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## **Staff Development Practices among Librarians in Public University Libraries in Ogun State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated staff development practices (SD) among librarians. The purpose of the study was to find out involvement of librarians in of staff development practices among librarians. Total enumeration was used to arrive at the sample size used for the study. Survey method was used while questionnaire was use to collect data from 42 librarians from three public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria. Data was analysed using frequency, mean and standard deviation. Findings indicated SD practices are available in the libraries studied. The study found additional higher degree, seminar and conferences and in house seminars as the most frequently patronised staff development practices among librarians. In addition, majority of librarians do not enjoy institutional support for staff development practices. Further findings showed that SD practices led to enhancement of capacity, increase skills, abilities, and competencies while broadening their knowledge base. Challenges affecting SD practices among librarians were lack of institutional support, reduction in financial power for self-sustenance as well as resistance to change among others. The study therefore recommends that both the university and the library manager should ensure that staff are given institutional support in terms sponsorship so that they can benefit from SD practices existing in their library. Necessary policies should be put in place to ensure to ensure equity in opportunities available to staff. Library management and the concerned authorities should allow librarians to TETFund fund to attend seminar and conferences so as to be conversant with development in their field.*

**Keywords:** Staff, Development, Professional librarians, Public university.



## **Introduction**

Staff development (SD) is critical in improving organisation efficiency, profitability and productivity. It increases the quality of service rendered to library clients and by so doing promotes user satisfaction. Librarians must involve themselves in continuous learning because the field of library science has consistently been experiencing growth and innovation. Library and information professionals need to develop their capacity consistently to be able to stay relevant in their profession. Current developments in information industry call for dynamism in library operations. Therefore, library practitioners must embrace information and communication technology and be fluent with it. They must be on top of their job. Most especially when information seeking behaviour of today's users has become dynamic and multifaceted. Meeting these divergent information needs require multifaceted approach, including versatility in technology usage. Library professionals, in this millennia must be well educated, well trained and highly motivated without which they will be unprepared to meet the diverse information needs of their clients (Connor, 2009).

Information and communication technology has impacted greatly on information handling practices in university libraries and this has necessitated the need for librarians to update their skills and competency to be able to function in the present scenario. Leveraging on information and communication technology (ICT) in service delivery, calls for knowledge expansion, acquisition of new skills and competency from librarians. Some of the ways these can be achieved is through attendance at seminars, conferences, workshops, continuing education and staff exchanges among many others. It is on note, that many a time, librarians are denied opportunity for sponsorship to seminars conferences and workshops on the basis of policies that make delivery of paper a compulsory requirement for sponsorship neglecting the professional needs of librarians. Even though librarians are academic staff, nonetheless their professional roles must not be neglected. This must attract training and retraining to make them relevant in their field.

In university libraries, librarians generally play dual roles. They are first and foremost professionals cum administrators and then researchers cum teachers. By virtue of their profession, librarians are expected to deliver accurate, comprehensive and timely information to users using the vast array of information resources, comprising pre-print, non-print and electronic based collections at their disposal. At the same time, they also supervise and manage both human and material resources in their libraries. In addition, they are expected to teach and carry out research to attain tenure. As a researcher and custodian of information resources, librarians are expected to be knowledgeable and skilful in the use of ICT for the discharge of duties and responsibilities. This can only be achieved through various staff development programmes.

Lack of sponsorship to seminar and workshops is inimical to the growth and development of librarians. The subject of staff development places joint responsibility on both the institution and the individual (Mathew, Baby & Pillar, 2011), nevertheless, they are both beneficiaries of its outcome. Though IFLA (2016) considers SD as individual responsibility, this notwithstanding, the economic indices cannot support sole responsibility for staff development. Institutions must be proactive, in supporting its staff. This calls for greater involvement in achieving sustainability and continuity for meaningful staff development in libraries.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Staff development is critical for the growth and development of competencies needed to enhance working abilities of employee in any organisation. As professionals, librarians need to upgrade their knowledge and skills to enhance the performance of professional duties and responsibilities. Likewise, there is the need to improve on publishing skills because they are promoted on the basis of professional services and publications output; making them susceptible to publish or



perish syndrome in the universities. However, it has been observed that sponsorship to seminars, workshops and conferences are majorly based on paper delivery, living out critical professional development of librarians unattended to. This is inimical to the achievement of individual competency and effectiveness on the job and the promotion of good service delivery to library users. This may partly explain why some librarians are not performing adequately in certain tasks. It is against background, therefore, that this study sought to empirically investigate the extent of staff development practices of librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to investigate staff development practices among librarians in public universities in Ogun state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study set out to:

- i. examine the nature and availability of staff development practices for librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State;
- ii. assess the frequency of staff development practices uptake by librarians in public university libraries in Ogun state;
- iii. identify the benefits of staff development practices to librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State;
- iv. ascertain the existence of policy that guides staff development practices in public university libraries in Ogun State;
- v. identify source of sponsorship available for staff development practices by librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State; and
- vi. identify the challenges to staff development practices among librarians in the libraries studied.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the nature of staff development practices available for librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the frequency of staff development practices uptake by librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- iii. What are the benefits derived from of staff development practices by librarians in public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- iv. What are the policies that guide staff development practices in public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- v. What are the sources of sponsorship for staff development practices in public university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria?
- vii. What are the challenges to staff development practices in the library studied?

### **Review of Related Literature**

Development generally has been associated with improvement on existing structure. According to Otsonu, Asom, Zuwaira and Olije (2016), development is a multi-faceted phenomena capable of enabling one to attain comprehensive skill, creativity, independence, self-discipline and acquisition of knowledge commensurate with one's job duties and responsibilities. Staff development on the other hand is defined by Khan and Khan (2013) as the process, programs and activities through which organisations, in this instance, the library, develops, enhances and improves the skills, competence and performance of librarians.

Staff development practices are activities that are expected to improve the capacity and capability of workers among other intervention which librarians are encouraged to develop. Librarianship place much premium on professional development, as it is capable of improving and expanding the knowledge of personnel and at the same time enhance professional practices leading



to efficient job performance. There are numerous staff development practices that can be of value to librarians. This could be formal or informal in nature. Aslam (2017) itemised variety of staff development activities that could aid in preparing librarians for future challenges to include: group learning, attendance at professional conferences, workshops and updating oneself through literature in current trends in Library and Information Science. Imam, Muhammad, Abba and Ijekhuamehen (2020) identified area of needs which requires capacity building among librarians. These are in the trouble shooting new technologies, academic research, Internet search, e-library management, among others.

Khan and Khan (2013) investigated staff development practices among Pakistan library staff and their finding revealed the type of staff development practiced among librarians. These include: the creation of problem solving groups, secondment, meet and greet, field trips, buddy system, avocation, technology guidance, specialized trainings, incentives, specialized lectures, creation of staff development portals, among others. A study carried out by Iwuchukwu and Echedom (2020) revealed the availability of training and development programmes in academic libraries in Imo state. Anyaegbu and Wali (2021) in their investigation of staff training development programmes in federal universities in south-south Nigeria, and found that orientation, computer literacy, simulation exercises, in service workshop, seminars, consultancy and others are the trainings and development programmes available to librarians. Pan and Horvde (2010) investigated various professional development practices among Chinese libraries, and identified cross library visit, cross trainings, mentorship, peer coaching and exchanges as the most common. The study emphasised that the most prominent staff development practice in these libraries is continuing education for higher degrees. Ojowoh (2016) in an investigation of Bayelsa and Delta University libraries found that librarians are involved in staff development practices through attendance at seminars, workshops, orientation courses, in-service trainings and inductions courses. Examining various staff development practices that are majorly used by libraries, the study by Mathew, Baby and Pillar (2011) revealed that higher educational degree received the most attention while participation in allied courses were equally adopted.

It is disheartening to note that most libraries do not give priority to staff development as a result of lack of appropriate policy to direct and guide the practice. Availability of SD policy instituted by academic libraries would guide implementation and ensure it is captured in yearly budget of the library. Namaganda (2019) as well as Otsonu, Asom, Zuwaira and OIije (2016) stressed the need for effective staff development policy that would serve as guide to aid decision making. Aslam (2017), Lokhart and Majal (2012) emphasised the need for libraries to provide a framework that will spell out in detail, plans and actions for effective staff development programmes. In a study on staff training turnover and retention pattern in Ethiopian academic library by Gojeh, Ayde and Fantadahun (2015) findings indicated that staff development policies existed and this drives training and retraining of library professionals. In another study conducted by Gillan (2009) in Sidney, findings indicated that 52% of the respondents indicated that academic library had a formal written policy that guided their SD activities in their respective academic libraries.

Staff development has been found to be beneficial to both individual staff and the organisation. Staff development is essential for staff upgrading as well as expansion of their capacity and capabilities. Professional development which is the same as staff development, enables library professionals acquire certain skills set needed to achieve excellence in the provision of support services to universities. Its adoption leads to self-improvement and proficiency, competence, job upgrades and promotion. In consonance with the above findings, Cobblah (2015) in a study on librarians in Ghana reported that training programmes led to improved knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences of library staff emphasising further, that it promoted efficient and effective service delivery



to the university community. Other benefits are that, it builds staff confidence and capabilities in providing services in spite of task difficulties; equips librarians for future challenges; career development; improves personnel job performance and productivity (Cobblah & Jiagge, 2017; Slam, 2017). In a study done by Anyaegbu and Nkiruka (2021) it was discovered that staff training and development influenced librarians job performance positively.

In spite of the immense benefits that can be derived from staff development practices, numerous challenges hinder librarians from benefiting from the practices and this is detrimental to the achievement of effective job performance. Maesaroh and Geoni (2010) investigated continuing professional practices (CPP) in Indonesian libraries and result indicated that though CPP was in a healthy state in most of the libraries studied, there was high rate of participation among libraries in CPP activities, but that notwithstanding, the state of infrastructure that ought to support CPP training was poor. This was described as 'grossly underdeveloped' and unable to support practical organized, during trainings. Iwuchukwu and Echedom (2020) identified poor funding, lack of management policy on training and development programmes to update their knowledge on new technology, as challenges facing academic librarians. Other challenges include lack of development plan and lack of budget, which resulted in infrequent trainings.

Funding plays crucial role in sponsorship by institutions and this must be well captured in budgets. Agbo (2015) identified lack of fund, lack of sponsorship, lack of training facilities absence of promotion and participation as factors hindering staff training and development programmes at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture university library. Cobblar (2015) considered inadequate funding shortfall in training policies or absence of training policies as some of the factors mitigating against SD. Otsonu, Asom, Zuwaira and OIije (2016) identified poor budgetary allocation, lack of sponsorship, discrimination against library staff by members in an organisation as impediment to staff development practices in special libraries in Benue State, in Nigeria. Moonasar, and Underwood (2018) also identified lack of management support and refusal to release staff for further studies constitute impediments to the success of SD in these libraries. Imam et al (2020) also advocated for the provision of adequate funding to enhance capacity building among library information professionals. In the absence of institutional funding, self-financing becomes imperative. Most library professionals rely only on self-financing.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted using survey research design of correlational type. The population of the study consisted of 41 librarians from 3 selected public university libraries in Ogun State. Total enumeration was used to arrive at the sample used for the study. This was due to small population size. Self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data from librarians working in the selected libraries. The test and retest method was used to determine the validity of the questionnaire. The pretest of the instrument was carried out at Kenneth Dike university library. The reliability of the paper was 0.83. The questionnaire was administered through participants in the study who were from the selected university libraries. The instrument covered availability frequency, policy existence, sources of sponsorship, benefits and challenges in relation to staff development practices in selected university libraries. The response rate was 99%. Data was analysed using frequency, mean and standard deviation.



**Analysis and Findings**

**Table 1. Demographic distribution of the respondents**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	19	46.3
Male	22	53.7
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 30 years	08	19.5
30-29 years	21	51.2
40 49years	11	26.8
50 years and above	01	2.4
<b>Status</b>		
Single	05	12.2
Married	36	87.8
<b>Designation</b>		
Deputy UL	02	4.9
Principal Librarian	14	34.1
Senior Librarian	12	29.3
Librarian 1	08	19.5
Librarian 11	05	12.2
<b>Highest Qualification</b>		
Ph.D	10	24.4
M. Phil	03	7.3
Master Degree	28	68.3
<b>Experience</b>		
1-5years	11	26.8
6-10years	02	4.9
11-15 years	13	31.7
16-20years	09	22.0
Above 20yrs	06	14.6



Table 1 shows the demographic characteristic of the respondents by gender, age, designations, qualification and experience. The table reveals that 22 (53.7%) were male while 19(46.3%) were female. This indicates that majority of the respondents were males. The table reveals further that between 40 and 49 (51.2%) were in the majority. This was followed by 50years and above with 41(26.6%). This implies that though younger librarians are not in majority they however need to be developed in order for them to be able to take over from those that are exiting the job. The table reveals further that 36(87.8%) were married while 5(12.2%) were singles. Principal librarian constitutes a majority 14(34.1%) this is followed by senior librarian 12(29.3%). The lowest designation is the DUL with 2(4.9%). The highest qualification among the respondents are the holders of Master Degree 28(68.3%). On years of experience, those with 11-15years are in the majority. This is followed by those with 1- 5years (26.8%) experience, while the lowest is between 6-10years (4.9%).

**Table 2: Nature and availability of staff development practices among respondents**

	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
In-house seminar and workshop	12	29.3	18	43.9	11	26.8	2.02	0.75
Job Enrichment	05	12.2	28	63.3	08	19.5	1.92	0.08
Additional Higher Degree	07	17.1	24	58.5	10	24.4	1.92	0.64
On the job training	03	7.3	31	75.6	07	17.1	1.90	0.49
Seminars and Conferences	05	12.2	26	63.4	10	24.4	1.87	0.59
Specialised training	05	12.2	25	61.0	11	26.8	1.85	0.09
Job rotation	5	12.2	25	61.0	11	26.6	1.85	0.09
Staff Exchanges	05	12.2	24	58.5	12	29.3	1.82	0.62
Orientation	05	12.2	24	58.5	12	29.3	1.82	0.62
Coaching/Mentoring	02	4.9	29	70.7	10	24.4	1.80	0.82
Visit to other library	04	9.8	24	58.5	12	29.3	1.78	0.95
Trial and Error	04	9.8	23	56.1	14	34.1	1.75	0.62
Job Shadowing	05	12.2	18	43.9	18	43.9	1.68	0.68
Peer Coaching	04	9.8	16	39.0	21	51.2	1.58	0.66
Cross Library Visit	03	7.3	16	39.0	22	53.7	1.53	0.63

Table 2 indicates that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that staff development practices were available. The highest mean score on availability reveal that in house seminar or workshop has the highest mean score of 2.02; SD.75. This is followed by additional degree with mean score of 1.92 SD .99. The lowest mean score was recorded by cross library visit at 1.53, SD.90.



**Table 3. Frequency of staff development practices among the respondents**

Staff Development Practices	Very Frequently		Frequently		Seldom		Not at all	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Additional Higher degree	10	24.4	12	29.3	14	34.1	5	12.2
Seminar/Conferences	5	12.2	17	41.5	15	36.6	4	9.8
Specialized training	8	19.5	10	24.4	13	31.7	10	24.4
In house seminar or workshop	8	19.5	14	34.1	12	29.3	7	17.1
Visit to other library	4	9.8	12	29.3	15	36.6	10	24.4
Coaching/mentoring	3	7.3	15	36.6	15	36.6	8	19.5
Orientation	6	14.5	17	41.5	09	22.0	9	22.0
Job rotation	8	19.5	12	29.3	12	29.3	9	22.0
Job enrichment	6	14.6	11	26.8	17	41.5	7	17.1
On the job training	9	22.0	10	24.4	17	41.5	5	12.2
Job Shadowing	4	9.8	12	29.3	11	26.8	14	34.1
Trial and error	2	4.9	11	26.8	14	34.1	15	36.6
Staff exchanges	-	0	6	14.6	17	41.5	18	43.9
Peer coaching	2	4.9	10	24.4	14	34.1	15	36.6

Looking at Table 3, majority of the respondents frequently make use of staff development practices to boost their career and widen their knowledge scope. The items that received the highest patronage by librarians on staff development practices are additional higher degree, seminar/conferences and in-house seminars with 22(53.7%) while the least patronized staff development practice is staff exchanges with 06(14.6%)

**Table 4. Sources of sponsorship for staff professional practices**

Sponsorship	Frequency	%
Institution	2	4.9
Self	16	39.0
Tetfund	7	17.1
Institution/Library Management	1	2.4
Institution/Self	4	9.8
Self/Special Grant	7	17.1
Institution/Self/Special Grant	4	9.8

Table 4 shows on sources of sponsorship on staff development practices. Majority of the respondents 16(39.0%) embraced self- sponsorship. This was followed by Tetfund sponsorship with





7(17.1%). The least is institution based sponsorship which is 2(4.9%). Others made use of combination of staff development sponsorship, those who made use of self/special grant were 7(17.1%); institution/self 4(9.8%) and institution/self/special grant had 4(9.8%) while library management/institution had 1(2.4%). The implication of this findings is that majority of the respondents were nothing sponsored by their respective institution.

On staff development policy, 28(8.3%) indicated that staff development policy does not exist in their library while 13(37.7%) indicated that there existed one policy or the other.

**Table 5: Benefits of staff development practices to the respondents**

Staff Development Practices	Strong		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD
	Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Enhance capacity to perform current and future responsibility	30	73.2	9	22.2	2	4.9	-	-	3.68	.56
Increase efficiency at work	29	70.7	10	24.4	2	4.9	-	-	3.65	.57
Enhance abilities, Skills and competencies	27	65.9	12	29.3	2	4.9	-	-	3.60	.58
Enable one to apply innovative technologies at work	24	58.5	15	36.6	2	4.9	-	-	3.53	.59
Increase ability to meet users need	20	48.8	19	46.3	2	4.9	-	-	3.43	.59
Broaden professional knowledge	23	58.1	14	34.1	2	4.9	2	4.9	3.41	.45

Table 5: shows the benefits of staff development practices to librarians in public university libraries. Enhancing respondents' capacity to perform current and future responsibility has the highest mean score of 3.68; SD .56. This is followed by increase efficiency at work with a mean of 3.65; SD .57. Broadens professional knowledge had the lowest mean core of 3.41; SD .80.

**Table 6: Challenges to development practices among the respondents**

Challenges	Strong		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	SD
	Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Inadequate institutional supports	4	9.8	21	51.2	13	31.7	3	7.3	2.92	.84
Reduction in financial power for self -sustenance	10	24.4	20	48.8	7	17.1	4	9.8	2.87	.89
Lack of staff development policy	8	19.5	31	51.2	8	19.5	4	9.8	2.80	.87



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Non conducive regulations and policies e. g publish or perish	8	19.5	21	51.2	6	14.6	6	14.6	2.75	.94
High cost involved in staff development practices	6	14.6	20	48.8	13	31.7	2	4.9	2.73	.77
Inadequate facilities to support staff development in libraries	7	17.1	20	48.8	10	24.4	4	9.8	2.73	.86
Hectic work schedule of librarians	4	9.8	21	51.2	13	31.7	3	7.3	2.63	.76
Resistance of some librarians to change	6	14.6	17	41.5	13	31.7	5	12.2	2.58	.89
Low level of commitment on the part of librarians	5	12.2	15	36.6	12	29.3	9	22.0	2.39	.97

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Table 6 identified the challenges facing the respondents in accessing staff development practices. Inadequate institutional support had the highest mean score with a mean of 2.92; SD .84. Reduction in financial power for self-sustenance had a mean of 2.75; .89 and resistance of some librarians to change had the lowest mean of 2.58 SD .89 and low level of commitment on the part of librarians also had a mean score of 2.39; SD .97.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The findings of this study revealed that different staff development practices were available to librarians in the university libraries studied. This is in consonance with Ojowoh (2016) which reported that librarians in Delta State were involved in staff development practices. In the same vein, Pan and Horvde (2010) identified cross library visits, peer coaching, mentorship, specialized training, and exchanges as various professional development practices available in Chinese libraries. The study revealed that Institutional based sponsorship was very low. Self-sponsorship was majorly the means by which respondents developed themselves in their career. The finding is in consonance with Otsonu, Asom, Zuwairu and Olije (2016) that reported lack of sponsorship and poor budgetary allocation as impediment to staff development practices among librarians. This could be highly discouraging to staff when staff cannot improve on their capacity on the job. This is hazardous to both individual and the institution alike. On staff development policy, majority of the respondents indicated that staff development policy exist in their library. The findings of this study negates the findings of Gojeh, Ayde and Fantadahun (2015) which reported the existence of staff development policy in the libraries studied.

The findings from this study showed that staff development practices improved capacity to perform current and future responsibilities as well as enhance abilities and competences of librarians. These findings corroborate Cobblah (2015) and Cobblah and Jiagge (2017) which reported that staff development practices led to improvement in knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences of library staff with improvement in performance and their level of productivity. On challenges to staff development practices among librarians, the finding revealed inadequate institutional support, reduction in financial power for self-sustenance and lack of staff development policy. The findings of this study corroborates Otsonu, Asom, Zawaira and Olije (2016) which identified poor funding, lack of staff training policy, discrimination against library staff within the same organization as challenges facing library staff. The implication of this is that institutional support which is very low in most libraries



could lead to lack of commitment among librarians. Apart from this, it could raise mediocre among librarians due to lack of exposure to new methods, processes and procedure in service delivery.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, it is obvious that among the major obstacles to effective staff development in the surveyed libraries is lack of institutional support. This could translate to lack of commitment on the part of librarians in working effectively towards the achievement of the goals of the library.

### **Recommendations**

1. Librarians should be given institutional support to develop their career through constant attendance at seminars and workshops on technology enhancement.
2. The library management and the concerned authorities should allow librarians to assess TETFund fund to attend seminar and conferences so as to be conversant with development in their field.
3. Library management should ensure that funds are set aside for the development of librarians which should be captured in the library budget.
4. There should be a written policy that can practically guide staff development practices in the university libraries. This will ensure equity in the distribution of available training opportunities among staff.



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