



Influence of Continuing Professional Development and Skills Acquisition on Librarians' Performance in Two State Capitals in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out the methods by which librarians acquired skills and types of skills attained for personal development and career advancement. It also investigated the influence of the methods of skills acquisition and the type of skills acquired on librarians' performance in Minna and Dutse metropolitan cities in Northern Nigeria. Four research questions guided the study. Four-point likert type of questionnaire was designed by the researchers and validated by experts in Library and Information Science profession. Copies of the modified version of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to conduct the statistical analysis. Descriptive statistical tools (frequency counts and percentages as well as mean and standard deviation) were used to analyze the data. Results showed that males and holders of Bachelor degree in librarianship were the highest; while publication and mentoring were the popular methods by which librarians acquire skills, though conferences, on-going postgraduate programme, workshops and seminars were also considered as the appropriate methods used to acquire skills by the respondents. On-the-job training was not considered as an appropriate method in the acquisition of skills while respondents seem not to use participatory management in the acquisition of skills. The study further revealed that the continuing professional development and skills acquired has mostly enhanced effective communication and creating harmonious working relationship among co-workers, although respondents derived satisfaction as well as facing the challenges in performing complex jobs. There was no effective and efficient job performance on the part of the respondents. Inadequate personnel resource was the major constraint to skills acquisition in libraries under study. Recommendations were proffered amongst include provision for career advancement and personal development through various methods. Librarians should apply the skills acquired through professional development while discharging their professional duties.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, Skills acquisition, Job performance, Librarians, Northern Nigeria.

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I. Introduction

Every organization expects to achieve its stated objectives through efficient job performance and higher productivity. This can only be achieved if the workforce is adequately equipped with necessary but basic skills which can only be acquired through continuous and regular training and development of personnel through personal effort or organization.

Virtually all libraries regardless of type and their location possess three categories of staff (professionals, paraprofessionals and non-professionals). The professional staff (librarians) performs the intellectual

duties (selection and acquisition, cataloguing and classification; readers services; reference services, etc). The para-professionals assist the professionals in the discharge of these duties (Aina, 2004). The concept of "Librarian" can be seen as one who have undergone training programme in approved library school and obtain first degree or higher degree(s) in librarianship. Apart from the professional training programme from library school(s), librarians are expected to keep on acquiring or continuously acquire basic skills to enable them function optimally in their various libraries. However, because of numerous changes brought about by Information and Communications Technology (ICT) more especially in

the area of virtual services, librarians are forced to acquire many more skills through constant training (Ezeani, 2013). The avenue for librarians to acquire these skills include: conferences, workshops and seminars attendance; on-the-job training, mentoring, formal professional education, publications, on-going postgraduate programme, etc. Furthermore, these are methods by which librarians acquire skills and knowledge for career advancement and personal development in Library and Information Science (LIS) profession or in their chosen fields of specialization within LIS profession. These methods help librarians to improve upon their jobs towards self and user satisfaction (Eke, 2011).

The National Library of Nigeria which is also the apex library in the country in 2012 designed workshop training programmes for information professionals, librarians, Documentalists, archivists, information providers, state Directors of Libraries and library assistants. However, in each of these workshops, librarians were among the participants throughout the training session. It is expected that librarians make positive contribution to the organization though this cannot be achieved as adequate skills on the part of librarians are lacking (Ugwu, 2009).

Minna the capital city of Niger State was carved out from the defunct North western State and created in the year 1976, Chanchaga and parts of Bosso Local Government Areas (LGA) are currently in Minna metropolis. Dutse, the capital city of Jigawa state was carved out of Kano state and created on 27th August, 1991. Dutse town has only one Local Government called Dutse LGA with headquarter in Dutse town. The study seeks to find the influence of continuing professional development and skills acquisition on librarians' performance in Minna and Dutse metropolitan cities being state capitals of Niger and Jigawa states as well as in North-Central and North Western geopolitical zones in Northern Nigeria respectively.

II. Statement of the Problem

It is expected that librarians contribute to organization's effectiveness. In order to effectively discharge the professional duties assigned to them, librarians need some skills which are to be acquired through continuous professional programme (conferences, workshops and seminars; publishing in reputable journals and textbooks; mentoring; on-the-job training and formal professional education). Unfortunately, it was discovered that the job performance of librarians was low (Akor, 2009) which could be attributed to low level or acquisition and possession of inadequate skills (Ugwu, 2009; Gbaje & Ukachi, 2011; Ojedokun & Okafor, 2011). This study therefore seek to find out the methods by which librarians acquire skills and the types of skills acquired as well as the influence of the above variables on librarians' performance and constraints to skills acquisition in the two metropolitan cities in Northern Nigeria.

III. Research Questions

The study provides answers to the following questions:

1. What methods do librarians use in the acquisition of skills?
2. What type of skills do librarians in the two state capitals acquire?
3. In what ways has the methods and skills acquired helped librarians in job performance?
4. What are the constraints to skills acquisition of librarians in the two state capitals?

IV. Literature Review

In an examination of demographic factors of the respondents, Saka (2014) reported that there were more males than female personnel and that BLS holders were the highest respondents compared to holders of diploma and higher degree holders in University libraries in North-Central, Nigeria. Ugwu (2009) reported that none of the librarians investigated have attained the desirable level of ICT competency which is the third level. The popular method by which librarians acquire ICT skills was "through colleagues". Ugwuanyi (2011) looked at mentoring as a process whereby the senior level librarians impart ideas, useful advice, norms and appropriate behaviour to subordinate librarians so that they can be successful personnel in their new job/discipline. The author postulated the various stages of mentoring such as initiation of interaction to establish rapport; setting of goals and objectives; actualization of stage process and review what has been done and the way forward. Mentoring could be formal or informal though enhances high performance in an organization. The challenges of mentoring include: wrong choice of mentors, criticizes the mentors instead of encouraging them; inability of mentee to open up and speak during interaction, etc.

Akor (2009) discovered that the leadership styles of university libraries do not significantly influence the job performance of professional librarians in universities in North-Central Zone of Nigeria. Adomi and Famola (2012) reported inability of National Library of Nigeria to sponsor cataloguers for training programmes was the problem of continuing professional development. Bello and Mansor (2012) investigated the "duties and job performance factors of cataloguers in Nigerian Academic Libraries". It was reported that technical skills were rated high as the main duties performed in the surveyed libraries. These duties include: performing original descriptive and subject cataloguing; determining appropriate guidelines in applying AACR and Sears Heading policies; assigning main entries and subject headings, etc. Based on the result, it was reported that communication, organization and supervision, relationship with colleague, research into new techniques were summed to be 'management enhancing factors'. Therefore, managerial skill was a requirement for effective performance.

Anunobi (2013) reported inadequate finance as a major obstacle to staff capacity development policy implementation. In a collaborative study, Jimoh and Adebayo (2014) found that all business management skills (technical, human relations, conceptual and

communication) were required by auto-mechanic craftsmen for establishing small and medium scale enterprises in Lagos state. Akande (2014) found that library personnel acquired ICT skills through personal effort for self-development (through self-development). The hypothesis tested showed that there was no significant relationship between the level of ICT skills acquisition and the methods of skills acquisition. This translates to show that various methods could be used to acquire ICT skills.

Ezeani (2013) posited that the changes brought about by ICT has necessitated not only the investigation into the skills and competencies of librarians but also forced them to acquire many skills. In order to develop “new generation of future ready librarians in Nigeria”, there is the need for mentoring, continuing education program, building relationships (both human and materials) as well as dynamic leadership (democratic leadership style as well as participatory management).

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VI. Methodology

Survey design was used for the study and the target population consisted of practicing librarians in various establishment within Minna and Dutse metropolitan cities in Northern Nigeria. A random sampling technique was used to select 100 librarians i.e 50 from each of the two cities. The study used four-point-likert type of questionnaire: Strongly Agree (S.A = 4), Agree (A = 3), Disagree (D = 2) and Strongly Disagree (S.D = 1). The researchers adopted the above likert scale as well as parts of job performance questionnaire designed by Oyawole and Popoola (2013). The questionnaire was validated by experts in LIS profession, while 100 copies of the modified instrument were personally administered by the researchers on librarians in their various libraries.

Out of the 100 copies of the modified questionnaire administered, as listed in Table 1, 56 copies were filled, returned and found usable. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 was used to conduct all the statistical analysis of data. Frequency counts and percentages as well as mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The rating scale in terms of the means score of 1.50 and above was considered adequate while below 1.50 was regarded as inadequate.

TABLE I
RESPONDING LIBRARIES IN THE TWO STATE CAPITALS

Minna	Frequency	Dutse	Frequency
<i>Federal University of Technology, Minna</i>	19	Federal University, Dutse	13
<i>State Library Board, Minna</i>	3	State Library Board, Dutse	4
<i>State College of Education, Minna</i>	3	State Polytechnic, Dutse	4
<i>National Examination Council, Minna</i>	1	Manpower Development Institute, Dutse	2
<i>National Library of Nigeria, Minna</i>	2		
<i>Education Resource Centre, Minna</i>	1		
<i>SUBEB, Minna</i>	1		
<i>Fati Lami Abubakar College for Legal and General Studies, Minna</i>	3		
<i>School of Midwifery, Minna</i>	2		
TOTAL	35	TOTAL	23

Based on the 56 copies of the retrieved questionnaire, it is clear that Minna metropolis (Niger State) has the highest number of the respondents probably due to the fact that it was the state capital created 15 years before Dutse Jigawa State was created. This may also translate to mean that Minna has the highest number of parastatals, institutions of higher learning than Dutse that was created in 1991.

TABLE II
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
<i>Male</i>	43	77
<i>Female</i>	13	23
Total	56	100
Highest Professional Qualification		
<i>First Degree in Librarianship</i>	46	82
<i>MLS</i>	09	16
<i>Ph.D (LIS)</i>	01	02
Total	56	100

From Table 2, the demographic information of respondents showed that 43 (77%) were males which signifies that there were more males than the female counterparts, while 46(82%) of the respondents were holders of first degree in librarianship as being the highest when compared to 9 (16%) and 1 (2%) higher degree holders respectively in the librarianship. Thus, the minimum professional qualification recognized by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) is the possession of at least first degree in librarianship.

TABLE III
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
(METHODS OF SKILLS ACQUISITION)

Methods of Skills Acquisition	Mean	SD
<i>Conferences</i>	1.79	.41404
<i>Workshops & seminars</i>	1.61	.49281
<i>On-the-Job Training</i>	1.34	.47775
<i>Publications</i>	1.84	.37059
<i>Mentoring</i>	1.80	.40089
<i>On-going PG programme</i>	1.74	.49680
<i>Participatory Management</i>	-	-

Data listed in Table 3 showed the various CPD programmes and the publications has the highest mean score of 1.84 with S.D of .37059. For librarians in academic and research institute libraries to be promoted, they have to write and publish in reputable journals, proceedings, technical papers and/or textbooks. This is followed by mentoring and conference attendance with mean scores/SD of 1.80 (.40089) and 1.79 (.41404)

respectively. Other mean score was that of workshops and seminars with mean score of 1.61 and S.D of .49281. The lowest mean score of 1.34 with SD of .47775 was discovered from on-the-job training was inadequate which means that majority of the respondents do not develop themselves while discharging their duties. None of the respondents indicated participatory management probably the heads of libraries has not been involving them in the management affairs of their respective libraries.

TABLE IV
SKILLS ACQUIRED DURING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Types of Skills acquired	Mean	SD
<i>Analytical and critical skills</i>	1.77	.42602
<i>Managerial skills</i>	1.66	.47775
<i>Technological skills</i>	1.66	.47775
<i>Technical skills</i>	1.71	.45584
<i>Organizational and Evaluative skills</i>	1.84	.37059
<i>Communication skills</i>	1.79	.41404
<i>Problem solving</i>	1.73	.44685

Data on Table 4 revealed various skills acquired during CPD programmes. The highest mean score of 1.84 with SD .37059 was discovered from organizational and evaluative skills. This revealed that librarians possessed the skills that enable them to organize information resources through accessioning, cataloguing and classification, compilation of bibliographies, shelving as well as various activities to be performed by subordinates and also appraise their job performance level. Next were the communication skills with mean of 1.79 and SD of (.41404); analytical and critical skills with mean score of 1.77 (.42602); problem solving skills 1.73 (.44685). Managerial and technological skills each with mean score of 1.66 and SD of (.47775) were the two skills with the lowest mean scores of each 1.66 and SD of (.47775), though the mean scores for all the skills were considered as appropriate. However, respondents possessed all the skills needed to perform jobs in their respective libraries.

TABLE V
INFLUENCE OF CPD AND SKILLS ACQUIRED ON JOB
PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS

Influence on Job Performance	Mean	SD
<i>Efficiency and effectiveness of job performance</i>	1.46	.50324
<i>Face challenges of performing complex job</i>	1.50	.50452
<i>Increase job satisfaction and performance</i>	1.57	.50420
<i>Harmonious working relationship with co-workers</i>	1.68	.47125
<i>Give concrete and clear instructions to subordinates</i>	1.70	.46396

Table 5 clearly revealed mean data on the influence of CPD and skills acquisition on librarians' performance. It was discovered that the highest mean score of 1.70 with SD of .46396 was noticed from "given concrete and clear instructions to subordinates". This showed that effective communication between the superiors and subordinates will go a long way to enhance efficient and effective job performance. Very close to this was the mean score of 1.68 with SD of .47125 indicating "harmonious working relationship with co-workers". The lowest mean score of 1.50 with SD of .50452 indicating that the skills acquired has helped respondents in facing challenges of performing complex jobs, which showed that few respondents were able to withstand the challenges involved in the job performance. It was discovered that the lowest mean scores of 1.46 and S.D of .50324 showed that there was inefficiency and ineffectiveness of job performance on the part of the respondents in libraries under study.

TABLE VI
CONSTRAINTS TO CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
SKILLS ACQUISITION OF LIBRARIANS

Constraints	Mean	SD
<i>Inadequate Funding</i>	1.46	.50324
<i>Inadequate Training Facilities</i>	1.57	.49935
<i>Administrative Bottleneck</i>	1.63	.48850
<i>Inadequate Resource Personnel</i>	1.75	.43693

As listed in Table 6, it was discovered that "inadequate resource personnel" was identified as the major constraint to skills acquisition of librarians with mean score of 1.75 with SD .43693. Resource personnel could be in the area of mentoring, conferences, workshops and seminars as well as pursuing postgraduate programmes (PGD, MLS and PhD). The lowest mean score of 1.46 with SD .50324 was discovered from "inadequate funding" as the lowest constraint to skills acquisition of librarians. This showed that the libraries understudy are adequately funded which has enable librarians to acquire skills in order to discharge their professional duties assigned to them.

VII. Discussion of Results

The analysis and interpretation of data showed that the demographic information of respondents with respect to gender and highest professional qualifications. It was discovered that there were more males than the female librarians, while holders of first degree in Librarianship was the highest when compared to holders of MLS and PhD in Librarianship. Lowest number of respondents was discovered from holders of PhD in Librarianship. The findings from the demographic information of the

respondents corroborates that of Saka (2014) who found the highest number of the respondents from males and first degree holders and lowest number from holders of Ph.D in librarianship respectively. The reason for having the lowest number of Ph.D holder(s) can be attributed to the requirement involve in undertaken higher degree research. The requirements include: course work, presentation of proposal, seminars and oral defense which are subjected to constructive criticisms and examination by the panel of examiners. It is a rigorous academic exercise not all librarians undergoing the postgraduate programme can withstand these challenges. Some of the postgraduate students may voluntarily withdraw from the programme.

On various methods by which librarians acquire skills, it was discovered that publication and mentoring were the highest methods. This finding corroborates that of Akande (2014) who found that library personnel acquired ICT skills through personal development. On the skills acquired by librarians in the two state capitals, going by the scale of 1.50 which was considered appropriate mean score, librarians have acquired all the skills needed in the job performance. This finding disagrees with that of Bello and Mansor (2012) but corroborates that of Jimoh and Adebayo (2014) respectively. Bello and Mansor (2012) found that technical skill was rated high while Jimoh and Adebayo (2014) found that business managers' skills included both technical, human relations, conceptual and communications respectively. This signifies that managers or heads of organizations are expected to possess all the skills to enhance job performance and attain high level of productivity.

The influence of CPD and skills acquired enable librarians to give concrete and clear instructions to subordinates. This finding disagrees with the tested hypothesis by Akande (2014) who submitted that there was no significant relationship between the level of ICT skills acquired and methods of skills acquisition. Whenever the methods used in skills acquisition were inadequate, there will be a corresponding low level of skills acquired.

On the constraints to skills acquisition, results showed "inadequate resource personnel" as the major constraint. This finding disagree with those of Adomiand Famola (2012) and Anunobi (2013) as they reported inability of National Library of Nigeria to sponsor staff for programme and inadequate finance to staff capacity development policy implementation respectively.

VIII. Conclusion

The study has revealed that males and holders of first degree in Librarianship formed the majority in the demographic variables. Respondents developed themselves mostly through publishing in reputable journals, proceedings technical reports, books as well as through mentorship which is expected to be mainly through the senior personnel or experts in LIS profession. Majority of librarians acquired more of organizational and evaluative skills than other skills. The CPD couple with the skills acquired has enhanced librarians' performance mostly through clear communication to subordinates and

creating harmonious working relationship with co-workers. Librarians indicated that inadequate resource personnel has accounted for the acquisition and possession of low level of skills.

IX. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. Males and females librarians should be given equal opportunities to pursue not only postgraduate programmes but also attending workshops, conferences and in-house training.
2. Organizations within the two state capitals should give opportunities for career advancement of librarians more especially in the areas of on-the-job training and participatory management. The implication is that as they are performing their professional duties, they should equally keep on acquiring the necessary skills. Heads of libraries or heads of sections/units within libraries should operate the democratic leadership style by creating opportunities for employees to participate in the decision-making process; representing them at the management meeting as well as given them leadership training through mentoring
3. The management of various organizations within the two state capitals should encourage librarians to not only develop themselves but also acquire all the skills needed for job performance;
4. Librarians should endeavour to apply the skills acquired (during the training programme/self-development) while discharging their professional duties;
5. Management of various organizations within the two state capitals (having libraries) should ensure that adequate resource personnel, funding and training facilities be put in place to enhance self development and skills acquisition in order to improve on the job performance of librarians.

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