes, technology and the electronic information explosion are having a major impact on society as a whole and libraries in particular. These changes call for continuous training and development of library staff, people need new skills to cope with the expanding information in their lives, it is therefore important for heads of institutions to take education and continuing professional training and development of its library staff serious in order to ensure quality service delivery.

Adomi and Famola (2013) posit that professional development is an important component of ongoing librarian education and is very critical to performance of their role. The library and information science profession is service oriented and therefore requires continually updated knowledge and skills for effective performance. The efficiency of any library and information centre depends on the caliber of its staff. Justifying the need for staff training, Agaja (1999) observes that a well-organized workshop enables librarians in universities to acquire practical training in some issues in their profession and the practical training enhances their job performance. Buttressing this point, Nwachukwu (1988) stresses that staff development deals with activities undertaken to perform additional duties and assume positions of importance in the organizational hierarchy. Library staff training and development are imperative because according to Adebayo and Alex-Nmecha (2018), the place of librarianship in the transformation of society in Nigeria is evident in the ways it educates professionals who manage information for national development.

Supporting the above view, Onwueme, Horsfall and Azubuike (2018) observe that with the increasing advances and effects of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) upon the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession, there are growing concerns of what kind of LIS education and training should be in place in producing the ideal 21st century LIS professional. An ideal librarian, having been well trained and formed, is expected to be ICT savvy and willing to embrace new technologies, he or she should be technically competent, enterprising and innovative, highly knowledgeable and current, organized and resourceful, demonstrate leadership and mentorship capabilities, amidst other relevant core competencies and skills. Corroborating this view, Ochai (2012) opines that in this changing environment, librarians are expected to be able to play multiple evolving and expanding roles. A librarian must be a professional knowledge manager, navigator, marketer, service provider, etc. He further posits that continued library staff training and development are pertinent because change is inevitable and is a natural phenomenon. In the library and information scene, this change has been brought about by the information explosion and the advent of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among other factors. He therefore suggests that library and information professionals must, of necessity, develop expert technological competencies required to make the best use of opportunities the ICT offers in order to meet and service the changing complex information needs of the user community. Buttressing the above point, Eke, Orji & Okorie (2010) opine that today in the digital age, librarians can no longer be simply information providers and 'keepers of knowledge'. They further suggest that training of librarian for the 21st century must be mainly in the mode of a digital librarian as the library of the 21st century can hardly be relevant anymore if not digitized. According to Ahiauzu (2012), today, capacity-building is key. So librarians need to consistently improve academically, updating through training, retraining, and repackaging old traditional professional skills to remain relevant. She observes that trends in ICT and in the library

environment show that librarianship will remain a profession in transition, therefore university librarians need to be comfortable with the continued transformation as the foundation of their everyday career life. Supporting the above view, Stanley (2005) adds that the librarian of today must keep more and more on the cutting edge of many areas of technology. Online databases, not to mention Internet sites themselves, are proliferating in greater numbers; and although they do make one's ability to do research more encompassing, they create a learning curve that must be continuously reevaluated. If librarians are to assist patrons in making the most of these innovations, then the librarians themselves must keep one step or more ahead in their uses and knowledge of the data available. He further advised that this knowledge should encompass not only the use of databases but also the knowledge necessary to expertly evaluate the findings. Shading more light on staff training and development, O'English (2005) views that a new librarian of the 21st century will need to possess four attributes for survival and success: a customer service orientation, flexibility, strategic thinking, and the capacity for self-renewal. According to her, the new librarian of the 21st century will be facing a new career that will be full of challenges and surprises. The combination of all this suggests that a very important trait for the librarian of the 21st century will be the capacity for self-renewal. She emphatically stressed that staff training and development are necessary because:

Libraries will change, and librarians will also change. Perhaps, in the end, the most important thing that we will look for in new librarians of the 21st century is the ability to sort through impending changes and separate positive change from negative change.

Prasad (2001) observes that continuous staff training is imperative because:

In the backdrop of the knowledge economy that we live in today, one is sure to say that the corporate quest for intellectual capital is going to be a continuous activity. This quest is, mainly due to scarcity of the right talent or skill for respective positions. The recruitment revolution is already underway and the winning organizations will be those who develop innovative methods to attract the best talent to beat the competition in recruitment.

A study conducted by Oluwaseunfunmi (2015) reveals that the group under study was dissatisfied with the library services due to inadequate trained staff. He therefore recommended that librarians should be trained in the use of the latest technologies for information dissemination with a view to improving their proficiency in service delivery. Buttressing this point, Lawal (2009) opines that librarians and information workers are not only having to adapt to change in library services but also requiring in-depth and structured education and training programmes for their occupational engagements in all library types.

To sum it up, therefore, Kaushal (2004) advises that effective and efficient staff training and development should include manpower planning and budgeting, recruitment, training, performance appraisal, job specifications, pay package, compensation and incentives, career planning, promotion policy, retirement, ethics, organizational behavior/change/development, administration, labour laws, communication skills and so on and so forth. Eze (2012) stresses that training has been observed to be a very important device in personnel management in public as well as other libraries. She however laments that in spite of the fact that no organisation can grow in its services without continuous training of staff, it has been observed that most workers of Enugu State Public Library as well as other public libraries around them may not have been adequately exposed to training programmes.

The purpose of this study is therefore to assess the extent of library staff training and development in Kebbi State with a view to strategizing further in order to ensure efficiency, proficiency and prudence in resource management and service delivery in type of libraries in the State.

Research Methodology

Survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised heads of the ten libraries under study. Random sampling technique was used to select the population for the study. Ten (10) out of twelve libraries were selected for the study. These included seven (7) academic libraries in Kebbi State, two (2) special libraries and the State Library, which is responsible for staff training and development in other branches of the Public Libraries. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally and through research assistants to the heads of the selected libraries. All the questionnaires were returned after completion. The data collected were presented in a tabular form showing the findings and interpretations. The libraries of the institutions/organisations selected for the study are indicated below:

Table 1: Institutional/Organisational Information

S/No	Institution/Organisation	Year Established	Name of the Library	Year of Establishment of the Library	
1.	Adamu Augie College of Education, Argungu	1994	College Library	1995	10
2.	College of Agriculture, Zuru	1976	College Library	1976	12
3.	Federal Medical Centre, Birnin Kebbi	2000	Ultramodern Library Complex	2005	4
4.	Federal University Birnin Kebbi	2013	FUBK Library	2015	35
5.	Kebbi State House of Assembly, Birnin Kebbi	1991	Aminu Musa Habib Library	2002	9
6.	Kebbi State Library Board	1991	Dr. Yusuf Bala Usman Library Complex	1991	61
7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic, Dakingari	2013	Polytechnic Library	2015	12
8.	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero	2006	University Library	2008	65
9.	School of Health Technology, Jega	1978	College Library	1978	1
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Birnin Kebbi	1976	The Polytechnic Library	1978	23
	Total				232

Analysis and Presentation of Data

The data obtained from the questionnaire administered to heads of the Libraries under study are analyzed and presented as follow:

Table 2: Number of staff trained from 1991-2018

S/N	Name of Library	PhD	Master's	Bachelor's	Others	Total
1.	Adamu Augie College of Education Library, Argungu	0	3	1	5	9
2.	College of Agriculture Library, Zuru	0	0	2	3	5
3.	Federal Medical Centre Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	0	0	1	1
4.	Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library	0	0	0	0	0
5.	Kebbi State House of Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	0	0	1	1
6.	Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin Kebbi	0	0	2	7	9
7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic Library, Dakingari	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Library, Aliero	1	4	2	27	34
9.	School of Health Technology Library, Jega	0	0	0	1	1
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	3	8	16	27
	Total	1	10	15	61	87

The Table above shows that eighty-seven (87) were trained by the libraries under study from 1991 to 2018. Only 1 staff had a PhD, 10 staff had master's while 15 had bachelor's degrees. 61 had other qualifications, most of which were diploma in Library and Information Science. This shows that the libraries need to invest more resources in staff training and development especially in professional cadre.

Table 3: Number of staff currently on training

S/N	Name of Library	PhD	Master's	Bachelor's	Others	Total
1.	Adamu Augie College of Education Library, Argungu	0	0	0	1	1
2.	College of Agriculture Library, Zuru	0	0	0	0	0
3.	Federal Medical Centre Library , Birnin Kebbi	0	0	0	0	0
4.	Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library	0	4	0	0	4
5.	Kebbi State House of Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	0	0	1	1
6.	Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin	0	0	1	2	3

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7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic Library, Dakingari	0	1	0	0	1
8.	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Library, Aliero	1	0	2	4	7
9.	School of Health Technology Library, Jega	0	0	0	0	0
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	5	3	8	17

The Table above shows that only 1 staff of the libraries under study was on PhD training. 5 were on master's while 3 were on bachelor's degree programmes. 8 were pursuing other programmes such as national diploma and postgraduate diploma in Library and Information Science.

Table 4: Adequacy of library professional to provide services to users

S/N	Name of Library	Adequate	Inadequate
1.	Adamu Augie College of Education Library, Argungu		No
2.	College of Agriculture Library, Zuru		No
3.	Federal Medical Centre Library, Birnin Kebbi	Yes	
4.	Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library		No
5.	House State House of Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	Yes	
6.	Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin Kebbi		No
7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic, Dakingari		No
8.	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Library, Aliero		No
9.	School of Health Technology Library, Jega		No
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi		No
	Total	2	8

The above Table shows that only 2 of the libraries under study indicated that they had adequate staff while 8 indicated that the staff were inadequate. This shows that majority of the libraries under study had no adequate professional staff to manage and provide services to users. This could be attributable to government attitude towards library development in the State.

Table 5: Number of professionals needed by the libraries

S/N	Name of Library	Number Required	Percentage
1.	Adamu Augie College of Education Library, Argungu	5	5.6%

2.	College of Agriculture Library, Zuru	10	11.1%
3.	Federal Medical Centre Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	0%
4.	Federal University BKebbi Library	15	16.6
5.	Kebbi State House Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	0	0%
6.	Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin Kebbi	10	11.1%
7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic Library, Dakingari	5	5.6%
8.	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Library, Aliero	10	11.1%
9.	School of Health Technology Library, Jega	5	5.6%
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi	30	33.3%
	Total	90	100%

The above Table shows that 2 of the libraries under study required no additional professional staff while 3 required 5 (5.6%) each. 3 of the libraries required 10 (11.1%) professional staff each while 1 required 15 (16.6%). The Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library required 30 (33.3%) professional staff. This is attributable to the fact that the institution was one of the oldest in Kebbi State and thus had a large population of students and several faculties/college libraries that required professionally trained librarians for efficient service delivery.

Table 6: Number of professional staff recruited by the libraries in the last five years

S/N	Name of Library	Number recruited	Percentage
1.	Adamu Augie College Education Library, Argungu	0	0%
2.	College Agriculture Library, Zuru	0	0%
3.	Federal Medical Centre Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	15.2%
4.	Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library	10	30.2%
5.	Kebbi State House Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	15.2%
6.	Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin Kebbi	5	15.2%
7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic library, Dakingari	NA	NA
8.	Kebbi State University Science and Technology Library, Aliero	3	9.0%
9.	School of Health Technology Library, Jega	0	0%
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	15.2%
	Total	33	100%

The above Table shows that the libraries under study recruited 33 staff in the last 5 years. 3 of the libraries did not recruit any staff in the last 5 years. 1 library recruited 3 (9.0%) staff while 4 recruited 5 (15.2%) each. Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library recruited 10 (30.2%sss) professional staff at the time of take up while Kebbi State Polytechnic Library, Dakingari did not recruit any after the initial recruitment at the time of its take up.

Table 7: Number of professionals the libraries intended to recruit in the next five years

S/N	Name of Library	Number to be Recruited	Percentage
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1.	Adamu Augie College of Education Library, Argungu	5	6.2%
2.	College of Agriculture Library, Zuru	5	6.2%
3.	Federal Medical Centre Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	6.2%
4.	Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library	15	18.8%
5.	Kebbi State House Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	6.2%
6.	Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin Kebbi	10	12.6%
7.	Kebbi State Polytechnic Library, Dakingari	5	6.2%
8.	Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Library, Aliero	10	12.6%
9.	School of Health Technology Library, Jega	5	6.2%
10.	Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi	15	18.8%
	Total	80	100%

The above Table shows that 6 of the libraries under study intended to recruit 5 (6.2%) of the professional staff each in the next five years. 2 libraries intended to recruit 10 (12.6%) each while another 2 intended to recruit 15 (18.8%) each. This brings the total of the professional staff to be recruited by the libraries under study in the next five years to 80.

Table 8: Number of professional staff the libraries intended to train in the next five years

Name of Library	Number to be Trained	Percentage
Adamu Augie College of Education Library, Argungu	5	6.7%
College of Agriculture Library, Zuru	5	6.7%
Federal Medical Centre Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	6.7%
Federal University Birnin Kebbi Library	10	13.3%
Kebbi State House Assembly Library, Birnin Kebbi	5	6.7%
Kebbi State Library Board, Birnin Kebbi	5	6.7%
Kebbi State Polytechnic Library, Dakingari	5	6.7%
Kebbi State University of Science and Technology Library, Aliero	20	26.5%
School of Health Technology Library, Jega	5	6.7%
Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic Library, Birnin Kebbi	10	13.3%
Total	75	100%

The above Table shows that 7 of the libraries under study intended to train 5 (6.7%) of the professional staff each in the next five years. 2 libraries intended to train 10 (13.3%) each while 1 intended to train 20 (26.5%) respectively. This brings the total of professional staff to be trained by the libraries under study to 75. From the above table, it can be observed that Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Federal University Birnin Kebbi and Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Birnin Kebbi intended to train the highest number of professional staff in the next five years. This is attributable to the fact that in addition to awarding first and higher degrees by the institutions, they also benefit from the interventions of the Tertiary Education Trust Funds (TETFund).

Discussion of Findings

From the findings of the study, it is clear that from 1991 to 2018, the libraries under study trained eighty-seven staff in various programmes. Although this seemed to be a good number considering the fact the libraries have a total of two hundred and thirty two staff, there is the need for more training and development at the professional level to keep abreast with new developments, improve their managerial competence as well as promote efficient service delivery. This is supported by Whitmell (1999) who asserts that as individuals, information professionals must continue to build skills and find out what employers need, keep each other informed about best practices and keep up-date on what is happening elsewhere in the industry. Furthermore, the findings revealed that seventeen staff were currently under-going various training programmes. However, it is discouraging to observe that four out of ten libraries have no staff currently on training. From this revelation, it is very clear that the need for more efforts in staff training and development is glaring. The findings also revealed that eight out of the ten libraries under study had inadequacy of staff. Thus, the libraries needed ninety staff to ameliorate the inadequacies. With the shortage of this number, the effects on the service delivery is obvious.

Similarly, the findings revealed that the libraries under study recruited thirty-three professional staff in the last five years and are intending to recruit eighty as well as train seventy-five in next five years. To achieve this laudable objective requires the concerted efforts of the library management and the cooperation of government. The libraries are therefore expected to strategize in order to actualize their staff training and development goals. This is the surest way of meeting their development goals and efficiently and satisfactorily meeting their users' needs.

Conclusion

Staff training and development keep organisations vibrant and dynamic. They promote staff upward mobility and increase efficiency in job performance. As users' demands continue to increase and new information and communication technologies continuously change, libraries are expected to continuously engage in staff training and development in order to remain relevant as well as cope with the challenges in the ever-changing and competitive world. To achieve and sustain this require the support of the government and other stakeholders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Regular staff training and development should be made an important aspect of the Library development policy.
- ii. Library staff should be sponsored for training, conferences, seminars and workshops in order to boost their morale as well as increase their efficiency in job performance.
- iii. The libraries should organise in-house training from time to time in order to continuously keep staff abreast with new developments in their fields for increased output.
- iv. The libraries should be adequately funded to recruit qualified staff from time to time in order to meet the increasing demands of the expanding user community.

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