



## Education and Training of Librarians for National Integration and Development in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Librarians are continuously expected to update their job knowledge and renew their job related skills to enable them compete effectively in our changing society. These professionals are also expected to acquire extensive education and training to enable them function properly and be productive in their organisations. Agreeably, for librarians to integrate and develop a nation like Nigeria, sustained efforts must be made by pulling acquired knowledge and skills into practice for quality service delivery, which is now the hall-mark of international best practices. This paper assesses the educating and training of librarians for national integration and development. It discussed the concept education and training. It further highlighted programmes as well as course contents for the educating and training of librarians. It concluded that the performance index of librarians through education and training will enable them to acquire the competencies needed to render appropriate and quality services in libraries in Nigeria. The paper recommended that education and training of librarians should be more of practicum and that librarians must acquire computer and internet literacy.

**Keywords:** *Educating librarians; National development and integration; Training librarians; Nigerian librarians*

### Introduction

The importance of librarians in national integration and development cannot be underestimated. Librarians are key players in major libraries in Nigeria. They are heads of libraries. They manage and oversee various sections or units in the library. The librarian, as the chief administrator or manager or director is responsible for overall planning and organisation of the work to be done in the library. They are charged with the responsibility of organising the staff for maximum performance. It is their responsibility to initiate practical plans for organising the library resources and designing job descriptions for the library workers. The librarians are dispersed and are found working in all the Nigerian sectors where libraries are established such as education, agriculture, health, economic, social, information sectors, among others.

Librarians have been described as one of the most valuable assets of library organisations. These are professionals who are holders of Bachelor's degree, Master's degree and PhD degree in their discipline. They are those who are qualified to be registered by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) to practice in Nigeria. There are however other professionals who are holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) or Ordinary Diploma (ND) either from a university or accredited polytechnic. The scope of library services and practice is changing significantly and is moving parallel with technological developments. Substantial changes are taking place in libraries and information centers as well as products and services offered therein. There is need for education of librarians to keep them in tune with demands of contemporary societies. As it is now, they

cannot afford to use the same old methods and strategies of offering services to library clientele and expect them to be retained. Education and training are integral part of vocational or career development and the presence of which determines the success for any establishment or organisations, the absence, on the other hand, spells doom for such establishment or organisations.

On the other hand, librarians are expected to be versatile in all kinds of information handling jobs and management of human and non-human resources in their libraries. The effectiveness of these professionals in the discharge of their services depends on the extent of acquisition of relevant education and training and skills and competencies. They need to be educated and trained by putting quality into practice for effective and efficient service delivery. Areas where librarians can be trained include: library administration, publishing, archives and records management, digitalisation, information technology. Mabawonku (2017) asserted that, in the modern library, the library- and information professionals have profound roles as information specialists, information scientists, knowledge managers, documentalists, media specialists, publishers, archivists, etc.

Education and training are geared towards improving job performance with the ultimate aim of achieving library set goals and objectives. Education programmes can help librarians to be current with new knowledge and development in their field. This therefore means that, librarians' education and training keeps them more committed on the job. Moreover, Nigerian libraries will function adequately when they have librarians of genuine intellectual quality, supported by first-class professional training from

library schools of high quality. This is in line with the thinking of majority of librarians who see training for librarians as provision of practical knowledge, skills and tools to prepare them for the challenges of the future (Nkanu & Eyo, 2006).

When one refuses to be updated, one becomes out-dated. Education and training enable librarians to participate more intelligently in the work of the library. Education and training for librarians are necessity if library and information professionals must remain relevant and retain their place as information providers in the information conscious society. Akintunde (2006) emphasised the need for librarians to undergo compulsory routine retraining to preempt technological obsolescence and to cope with the unfolding exigencies of the technological age. They are to be continuously exposed to new technologies, regular professional updating and greater control over the information resources (Odini, 2006; Tiamiyu, 2003). Furthermore, Mohammed (2010) affirmed that personnel in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century organisation and establishment of which libraries and information centers are one, need more education, training, knowledge, skills, ideas, experiences, information and enlightenment now more than ever before in order to cope with the challenges of the time.

He added that, the personnel who continue to improve in their job knowledge, experience, education, information, ideas and skills acquisition in their workplace, will eventually make a better employee and fulfilment about their work and assurance of ensuring the achievement of the objectives, goals and mission of their employers. Librarians working in libraries need education and training by acquiring core competencies, new skills and never to become

obsolete at any time in this fast changing environment. For this, they need to shift their focus from traditional library activities of collecting, processing, storing and accessing information to offer customer-centered automated information services, generated by using online, offline databases, e-resources, e-journals, networks and consortia, etc. (Nkanu & Eyo, 2006).

The education of librarians cannot be done without a well-articulated course contents. There is a need for change in the course content for the training of current professionals. This course contents as practiced cannot be changed substantially without giving adequate attention to professionals changing roles and skills. It is through this means that librarians are prepared for the country. The country uses the course contents to produce various kinds of manpower needed in all fields of endeavour in the country. The course contents reflect culture, real life experiences, needs, interest, and aspiration of the society and employers. The library school, as producers of the labour force have to continually match society and employers needs and demands by being novel in teaching, educating and training of their products to be capable, able, relevant and ready to deliver the needed and expected goods services to the target customers effectively and efficiently. The course contents must be relevant in order to enter real business with information as their factors of production and raw materials (Aina, 2007).

Nevertheless, the study on educating and training of librarians for national integration and development will contribute to the development of manpower dispersed and found working in libraries established in different sectors in Cross River State in South-south, Nigeria. It will further help library managements and various institutions/organisations to develop their

librarians through formal and informal education programmes to be current and relevant on their job by acquiring job knowledge, skills and competencies needed in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, in library service delivery in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study assesses educating and training of librarians for national integration and development. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify programmes for educating librarians for national integration and development.
2. Assess the course contents for educating librarians in national integration and development.

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concepts of Education and Training**

Education and training in any human society is recognised as a lifelong process. Receiving education is different from receiving training, although education might constitute foundation for training. Education and training are two interactive concepts. While education prepares the professional for qualification, training equips him with skills required on-the-job based on education received. Education is a formal way of attending school to acquire degrees (diploma, higher diploma, bachelor, masters and philosophy degrees) to improve on one's proficiency. Training is more of an informal approach which is achieved by attending conferences, seminars, workshops, short courses, on-the-job training to update one's knowledge in his or her area of professional practice (Ochogwu, 2016).

By definition, librarians' education refers to the initial, conceptual and knowledge-based training which a "professional" had before entry into the profession while training refers to the further and continuing training thereafter" (Obadan, 2002). Peters cited by Lawal (2010) stated that, the concept of training has application when there is specific type of programme that has to be mastered. In addition, practice is required for the mastery of it, and little emphasis is placed on the underlying rationale. Training, basically, is a process of learning a skill and developing expertise in a specific job or field. It imparts the skill to do things and enhances hands-on experience to solve known problems with a degree of expertise (Fortino, 2012). Training of librarians focuses on acquisition of job knowledge, skills and abilities specifically to a particular task or job. Thus, librarians will maintain up-to-date expertise. In addition, equipped with job knowledge, skills and competencies, librarians are not mere librarians any more. They are expected to improve effectiveness, efficiency and excellence leading to total quality service. No matter the programme, the objective of education and training is to improve the capacity of librarians to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently. It is expected that education and training of librarians must expose them to acquire extensive knowledge to enable them function effectively and be productive.

### **The Programmes for Educating and Training Librarians for National Integration and Development in Nigeria**

There are many avenues through which librarians can develop themselves. These depend on their readiness and willingness to widen their horizon and break new grounds. Education and training of librarians come in

form of formal training, seminar, workshops and conferences participation, staff orientation and on-the-job training. Furthermore, Babalola (2013) outlined education and training for librarians to include: staff orientation, staff meetings, departmental seminars, subject responsibilities as well as professional activities outside the university. Saharan (2013) listed strategies for developing staff to include: develop a programme of job rotation and cross-training, take advantage of task forces and interim job assignments: action learning: implement a 360 - degree feedback programme: create a dual career ladder system for librarians: offer coaching to managers and leaders: assign mentors to new and longer-term employees and offer of on-the-job training.

Gbaje and Ukachi (2011) posited that training can take many forms that best meets each library needs. Among the methods of training they proffer are: training from library schools, in-house training programme, outside training opportunities, self-paced training, workshops and seminar. Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) and Ajidahun (2007) outlined other education and training programmes to include: simple orientation, organised visits to other libraries, seminars and conferences, participatory management, internal or in-house training programmes, short courses and formal professional education. Others, according to Ajidahun (2007), are staff manual for self-development and research/sabbatical leave, continuing education, industrial attachment, formal education programmes leading to certificates, diploma and degrees, on-the-job learning from experienced colleagues, coaching and special project and off-the-job lectures, seminars, discussions and instructions of various types.

Nkebem (2016) further suggested attending workshops, seminars, conferences, refresher courses, short in-service or vacation courses and belonging to a professional body as a medium of development e.g. the Nigerian Library Association where views and write ups about the profession are published or discussed. Also independent reading can help in human development. According to Azino (2014), on-the-job training enables a person to learn a job while working at it or doing the particular job. He identified the various types of on-the-job training methods to include: job rotation, internship, apprenticeship, special or study assignment, and coaching.

To buttress these, Mohammed (2010) carried out a study on the capacity building of library staff of selected special libraries in Ekiti State. He found that there are various methods employed in libraries for the purpose of capacity building and these are conferences, seminar/workshops, spending time in developed countries libraries for the purpose of skill acquisition, library school courses, on-the-job training, classroom/lecture method, consultants and special training, in-service training and non-credit earning short courses. They stated that staff capacity building enhances job performance by upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment. Adeniji and Onasote (2006) also looked into library workers training programmes in two university libraries in Nigeria. The study showed that the two institutions have various manpower development programmes to enhance staff performance on the job. Some of the programmes they identified are: off-the-job and on-the-job training, internal training programme and initial orientation programmes for new staff.

Furthermore, a study carried out by Mbagwu and Nwachukvuu (2010), examined the training and development programmes of library staff in Federal University of Technology Owerri library. They found that induction and orientation, on-the-job training, workshops, seminars and conferences, simulation and extension training are the kinds of training and development available.

### **Assessing the Course Contents for Educating and Training of Librarians for National Integration and Development**

The education and training programme for librarians cannot go without a well-articulated course contents. Librarians' education and training programmes should be structured to meet the employers and manpower needs of this 21<sup>st</sup> century, taking cognisance of the impact of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and the challenges professionals are likely to face by having to train to acquire new skills and competencies to enable them function in a new era. This calls for new curricula which are geared toward preparing librarians to become new era librarians for information services delivery in organisations / institutions in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria. The course contents should help to produce librarians who will function as dynamic information providers and information specialists.

In recognition of the relevance that education and training can contribute to national integration and development, the course contents must reflect the best international practices, to enable librarians adapt to changes in the area of technology and to keep up-to-date with new practices, trends, and standards of practice in their field and in the new information order.

Course contents as practiced cannot be changed substantially without adequate attention to professional changing trends. However, Ifidon (2008) and Mohammed (2013) stated that the course contents should be reviewed every quinquenium. Aina (2007) further stated that the curriculum developed for the program should provide courses felt to be more relevant and appropriate. The course contents if well designed will provide librarians with specialised

knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective performance in a given position. Serious practical experience in courses in information technologies should be considered during education and training. Akin-Fakorede, Ottong and Eyo (2014) analysed 100 - 400 level course contents for the education and training of undergraduates in University of Calabar and University of Uyo as presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Course Contents for University of Calabar and University of Uyo for Educating and Training Librarians*

| S/N | University of Calabar   | University of Uyo   |
|-----|---|---|
| 1   | Introduction to library and information science                         | Libraries and information society                                       |
| 2   | History of libraries and information centres                            | History of libraries and information centres                            |
| 3   | Administration and management of libraries and information centre visit | Introduction to cataloguing and classification of information resources |
| 4   | Government publications   | Library resources and modern methodologies in education                 |
| 5   | Organisation of knowledge I   | The library circulation system  |
| 6   | Library and society   | Library and information centres study visits                            |
| 7   | Introduction to the Internet and electronic libraries                   | Bibliography  |
| 8   | Repackaging of information  | Information organisation I  |
| 9   | Multimedia  | Serials management  |
| 10  | Theory and practice of bibliography                                     | Information users   |
| 11  | Organisation of knowledge II  | Library and information services to rural communities                   |
| 12  | Library and information services to the rural communities               | Management of libraries and information centres                         |
| 13  | Legal issue on information management                                   | Information sources and services to different user groups               |
| 14  | Information management system and development                           | Literature and library services to children and adolescents             |
| 15  | Information use and literacy  | Oral tradition and cultural information resources                       |
| 16  | Information technologies  | Computers and Data processing   |
| 17  | Serial management   | Information organisation II   |
| 18  | Preservation and conservation of information resources                  | Information resources development and management                        |

Table 1 (continued)

| S/N | University of Calabar   | University of Uyo   |
|-----|---|---|
| 19  | Literature and library services to children and adolescents     | Reference and information sources and services                    |
| 20  | Collection development  | Information technologies  |
| 21  | School libraries/media resource centres                         | National, public libraries and information centre services        |
| 22  | Reference and information services online information retrieval | School libraries and media resource centres                       |
| 23  | Health information system                                       | Introduction to information science                               |
| 24  | Principles of cataloguing and classification                    | Technical services in libraries and information centres           |
| 25  | Automation in libraries   | Research and statistical methods                                  |
| 26  | National and public libraries                                   | Academic, special libraries and information centres               |
| 27  | Academic and special libraries                                  | Interlibrary cooperation and information networks                 |
| 28  | Gender and information management                               | Preservation and conservation of information resources            |
| 29  | Business information system                                     | Cataloguing and classification of non-book information resources  |
| 30  | Research project  | Library and information service policies                          |
| 31  | Field Experience/professionalism                                | Seminar on contemporary issues in library and information science |
| 32  | Entrepreneurship in information services                        | Field Experience (SIWES)  |
| 33  | Indexing and abstracting  | Bibliography and literature of the social science                 |
| 34  | Archives and record management                                  | Bibliography and literature of science and technology             |
| 35  | Book production publishing and trade                            | Research project  |
| 36  | Issues and themes in librarianship                              | Indexing and abstracting of information resources                 |
| 37  | Emerging technologies   | Information retrieval from the Internet                           |
| 38  | Information policies  | Automation in libraries and information centres                   |
| 39  | Computer communication and network management                   | Government information sources and services                       |
| 40  |   | Publishing and marketing of information resources                 |
| 41  |   | Africana information sources and services                         |
| 42  |   | Archives and records management                                   |
| 43  |   | Information entrepreneurship                                      |

**Source:** Akin-Fakorede, Ottong and Eyo, 2014

## Methodology

### Participants

The participants of this study include 63 librarians spread across the different sectors in Cross River State in South-south, Nigeria where libraries are established. These libraries are: Cross River University of Technology Calabar library, University of Calabar library, Federal College of Education, Obudu library, College of Education, Akamkpa library, College of Health Technology Calabar library, Teaching Hospital Calabar library, Cross River State Library Board, Ministry of Information Calabar library, Federal Girls' College Calabar library, SUBEB library, Psychiatric Hospital Calabar library.

The total enumeration technique was adopted to cover all the 63 librarians in the entire 11 libraries involved in the study. This is in line with Bernard (2012) assertion that if the population is not so large the entire population should be used for the study.

### Instruments

The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire. Survey design was also employed using questionnaire to elicit responses from librarians, the kind of education and training they desired for growth and national development. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section has to do

with the demographic data of the respondents while the second section contained ten items on educating and training of librarians on four points Likert type scale ranging from 1 - strongly disagree, 2 - disagree, 3 - agree to 4 - strongly agree. Reliability coefficient was 0.75. This made the instrument valid for the study.

Data collected through questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables and percentages.

## Findings

Table 2 shows the distribution of questionnaire to some librarians in Cross River State in South-south, Nigeria. It shows that only 63 usable questionnaires were completed and returned, summing up to 100%. Of the 63 questionnaires returned, 12 (19.0%) respondents were librarians from CRUTECH Calabar library, Unical library 16 (25.4%), Fed. College of Edu, Obudu library 10 (15.9), College of Edu, Akamkpa library 2 (3.2%), College of Health Tech. library 2 (3.2%), Teaching Hospital library 5 (7.9%), CRS Library Board 5 (7.9%), Ministry of Information library 1 (1.6%), Fed Girls' College library 5 (7.9%), SUBEB library 2 (3.2%), Psychiatric Hospital library 3 (4.8%). The respondents were asked to mark the education and training programmes for librarians for national integration and development. The findings of the survey are shown in Table 3.

*Pattern of questionnaire distribution*

| S/N          | Libraries   | No Distributed | No Returned | Response %  |
|--------------|---|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1            | Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) library, Calabar, CRS. | 15             | 12          | 19.0        |
| 2            | University of Calabar library, Calabar, CRS.                          | 40             | 16          | 25.4        |
| 3            | Federal College of Education library, Obudu, CRS.                     | 18             | 10          | 15.9        |
| 4            | Cross River State College of Education library, Akamkpa, CRS.         | 5              | 2           | 3.2         |
| 5            | College of Health Technology library, Calabar, CRS.                   | 5              | 2           | 3.2         |
| 6            | Teaching Hospital library, Calabar, CRS.                              | 10             | 5           | 7.9         |
| 7            | Cross River State Library Board, Calabar.                             | 10             | 5           | 7.9         |
| 8            | Ministry of Information library, Calabar, CRS.                        | 5              | 1           | 1.6         |
| 9            | Federal Girl's College library, Calabar, CRS.                         | 10             | 5           | 7.9         |
| 10           | SUBEB library, Calabar, CRS.  | 5              | 2           | 3.2         |
| 11           | Psychiatric Hospital library, Calabar, CRS.                           | 5              | 3           | 4.8         |
| <b>Total</b> |   | <b>128</b>     | <b>63</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

Table 3 shows the various avenues to educate and train librarians in Nigeria. The available programmes could enhance librarians in different areas of endeavours in their various libraries to function very well for national integration and development. However, 60 (95.2%) of librarians strongly agreed that acquisition of PhD enhanced their job performance as library administrator; regular attendance at cataloguing/classification workshops improved their knowledge and skills in cataloguing/classification; IT training workshops enhanced their knowledge and skills in information search, and coaching and mentoring in technical services improved their understanding and utilisation of work tools in technical services department. On the other hand, 57

(90.5%) of librarians indicated that with Master's degree they can supervise staff effectively on-the-job. In the same vein, 55 (87.3%) indicated that participation in conference programmes served as training grounds for improved circulation work, while 50 (79.4%) agreed that on-the-job training enabled them to become more competent in reference service, 50 (79.4%) also agreed that regular IT training workshop helped them to acquire modern skills to function in the library; 45 (71.4%) indicated that continuing education exposed them to modern library services delivery, and Job rotation training increased their confidence and commitment to work in any section of the library.

Table 3

*Educating and training of librarians for national integration and development*

| S/N | Educating and Training of Librarians   | No of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----|--|-------------------|------------|
| 1   | Acquisition of PhD enhanced my job performance as a library Administrator.   | 60                | 95.2%      |
| 2   | With Masters' degree I can supervise staff effectively on-the-job.   | 57                | 90.5%      |
| 3   | On-the-job training enabled me to become more competent in reference service.  | 50                | 79.4%      |
| 4   | Regular attendance at cataloguing and classification workshops improved my knowledge and skills in cataloguing/classification.         | 60                | 95.2%      |
| 5   | Regular IT workshop training helped me to acquire modern job related skills to carry out functions in the library.                     | 50                | 79.4%      |
| 6   | IT training workshop enhanced my knowledge and skills in information search.   | 60                | 95.2%      |
| 7   | Continuing education exposed me to the modern library services delivery to serve library users and the library community.              | 45                | 71.4%      |
| 8   | Job rotation training increased my confidence and commitment to work in any section of the library.                                    | 45                | 71.4%      |
| 9   | Coaching and mentoring in technical services improved my understanding and utilisation of work tools in technical services department. | 60                | 95.2%      |
| 10  | Participation in conference programmes served as training grounds for improved circulation work.                                       | 55                | 87.3%      |

### Discussion

The study shows significant relationships between education and training of librarians and their job performance for national integration and development. Without which librarians cannot deliver effective and efficient services. This is in line with Ajidahun (2007) assertion that, for there to be an enhanced job performance an employee's educational background must be relevant to the profession and job roles. Azino (2014) asserted that library services require professionally competent staff to meet the needs of its communities. Furthermore, a study carried out by

Mabawonku (2005) affirmed that for effective library service delivery, library and information professionals (LIPs) must be tutored and well-grounded to function effectively. Education and training contribute significantly to job performance because trained and equipped librarians utilise their job knowledge, skills and ability to enhance their job performance.

Moreso, the study also revealed that the articulated course contents for education and training of librarians are very much relevant and appropriate for national integration and development. The course contents analysed by Akin-Fakorede, Ottong and Eyo (2014)

further showed that librarians could be educated and trained with courses in area of library and information Sciences to become Bibliographers, Acquisition librarians, Cataloguers/Classifiers, Indexers, Publishers/Book traders/sellers, Information Brokers, Information Analysts, Archivists, Curators, Entrepreneurs or Consultants, Information Technologists, and Educators.

### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded that education and training of librarians are very relevant and appropriate for national integration and development. This reaffirms that education and training are the most proven vehicle for sustainable development in any nation. The performance index of librarians will enhance them to acquire the skills and competencies needed to render appropriate and quality services in libraries in Nigeria. The formal and informal programmes will enhance and improve their job knowledge, skills and competencies in library services delivery in Nigeria. Librarians' education and training will help them to acquire core competencies and new skills in this fast changing environment. The librarians with technological competencies have great opportunities to perform their jobs in their workplace, and eventually make better employees with stronger feeling of fulfilment about their work and assurance of ensuring the achievement of the objectives, goals and mission of their employers and themselves.

This study revealed various programmes for educating and training librarians for national integration and

development. These programmes are formal training (acquisitions of PhD, Master's and Bachelor's degrees) and informal training (attendance at conferences, workshops, seminar, professional meetings/discussions, continuing education, coaching and mentoring, etcetera) that enhance and improve their skills and competencies in library services delivery in Nigerian libraries.

### **Recommendations**

The paper recommended that education and training of librarians should be more of practicum to broaden and deepen their job knowledge in their career. In addition, emphasis should be more on information and communication (ICT) because in this Information Age, no library services can be provided efficiently and effectively without ICT facilities in libraries. Librarians must acquire computer and internet literacy.

Furthermore, attention should be given to courses in and practice of information technologies (IT) to enhance librarians work skills and competencies on how information materials are retrieved with the help of ICT tools. More relevant courses like web searching skills, research services, etcetera should be injected into the course contents.

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