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Impact of training and education on productivity of Academic Librarians in Nigeria: Case of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of training and education on job productivity of librarians in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to direct the study. Ex-post factor research design was used for the study. There are 47 Librarians in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State and all of them were used for the study. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The data obtained was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Each of the hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. The result further revealed that there is a significant relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that training and education have significant impact on job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. It was recommended that regular training should be organized for academic librarians in order to get them acquainted with skills needed to function effectively in their duties. In addition, it was recommended that opportunities for education through staff development programmes should be given to academic librarians as this will enable them to update their knowledge on latest development that may arise due to rapid technological changes.

Key words: *knowledge management, academic libraries, job productivity, rapid technological changes*

Introduction

Academic libraries are the nerve centres of any tertiary institutions. They are raised to support the teaching, learning research activities of their parent institutions by providing vital resources, facilities and services to learners and lecturers. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to assert that no organization can achieve its goals and objectives without effective and proficient human resources. This is because human beings constitute a vital part of any organization; and they need to be trained and educated to determine the level of productivity in that organization. Usoro & Enang (2010) asserted that human resources are the most vital assets that any organization such as the University libraries can boost of, since it is staff that operate, direct and manipulate the resources in order to achieve the desired objectives of the academic libraries or any other organization. To achieve this, the librarians have as their major function the provision of these information resources and must

also organize, preserve and disseminate same to the library patrons. This function depend on their level of education and the training they have received.

Sivadas (2012) mentioned that training and education is one of the most critical ingredient in providing quality services. Quality training enable staff to perform at optimal levels, and staff who deliver quality service tends to satisfy users. Training and education is intended to bring about change, that is, an increase in knowledge, acquisition of a skill or the development of a new perspective. Resis in Johnson (2012) affirmed that all activities of any enterprise are initiated and determined by the persons that make up the institutions. He said further that the plants, computers, automated equipment and all other machines that a modern organization uses are unproductive except for human effort and direction. He therefore concluded that every aspect of a firm's activity is determined by the competence and effectiveness of its human resources.

Furthermore, Aiyegunle (2010) stated that, for the right information to be provided to the right user in the right format at the right time, qualified professionals in information industry are charged with the responsibility of acquiring, processing, preserving, organizing and dissemination of relevant information. It is worthy to note that the primary link/facilitator between the information world and the library users are the academic librarians who are trained and educated as professionals in the information service field.

Academic libraries, being housed in tertiary institutions are no exception to the impact of technological advancements which has been an increase, changing the reader's habits in accessing and retrieving of information resources. In order to provide better client services, acquisition of new technology have been made in all library transaction models (operations, service, and communication). The application of new technologies extends to acquisition, cataloging, collection development and circulation (including information sharing). Reference (especially e-reference), information literacy education, information retrieval (databases, including full-text, electronic publishing, and consortium agreements), library services promotion, institutional internal communication are not left out. Thus, all library professionals, regardless of departmental affiliation, face an imperative need to upgrade their knowledge, improve their skills, and to adapt and broaden service models. They have no other option if they wish to maintain their role both in the profession and, by extension, in the vitality of the library as an institution (Junlin & Karen, 2010). Changes in libraries in recent years have resulted in the need for librarians to be re-trained and educated to face the new trends. These changes include the implementation of new technologies such as computer-based cataloging, automated circulation systems, online access to machine-readable bibliographic databases, and the development and formalization of personnel policies and procedures. Dawh, (2009) stated that because of the increasing variety of information formats and library services, there is need for continuous training and education of librarians. Khan & Bhatti (2012) emphasized that due to changing needs of library users, the libraries also need to be changed. A dynamic environment like academic library requires librarians and library assistants to have strong abilities in library services delivery for all types of print and electronic information retrieval. Studies conducted by Evans, (2012) & Godwin, (2009) on the development of human resources indicated that it may occur through formal education and training; on the job training; self-development programs which provide opportunities for people to advance their learning and skills through their own efforts.

Training is necessary to ensure an adequate supply of staff that are technically and socially competent and capable of career development into specialist departments or management positions. There is therefore a continual need for the process of staff development, and training. They add that technological developments and organizational change have gradually led some employers to the

realization that success relies on the skills and abilities of their employees, and this means considerable and continuous investment in training and education.

Udo in Ubeng (2008), views training as the development of specific skills and attitudes needed to perform a particular job or series of jobs to maximize the productivity of the individual and improve the overall organizational efficiency. According to Ohakwe (2007), training is a continuous assistance or coaching given to an employee in order to make him have the current knowledge of the job content, scope and relationship within the organization. No matter how carefully job applicants are screened, typically a gap remains between what the employee does know and what they should know. An organization which desires to gain the competitive edge in its respective industry, needs among other things, extensive and effective training of its human resources. Training is therefore a key element for improved organizational performance; it increases the level of individual and organizational competences. It helps to reconcile the gap between what should happen and what is happening – between desired targets or standards and actual levels of work performance.

According to Quotient (2009), training is a joint and an ongoing process between the employee and the organization aimed at overall development of the individual and in turn the organization. Furthermore, training can be understood as the process of teaching employees new skills that are essential to perform their jobs. Training is usually applied immediately after recruitment, but in some organizations, employees undergo training on a periodic basis that can be understood as “developmental training.” Training, therefore, is a systematic development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job (Al-Ajlouni, Athamneh, & Jaradat, 2010; Olaniyan & Ojo, 2008).

In stressing the importance of Education to the librarians, the National Universities Commission (NUC; 1996) cited in Dawha (2009) in its draft manual on university management stated that staff training and development in university libraries is of utmost importance. They emphasized that the librarian should ensure regular 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 his staff, where appropriate, to go for higher education. Library Assistants for library diploma; graduates for master’s and doctorate degrees; short course for administrative and secretarial staff. Sponsorship for any training should be based on good performance of the staff.

According to Job (2011), once an applicant has been selected and placed properly in the library, the next step is always to transform him to meet the future requirements of the institution. Such transformation can best be done by means of training and education. Fitzgibbons (2008) opines that training of library professionals can provide the confidence that limits mental techno stress. Oke and Oguntuase (2010) affirm that training of library staff in any academic library contributes significantly to productivity because trained staff members are motivated and better equipped to utilize their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Eze (2012), stated that training is a public or private education program directly applicable to work situation. When there are lapses or loopholes in work efficiency and expected productivity, it means that the workers involved need more and better skills and knowledge to be gained through training. Training is necessary to face the realities at work on a daily basis. It enhances the personnel to be well equipped for challenges otherwise that could overwhelm them. Training is a planned and continuous program aimed at positioning employees to solve problems in the workplace. The report of the University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries Staff Development working group (1998),

cited by Eze (2012), emphasized that libraries need a staff that is vast in all facets of work to provide excellent service to the users. According to Cole (2002) training can achieve:

- High morale - employees who receive training have increased confidence and motivation;
- Lower cost of production – training eliminates risks because trained personnel are able to make better and economic use of material and equipment thereby reducing and avoiding waste;
- Lower turnover – training brings a sense of security at the workplace which reduces labor turnover and absenteeism is avoided;
- Change management- training helps to manage change by increasing the understanding and involvement of employees in the change process and also provides the skills and abilities needed to adjust to new situations;
- Provide recognition, enhanced responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion;
- Give a feeling of personal satisfaction and achievement, and broaden opportunities for career progression; and
- Help to improve the availability and quality of staff.

It is in the light of the foregoing that this study is necessitated to examine the impact of training and education on the job productivity of librarians in Academic libraries.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the importance which training and education plays in helping organizations achieve their aims and objective, improve the skills of the employees and also help them to cope with the high rate of technological advancement, observations made by the researcher shows that most library staff in academic libraries have not been properly trained and educated. It has also been observed that most academic librarians in the academic libraries do not possess basic library qualifications, but were employed into the library with other qualifications. For this reason they lack the basic library skills and this has resulted in low productivity. Alyegunle (2010) stated that the chance for continuing education for librarians and other library staff is a professional step in advancing knowledge in the profession through attendance of seminars, workshops or conferences and further education. It has also been observed by the researcher that some of the staff have remained at a particularly level for years due to the fact that they were employed into the institutions with Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) or qualifications that are not in library science and as such they get bared at a particular level and also lack the basic skills needed to cope with today's information technology. This unfortunate development may impact negatively on their job commitment and productivity. Sivadas (2012) also stressed that the academic library have not been able to come up with the required knowledge, adequate skills and ability, be it an in house training, (staff development) and/or external training (continuing education). It is in the light of the foregoing that this study is poised to examine the impact which training and education plays on job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of training and education on job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To examine the relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.
- To ascertain the relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

RQ 1: What is the relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries?

RQ 2: What is the relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following research hypotheses were tested in the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Data gathering method and analysis

An ex-post facto research design was used for the study. This design is considered suitable for the study because the variables under investigation are presumed to have occurred and could not be experimentally manipulated in the process of the study.

This study was carried out in academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State. The state was created on September 23, 1987 under decree No. 24 promulgated by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Akwa Ibom State is currently segmented into three Senatorial Districts (Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene). Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District is located in the Northern part of the state and is made of eight local government areas with six being annang speaking local government areas and two Ibibio. This suggests that the senatorial District is dominated by the Annangs. The major occupation of the people is farming and petty trading, though in recent times most of the people are now engaging in white collar jobs.

Eket senatorial district has 12 local government areas with different ethnic groups including the Ibibios', the oros', and the obolos'. The major occupation of the people in this area is farming and fishing. Uyo senatorial district on the other hand comprised of 11 local government areas. Uyo senatorial district has only one ethnic group which is the ibibios' with major occupation of the people being farming. However in modern time, with high rate of urbanization, the people of Akwa Ibom State are now engaged in white collar jobs.

Akwa Ibom State is blessed with numerous institutions worthy of mention are University of Uyo, Maritime Academy, Oron, Akwa Ibom State University of Science and Technology, Ikot Akpaden, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, Ikot Osurua among others. The researchers are however prompted to carry out this study in the area because of their familiarity with the State and also because of the observation made by the researchers as regards low job productivity of most library professionals in the State.

The population of this study comprised of all the 47 academic librarians in the academic libraries in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Distribution of academic librarians in Akwa Ibom State Tertiary Institutions

Institution	population
University of Uyo	27
College of Education	6
Akwa Ibom State University of Science and Technology	14
Total	47

The sample of this study comprised of 47 librarians in academic libraries from the area of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used since all the academic librarians in the three institutions are included in the study.

An instrument titled “Impact of Training and Education on Job Productivity of Librarians Questionnaire (ITEJPLQ)” was used for data collection. The instrument is made up of two sections (A and B) consisted of 15 items designed with a 4-point rating scale response as follows: strongly Agree (SA,) Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD).

The validity of the instrument was established using face validation method. This was done by giving copies of the instruments to three experts, one in measurement and evaluation and two in the department of educational technology/library science to check if the items in the instrument appropriately measure the variables they are supposed to measure. Based on the observations, corrections and comments made by the experts, the researcher was appropriately guided in the development of a valid instrument.

In order to establish reliability estimates for the instruments, it was administered to 20 librarians’ who were drawn from other tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. The scores obtained from the respondents were subjected to Cronbach’s Alpha analysis of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A reliability estimate of .817 was obtained for the instrument.

The researchers personally visited the sampled libraries and obtained permission from the management. Afterwards, the researcher administered the instrument to the respondents. The respondents were asked to be sincere in their responses as the data sought will be kept confidential and will serve the purpose of the research only. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for analyzing the data obtained. Each hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results obtained were analyzed in line with the hypotheses formulated to direct the study.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis. The result is as presented in the table below:

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used to determine the relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries (N=47)

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Training				
	651	1082		
			13550	0.66
Job productivity of librarians in academic libraries	616	1121		

Significant at .05 level, critical r = .288, df = 45

The result in Table 1 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.66 is greater than the critical r-value of .250 at .05 level of significance with 45 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

4.1.2 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis. The result is as presented in the table below:

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis of the relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries (N=47)

Variables	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-value
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Education				
	660	1235		
			14736	0.79
Job productivity of librarians in academic libraries	616	1121		

Significant at .05 level, critical r = .288, df = 45

The result in Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.79 is greater than the critical r-value of .288 at .05 level of significance with 45 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Discussion of Findings

The result of analysis of the first hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. This result is timely in view of the fact that no organisation can achieve its goals without efficient workforce and one of the ways which human resources can be efficient is no doubt through training. This finding is supported by Sivadas (2012), who asserted that quality training leads to staff who perform at optimal levels, and staff who deliver quality service leads to satisfy users. The findings of the study is also supported by Ohakwe (2007), who asserted that no matter how carefully job applicants are screened, typically a gap remains between what the employees does and what they should know. Therefore, an organisation which desires to gain the competitive edge in its respective industry, needs among other things, extensive and effective training of its human resources. The findings is further supported by Job (2011), who remarked that once an applicant has been selected and placed properly in the library, the next step is always to transform him to meet the future requirements of the institution. Such transformation can best be done by means of training. Oke and Oguntuase (2010) affirm that training of library staff in any academic library contributes significantly to productivity because trained staff are motivated and better equipped to utilize their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

The result of the analysis of the second hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries. This finding is important in view of the fact that education plays a pivotal role in the development of any individual. Hence, it is not wrong to assert that in order to get the librarians acquainted with the rapid changes in information dissemination techniques, the librarians need to be educated. This finding is supported by Evans (2012) and Godwin (2009) who maintained that technological developments and organisation change have gradually led some employers to the realization that success relies on the skills and abilities of their employees and this means considerable and continuous investment in training and education.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study showed that:

- There is a significant relationship between training and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.
- There is a significant relationship between education and job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Conclusion

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that training and education have significant impact on job productivity of librarians in academic libraries.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing conclusion, the study recommends that:

- Regular training should be organized for academic librarians in order to get them acquainted with skills needed to function effectively in their duties.

- Opportunities for education through staff development programmes should be given to academic librarians as this will enable them to update their knowledge on latest developments that may arise due to rapid technological changes.

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