

# Training of Library Assistants in Academic Library: A Study of Babcock University Library, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the need to train and retrain library assistants in academic libraries. The researchers however used Babcock University Library to ascertain the impacts of training of library assistants. A descriptive design was adopted for this study. A total enumeration sampling method was used. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The population was made up of 30 respondents who were library assistants at the Babcock University Library, Nigeria. A total number of 30 questionnaires were administered. All the questionnaires were retrieved and were found useful giving a return rate of 100% used for this study. The result shows that library assistants were not given training in the area of system management and web searching. In addition, 27 (90%) of the respondents agreed that training will enhance their job performance while 30 (100%) of the respondents agreed that training will improve their skills to support library users in searching for information electronically. Based on the findings the researchers recommend that library assistants should be trained on electronic information technology usage as this will impact the overall service delivery in meeting the goals of the academic library.

## Keywords

training, library assistants, libraries, library profession, information science, social sciences, Babcock University, Nigeria

## Introduction

Changes in libraries in recent years have resulted in the need for new or expanded skills, abilities and knowledge of library assistants. 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. Hence, the awareness of the library professionals of the need for continuous training, because of the increasing variety of information formats and library services (Dawha, 2009). Khan and 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. Fitzgibbons (2008) posits that computer skills are requisite for library work in general while the librarians and library assistants must have a high enough level of knowledge to troubleshoot and assist clients in all areas of service need.

The knowledge needed can be acquired through regular training and development. However, Fitzgibbons (2008) reiterates that lack of adequate training for required tasks particularly in regard to technology has been identified as one of the causes of workplace stress in academic libraries.

According to Word 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). According to Managementstudyguide.com (2012), training is the process of enhancing the skills, capabilities and knowledge of employees for doing a particular job. Fitzgibbons (2008) further opines that training of librarians and library assistants can provide the confidence that limits mental techno stress.

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Oke and Oguntuase (2010) affirm that training and development 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. However, training and development of library assistants seem not to be considered as important despite the fact that it focuses on the current employee needs and competency. Therefore, it is pertinent for librarians to train library assistants as a means of empowering them for future assignments and responsibilities.

## Concept of Training

According to Eze (2012), 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.

## Babcock University Library

Babcock University Library has evolved over the years from 1959 to date serving as a College Library, Seminary Library, and now University Library. This transition presented various forms of challenges that of course were not insurmountable. The main library is situated at the center of core academic activities of Babcock University and serves as the academic resource of last recourse.

There are five branch libraries located within the host School or Department that caters for the information, research, and learning needs of users. The manpower development in the library has highly increased. There are 18 professional librarians and 30 library assistants who oversee the day-to-day running of the library services.

As at June 2013, the library has a total book stock of about 63,350. It also subscribes to several local and international print journals with a total collection of 4,416. The electronic databases like EBSCO, AGORA, DOAJ, AJOL, JSTOR, OARE, HINARI, and Nigerian Virtual Library to mention a few provide access to about 15,072 e-journals that are relevant to the academic programs of the university that are freely accessible by staff, students and registered library users via the library Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) <http://library.babcock.edu.ng/>

Periodically, the library organizes in-house seminar and workshop for library assistants. This is to ensure that they are

able to support users to access and use electronic databases subscribed by the University Library. Also the program was aimed at enhancing their capability to use modern applications for cataloging and classification of library materials. It further enables them to understand how to utilize electronic information resources access the OPAC and retrieve information.

## Statement of the Problem

Modern management techniques have shown that all levels of staff should benefit from training programs. In most academic libraries, library assistants are found to carry out task of shelving books and routine circulation desk activities among others. However, researches have shown that professional librarians are usually given better opportunities while the library assistants who also need training are often neglected or are denied such opportunities through rigid bureaucratic processes. Training of library assistants is very necessary because they are involved in the day-to-day processing and organization of materials in the library. They also work on desks or computer terminals entering data, compile bibliographic records, and help patrons find library resources that require training because of changes in library services. This study therefore tends to investigate how training of library assistants can enhance library services, improve their performance and productivity, and enable them support the librarians beyond usual library activities.

## Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine the impact of training and development of library assistants in Academic libraries. Specific objectives are to

1. Examine the different types of training made available to library assistants
2. Know the types of training programs that were attended by the library assistants
3. Ascertain the need to train library assistants in academic library for effective performance and productivity.

## Research Questions

To achieve the set objectives, the study was guided by three research questions as follows.

**Research Question 1:** What are the types of training made available to library assistants?

**Research Question 2:** What are the types of training programs attended by the library assistants?

**Research Question 3:** How can training of library assistants in academic library enhance their performance and productivity?

## Review of Related Literature

### *An Overview of Training and Development*

Training is crucial for organizational development and success. It is fruitful to employers and employees in any organization. An employee will become more efficient and productive if he or she is well trained. Training has been defined by a number of scholars and trainers as “change agent.” Steinmitz (1968) defined training as a process of utilizing a systematic and organized procedure by which non-personnel learn technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose. According to Flippo (1984), training is the act of increasing the skills of an employee for doing a particular job. Similarly, McNamara (n.d.) noted that training involves an expert working with learners to transfer to them certain areas of knowledge or skills to enable them improve in their current jobs.

Training, therefore, is a technique concerned with the development of skills and knowledge in a particular discipline. Training enhances and improves employee’s skills; imparts knowledge to change employee’s attitudes; and values toward a particular direction. Training is a technique that focuses on the achievement of particular goals and objectives of an organization. According to Managementstudyguide.com (2012) training is given on four basic grounds:

- New candidates who join an organization are given training,
- The existing employees are trained to refresh and enhance their knowledge,
- If there is any updates and amendments that takes place in technology, and
- When promotion and career growth becomes important.

These points remain very important why training takes place in any organization. However, the question is: does it apply to junior staff and especially library assistants in the library? 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 emphasize that

The librarian should ensure regular training 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 . . .

### **Benefit of Training**

Torrington et al. (2009) cited by Cole and Kelly (2011) suggest that there is a general agreement that training and development is a good thing and that it increases productivity. The cost of training cannot be compared with the benefits derived from it. Some of the benefits include increased productivity, improved employees’ morale, encourages less supervision, reduction of errors, and increased chances of promotion among others. Slee (1997) posits that training is a systematic approach to staff development, continuing education and program of learning opportunities, with the aim of ensuring that workers continue to acquire and adapt their skills and knowledge to a changing environment.

Training helps to remove performance deficiencies, whether current or anticipated that causes employees to perform minimally. It therefore enhances the employees to be much more productive (Obi & Zakari, 2005). Training and development is a deliberate attempt to improve current or future employee’s performance through learning. It is a vital function of the human resource department in an organization.

According to Olaniyan and Ojo (2008), training can solve a variety of manpower problems that militate against optimum productivity. Word Quotient (2009) noted that the *benefits* of training for an employee range from increased job satisfaction, increased motivation, and improved performance. While for an organization its benefits range from increased productivity and improved efficiency.

Kayode (2001) opines that training contributes a lot to an organization. These include increased productivity, improved quality of work, development of new skills/knowledge, and use of new tools and machines correctly. Other benefits are implementation of new policies and regulations, fighting of obsolescence in skills, technologies and methods. Training also provides standard of performance for a job, prepare people for advancement, improved manpower deployment, ensure continuity of leadership, survival and growth of an organization, among others.

### **The Role of Library Assistants in 21st-Century Academic Library**

According to Education Portal (2012), library assistants perform duties by organizing library resources and make them available to patrons. Their task however goes beyond that. Library assistants are the people involved in the day-to-day activities of a library. They perform tasks such as collecting returned books, lending out books or periodicals and other library materials. They also register new library users and help them use library facilities effectively. Library assistants are the people behind the meticulous compilation of book titles for order. They sort the books and periodicals consulted by library users and arrange them on shelves on daily basis. They help to make the experience of a library patron less

tedious. They are always available to help users locate desired titles, and answer some of their queries (State University, n.d.).

According to McKay (n.d.), library assistants help librarians and library technicians organize materials and make them available to the public. They start their career by performing simple tasks, such as shelving of books and periodicals among others. They eventually perform more advance tasks that may include working at the circulation desk. In academic library, training of library assistants usually takes place on the job, but some employers prefer to hire candidates who have had prior clerical experience. McKay outlined typical daily activities of a library assistant that include issue library cards to library patrons; work at the circulation desk, lending and receiving library-owned materials; inspect returned material for damage; repair damaged books and magazines, sort and shelve materials.

Australian Library and Information Association (n.d.) opine that library assistants work as part of a service team to assist librarians and library technicians with library and office tasks and procedures. They respond to enquiries and provide advice and assistance to library users; work as part of a team in a library or information service environment; identify and correct minor faults with multimedia equipment; shelve library resources; direct customers to use information services, for example, electronic catalogs, electronic information resources, and other library resources.

Considering these stated duties that are carried out daily by library assistants, there is no doubt why they should not undergo adequate training to engender quality services to the library patrons. Library assistants perform variety of responsible and clerical work in support of daily library operations. They help all patrons to locate resources within a library and some of them specialize in helping visually impaired patrons to find books or large-type books.

Library assistant has the ability to learn, understand, and apply pertinent laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; sort and organize materials in alphabetical, numerical and topical order and carry out oral and written instructions. In addition, the library assistants deal effectively with patrons with special needs, or in confrontational situations to locate, sort and retrieve materials according to the classification system used in the library. They perform circulation duties and provide basic reference services to library patrons to effectively use computers for specialized library applications and Internet research. <https://www.mariposacounty.org/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1923>

## Training Needs in Academic Library

Identifying the training needs is first and probably the most important step toward the identification of training techniques. The process of identifying training needs is to

carefully look at program that need to be carried out with sensitivity because success of a training program may be crucial for the survival of the organization (Al-Ajlouni et al., 2010; Olaniyan & Ojo 2008). Training needs also determine the nature of training program. Abifarin (1997) opines that staff is an important factor in motivation. If people are engaged through training, the impact on them and the library will be immeasurable. Library assistants require training for various purposes. Jain (1999) and Rowley (1995) cited by Dawha (2009) posits that lack of training results in lack of ability to use existing knowledge, which causes ineffective services, lack of customer satisfaction, and lower productivity. Pugh (1984) maintains that training will foster an increase in professionalism and better management methods, whereas lack of training can cause frustration and lack of job satisfaction. Well-trained individuals know the scope and expectations of their jobs and will be able to add building blocks to their expertise as they progress through their careers.

Oke and Oguntuase (2010) study on training needs of library assistants in two Nigeria academic libraries identified that occasional training alone is not adequate for optimal performance. The objective of training and development in a library is to enhance the individual's capacity to contribute optimally to the development of the library. Training and development of library assistants is very crucial due to environmental changes and technological innovations (Olaniyan & Ojo, 2008). One may therefore conclude that training physically, socially, intellectually, and mentally to facilitate productivity cannot be overemphasized.

Furthermore, Dawha (2009) investigation of personnel training needs at the Ibrahim Babangida Library, Federal University of Technology, Yola, Nigeria, reveal that training is important because it enhances library's effort to provide services to the university community. Fitzgibbons (2008) stresses that regardless of the exact model use staff (professional librarian and library assistant) requires certain skills to effectively carry out an acceptable level of seamless services.

## Types of Training Required for Library Assistants

At the point of entry into the job, a library assistant is required to go through some training to equip him or her for the task ahead. Such training is all encompassing. According to the American Association of Law Libraries (2013), the library assistant is responsible for the acquisition, distribution, and maintenance of the firm's printed material resources. Therefore, the competency required includes to

- Shelf books and maintain the library in a neat and orderly manner;
- Acquire and organize print library materials;
- Originate correspondence including ordering publications, renewing subscriptions, resolving billing



problems, tracing missing issues, and returning unwanted or duplicate materials;

- Check in all subscriptions, journals, newsletters, pocket parts, new volumes, loose leaf supplementation, new books, and so on;
- Process all books, journals, and newsletters (pocketing, stamping, etc.) that have been checked into the system;
- Photocopy and circulate the table of contents and highlight pages of various publications;
- Maintain the library catalog by adding new holdings and existing holdings to the catalog;
- File loose leaf supplements, new books, pocket parts, periodicals, and so on;
- Assist in legal research using a variety of print and electronic research tools such as Westlaw and Lexis;
- Provide reference services to attorneys and staff by answering questions, retrieving materials, and filling interlibrary loan requests;
- Resolve and/or direct questions or problems with subscriptions to the appropriate person for resolution.

However, the American Association of Law Libraries that also serves as an academic library did not stipulate some fundamentals and effectual areas of training that a library assistant need to undergo before and when engaged on the job. Their interest is focused on their nature of work and resources as legal practitioners, which differs from a multifaceted academic library that supports different academic courses. Their focus may be limited to their specific needs in their law specialty. However, in a core academic library which is the main focus of this study, most of the things articulated above could be mentioned at the first stage of training, which may be referred to “orientation.” Academic library provides holistic training covering all areas of services from circulation, reference, technical, serials, and Information Communication and Technology (ICT) support among others. But where training is lacking, certainly, the effect will be felt on quality of services provided.

Benoit in 1987 reported on training of library assistants in Mauritius and noted some of the important areas covered in the report. The program was designed for the training of intending and prospecting participants as library assistants to a higher level of efficiency in library activities. He emphasized that seminars for library assistants were held once a week.

American Library Association (ALA; 2013) opines that training requirements for library assistants are generally minimal and most libraries prefer to hire workers with a high school diploma. Library assistants receive most of their training on the job indicating that the type of training given to them is based on the job to be performed. ALA also noted that library assistants help librarians while library technicians organize library resources and make them available to users. At the circulation desk, library assistants lend and collect books, periodicals, videotapes, and other materials.

However, ALA (2013) specifically outline areas that training can be given to a library technicians that are also related to those performed by library assistants including (but is not limited to) directing library users to standard references, organizing and maintaining periodicals, preparing volumes for binding, handling interlibrary loan requests, preparing invoices, performing routine cataloging and coding of library materials, and retrieving information from computer databases.

Most importantly, considering the library’s mission, goals and objectives with regard to ensuring an unbiased acquisition and provision of access to materials, library assistants support the librarians to achieve the goals by effectively performing their duties.

### **Factors Influencing Training Needs of Library Assistants**

Organizations are complex and dynamic in nature. The effectiveness of an employee greatly depends on a number of factors. Complexity of organization is again a multifaceted implication of various factors being determined by various environmental factors. Hence, the nature of complexity of a given organization needs to be evaluated before determining its training needs. Khan and Bhatti (2012) investigation of application of social media in marketing of library and information services found out that inadequate training opportunity is one of the problems faced for applying social media in libraries.

Technology in this computer age is being upgraded frequently and is increasing the complexity of an organization structurally as well as behaviorally. According to Frances and Bee (1994), technology is changing in an ever-increasing rate. The technological changes are influencing the basic settings of academic libraries. The changes are not only concerned with the structure or gadgets of an academic library but also influence the behavioral aspect of the very people who work in the library. However people do not usually change easily, but adapt gradually to technology and the environment. The change can be brought about in a smooth manner only through training techniques (Al-Ajlouni et al., 2010). The library assistants must catch up with changes in technology and imbibe a culture of learning and adapt to changes in the 21st-century library.

### **Factors Inhibiting Training in Academic Library**

Factors militating against training of library assistants are numerous. According to Abba and Dawha (2009) in their study of personnel training needs identified inadequate funding, lack of qualification, shortage of personnel, and lack of written training policy as major setback for training in Ibrahim Babangida Library, Federal University of Technology, Yola, Nigeria. Furthermore, Nzotta (1994) cited by Eze (2012) also identified lack of fund, lack of management’s interest in

**Table 1.** Age of the Respondents (*N* = 30).

Age	Frequency	%
15-20	4	13.3
21-25	7	23.3
26-30	11	36.7
31-35	6	20.0
36-40	2	6.7
Total	30	100

**Table 2.** Gender of the Respondents (*N* = 30).

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	11	36.6
Female	19	63.4
Total	30	100

training, inadequate number of workers, no written policy, and lean budget as factors hindering training. In a nutshell, inadequate funding, lack of management interest and nondocumentation of training policy are some of the hindrances that characterized most Nigerian libraries.

## Method

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. A total enumeration sampling method was used. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The population was made up of 30 respondents who were library assistants at the Babcock University Library, Nigeria. A total number of 30 questionnaires were administered. All the questionnaires were retrieved and were found useful giving a return rate of 100% used for this study.

## Results

Table 1 shows the age group of the respondents. It indicates that the highest number of respondents were between ages 26 and 30, while ages 36 to 40 were only 2 (6.7%)

Table 2 indicates that 11 (36.7%) of the respondents were male while 19 (63%) of the respondents were female. This shows that there were more female respondents than their male counterpart in this study.

Table 3 reveals that 6 (20%) of the respondents have worked for a period less than 1 year, 15 (50%) of the respondents have worked for a period within 1 to 3 years, 6 (20%) have worked for a period within 4 to 6 years, while 3 (10%) have been on the job for more than 7 years.

Table 4 shows the educational qualification of the respondents. It indicates that 26 (86.7%) of the respondents had Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE), while 4 (13.3%) had National Certificate of Education (NCE). This result shows that majority of the respondents were SSCE

**Table 3.** Number of Years on the Job (*N* = 30).

Year	Frequency	%
Less than 1 year	6	20
1-3	15	50
4-6	6	20
7 years and above	3	10
Total	30	100

**Table 4.** Educational Qualification of Respondents (*N* = 30).

Qualification	Frequency	%
BSc	0	0
NCE	4	13.3
SSCE	26	86.7
Total	30	100

Note. NCE = National Certificate of Education; SSCE = Senior Secondary School Certificate.

holders, which implies that they may not have had prerequisite experience, skill, and knowledge on academic library routine and activities, hence the need for training. This result agrees with ALA (2013) that most libraries prefer to hire workers with a high school diploma.

Table 5 reveals the views of the respondents on the types of training made available to them in academic library. The result shows that 21 (70%) and 12 (40%) of the respondents agreed that orientation, on-the-job training, and supervisor's training were good techniques. In addition, 24 (80%) agreed that in-house training was a better technique. However, 21 (70%) and 24 (80%), respectively, of the total respondents disagreed that workshop, seminar, coaching, industrial attachment, online training, and supervisor's training were good techniques. This suggests that most of the techniques were good while some were not acceptable by the respondents. From the result, it implies that majority of the respondents did not know the value and impact of seminar, workshop, online training, and supervisor's training among others.

Table 6 reveals that the library assistants were trained on circulation/customer services because 30 (100%) of the respondents attested to this fact. In addition, 18 (60%) of the respondents indicated they have received training on the use of electronic resources/online communication, inputting/retrieving information from OPAC system, and cataloging/classification. However, the result indicates that training on shelving and shelf reading, web searching, and system management were given less attention. It shows a flaw on the training attended by the library assistants; this is because training ought to be holistic for effective service delivery.

Table 7 shows that 30 (100%) of the respondents agreed that they need training to support library users in searching for information electronically. It also reveals that 18 (60%) and 9 (30%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed,

**Table 5.** What Are the Types of Training Made Available to Library Assistants? (N = 30).

Type of training made available to the library assistants	Yes	No
Orientation	21 (70%)	9 (30%)
Supervisor's training	12 (40%)	18 (60%)
On-the-job training	21 (70%)	9 (30%)
Workshop	9 (30%)	21 (70%)
Seminar	9 (30%)	21 (70%)
Coaching	6 (20%)	24 (80%)
Industrial attachment (vestibule)	6 (20%)	24 (80%)
Online training	6 (20%)	24 (80%)
In-house training	24 (80%)	6 (20%)

**Table 6.** What Are the Types of Training Program Attended by the Library Assistants? (N = 30).

Type of training program attended by the Library Assistants	Yes	No
Circulation/customer services	30 (100%)	
E-resources/online communication	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
Inputting/retrieving information from OPAC system	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
Cataloging and classification	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
User support services	15 (50%)	15 (50%)
Selective dissemination of information	15 (50%)	15 (50%)
Shelving and shelf reading	12 (40%)	18 (60%)
Web searching	9 (30%)	21 (70%)
Minor system management	3 (10%)	27 (90%)

respectively, that training enhances their job performance. The result further shows that training of library assistants will help them cope with the 21st-century library challenges, foster their interest to become librarians in the future, understand the policies guiding the library, and help in the overall services of the library to her users.

## Discussion of Findings

### Demographic Information of the Respondents

Findings in this work reveal the efficacy of training library assistants in academic library. Tables 1, 2, and 3 discuss the demographic information of the respondents. The highest respondents in this study were of ages 26 to 30 years.

Table 2 findings show that there were more female respondents with 19 (63.4%) than the male counterpart, while Table 3 indicates that 70% of the respondents have only worked between 1 and 3 years, which implies that they were gradually gathering experience to carry out specific and procedural assignments.

Findings on Table 4 reflect the kind of personnel that were employed as library assistants. It shows that 86.7% had lower

qualifications. Besides that, even the 13.3% who had a higher degree in education did not have any training whatsoever in library routine activities. This result substantiates the reason why training of library assistants remains very important in academic library considering its evolving nature and rapid changes in information provision in this age. This finding agrees with ALA (2013) that most libraries prefer to hire workers with a high school diploma.

### Research Question 1: What are the types of training made available to library assistants?

The findings on Table 5 reveal the types of training made available to library assistants. It shows that 70% of the respondents were given orientation and on-the-job training, respectively, while 80% were given in-house training. The finding corroborates the findings of ALA (2013), which reveal that library assistants receive most of their training on the job. These findings are also in line with Benoit (1987) report on training of library assistants in Mauritius, which emphasized that seminar for library assistants were held once a week.

However, 80% of the respondents indicated that coaching, industrial attachment and online training were not the type of training they went through. Another 70% of the respondents also indicated to have not attended workshop and seminar. This signifies that the most important types of training that ought to have impacted the library services were not provided to the respondents.

Besides, the trainings that the library made available to the library assistants include in-house training, orientation, and on-the-job training that may not be substantial to meet with the challenges of current library services required by users of this age. Therefore, regional workshops and seminars should be organized for library assistants in every geopolitical zone. Training collaboration for library assistants among libraries should also be encouraged to enhance their services that in turn will impact the library goals and objectives.

### Research Question 2: What are the types of training programs attended by the library assistants?

On the type of training programs attended by the respondents, findings on Table 6 reveal that 100% of the respondents accepted to have attended training on circulation and customer services. In addition, 60% of the respondents indicated to have received training on electronic/online communication, inputting/retrieving information from OPAC system, and cataloging and classification, respectively. This finding buttress why ALA (2013) affirms that training such as performing routine cataloging and coding of library materials, and retrieving information from computer databases can be given to library assistants.

However, 90% and 70% of the respondents indicated they were not trained on minor system management and web

**Table 7.** How Can Training of Library Assistants in Academic Library Enhance Their Performance and Productivity?

S/N	The need to train library assistants in academic library	(SA)	(A)	(D)	(SD)
1	To cope with the 21st-century library challenges	12 (40%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	
2	To enhance my job performance	18 (60%)	9 (30%)		3 (10%)
3	To foster my interest to become librarian	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)
4	To enhance me understand the policies of the library	9 (30%)	18 (60%)		3 (10%)
5	To help my overall services at the library	9 (30%)	18 (60%)		3 (10%)
6	To support library users in searching for information electronically	12 (40%)	18 (60%)		
7	To impact positively on my services to the library users	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)

searching, respectively. This finding shows a flaw in the training programs organized for library assistants. It shows a lapse in the development of library services and therefore the need for the academic library to wake up to their responsibilities and initiate holistic training programs for library assistants especially in the areas of web searching and minor system management for adequate service delivery.

**Research Question 3:** How can training of library assistants in academic library enhance their performance and productivity?

Findings on Table 7 show that 100% of the respondents agreed that they need training to support library users in searching for information electronically. It also shows that 90% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that training enhances their job performance and help their overall services to the users. The finding further reveals that training of library assistants will help them cope with the 21st-century library challenges; foster their interest to become librarians in the future and understand the policies guiding the library. It is obvious from the findings that if adequate training is given to the library assistants, the impact on their performance and overall productivity of the library will be immense.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has uncovered the importance of training of library assistants in academic library. Findings have revealed that when training is made pivotal in academic library, the result will be immense. Some of the burdens, requests, and assistance that weigh on the librarians, which sometimes encroach into their core duties, are resolved by library assistants if adequate training is given to them at regular interval.

The role of training and development in academic library cannot be overemphasized. Staff training and development has been identified as special program used to achieve the goals and objectives of any library. From the literature reviewed in this study, it seems that training can solve a variety of manpower problems that militate against optimum

productivity especially in academic library. Training of library assistants will enhance efficient service delivery, adequate user satisfaction, increased productivity, and improved quality of work among others. The impact of training and development of library assistants can also be felt whenever there is a change as the set of staff that was trained adapts easily and quickly to such a change.

In the situation where staff members do not have the necessary expertise to answer reference questions, it becomes imperative that training be conducted, which will enhance them to make informed referrals to the appropriate person who can meet the user's needs. Library assistants require a certain amount of training to allow them have a high level of job confidence and satisfaction; this will ultimately translate to effective customer service delivery. Human resources management in academic libraries is therefore encouraged to train and retrain all categories of staff in their library to enhance productivity.

Interestingly, for any library to grow, training and retraining of all staff in the form of in-house training, workshops, conferences, and seminars must be vigorously pursued; and staff must be mandated to attend to achieve the set goals and objectives of the library. Staff training goes a long way in determining the staff level of productivity. It is also necessary in view of recent developments and advancement in modern world to invest in training. Finally, staff training and development is based on the premise that staff skills need to be improved for academic libraries to grow.

In line with the findings, the researchers recommend as follows; that

1. Library assistants should be encouraged to pursue formal educational programs to acquire needed skills to cope with the task of providing better information services to library users.
2. Library assistants should be given the opportunity to attend training of any kind either in form of workshop, seminar, or in-service training within the 1st and 2nd year of engagement. This will prepare them for the task ahead and will as well improve their skills to be able to know of recent developments in library services.



3. Academic library should organize regional training forum to be anchored by professional librarians for interaction and collaboration among library assistants on how to cope with the 21st-century challenges due to rapid changes in information provision in this age.
4. As the mission of a library is to provide information and to support the library users to make good use of the resources, academic library therefore should embark on periodic in-house training for library assistants, anchored by the professional librarians to achieve desired objectives.
5. Research should be intensified to identify possible ways of training library assistants in academic library for effective service delivery in meeting the goals and objectives of the library.

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