CHALLENGES IN THE TRAINING OF LIBRARIANS ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN FESTUS AGHAGBO NWAKO LIBRARY, NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA.

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Abstract

The paper sought to investigate challenges facing Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library and the librarians in ICT training. Data was collected through observation and interview methods. The population of the study is made up of all the librarians in the library. The major challenges discovered were insufficient fund, inadequate number of professional librarians, inadequate facilities, lack of written policy on training and non-sustenance of training programmes.

Keywords: **ICT, Manpower Developement, ICT Infrastructure, Festus Aghagbo nwako**

Introduction

Academic libraries are libraries established in institutions of higher learning such as universities and colleges of education. Academic libraries are part of the educational process and they have a mission. The 21st century has been characterized by advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT); changes in publishing models; changes in education (e-teaching and e-learning) and enormous growth of published and unpublished information (Thachill, 2008). In all these areas, academic libraries have a role to play. Academic libraries have the responsibility of supporting the goals and objectives of their parent institution by ensuring the provision of state of the art information resources for the academic community. Academic libraries have to train and retrain staff on ICT for effective service delivery. This is very necessary because some of the librarians were not trained in the digital era. Apart from these challenges, libraries in the developing countries are struggling to satisfy the numerous needs of their users due to frequent changes in information technology. These changes make training of librarians an uphill task.

Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library is the university library in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. It has faculty libraries at Faculty of Law, Pharmaceutical Sciences Agulu and College of Health Sciences Nnewi. Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library occupies a gigantic building with a usable floor area of 40,000 sq. and with a sitting capacity of 3,000 users and about 500,000 volumes of books. It has about 500 workstations in the digital library. The digital library provides enormous resources in databases on various disciplines. These include OARE, AGORA, HINARI, PROTA, EBSCOHOST, JSTOR, Earth Science, Nigerian University Virtual Library, Directory of Open Access Journals and E-Library USA. The university library has 12 professional staff and 108 para-professional and general duty staff (Onwuka, 2015) .

FAN Library has introduced new resources and services which require new tools and new skills. Abbas, (2013) observed that the crop of librarians that could thrive in the digital age are those who demonstrate specific skills, competence and are deeply committed to

gaining new skills and knowledge throughout their careers. FAN Library has been organizing ICT training for the librarians over the years. It is therefore, imperative to identify the ICT programmes available in the training and the challenges encountered by librarians and the library during training.

The application of ICT in academic libraries has resulted in changes in library tools, services and expectations of users. Academic libraries need to train and retrain librarians on new skills.

The Focus of this Paper is to:

1. Find out ICT training programmes available for librarians in FAN Library
2. Find out the challenges encountered by librarians in the course of training
3. Ascertain the challenges facing FAN Library in organizing ICT training for librarians.
4. Suggest possible strategies which can enhance ICT training in FAN library

Methodology

Data was collected through observation and interview. The researcher attended all the ICT training sessions and made observations which were recorded. Two unstructured interviews were conducted on a librarians who attended all the training sessions between March, 2015 to March 2016.

Review of Related Literature on Ict Training of Librarian

Academic librarians need to acquire certain skills in order to operate smoothly in ICT driven library environment. Abdelrahman (2009) reported in a study conducted by Choi, Young and Rasmussen in which they specified the skills and knowledge needed by modern day academic librarians. They opined that library professionals need skills on two levels. The first level which is related to technology includes digital library architecture and software, web marking languages, database development, management systems and web design skills. The second level which is library related includes user needs, digital archiving and preservation, cataloguing, indexing and collection development. They also pointed out that skills in communication, project management, leadership, grant and proposal writing, teaching and group presentation are also required for academic librarians to perform satisfactorily in the new information environment.

Ali, et al (2014) wrote on the training of librarians for electronic library services in state university libraries in Nigeria. They observed among other things that such variables as age, gender, prior knowledge, training, anxiety and educational qualifications seem to influence the attitudes of librarians toward ICT training. They also observed the existence of a large number of self-improvement training facilities which can be accessible online with the involvement of a minimum number of training personnel. They identified benefits of training as follows: helps employee to learn their jobs quickly, helps librarians update themselves in their work performance; serve as a tool used in developing the full potentials or effectiveness of staff in an organization; ensures skilled workforce and improves attitudes of workers. Omodia (2009) observed that staff training generally contribute to national development by promoting economic development, political stability and poverty alleviation.

Ali, et al (2014) also identified two factors which pose challenges facing university librarians in training: lack of funds and

insufficient facilities. They cited Ezeani who observed that most African universities can hardly take out money for local training of their staff much less overseas training. Aina, Okunnu and Dapo-Asaju (2014) identified challenges facing academic libraries as follows: demand for multi-channel opportunities which will help users to access library services irrespective of place, space and time, development of e-libraries, training and retraining of librarians, inadequate funding, inadequate power supply, inadequate ICT facilities, lack of user education. They suggested that training and retraining of librarians should be done as a routine in order for librarians to cope with innovation and advancement in ICT library services.

Abbas (2014) investigated the ICT skills of academic librarians in eleven institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey method was applied in the study using homogenous purposive sampling technique to select the sample. Forty-four academic librarians were selected comprising four from each institution. The finding revealed a huge gap between the potentials of the ICTs and the actual utilization by the librarians for information service provision in the libraries. The researcher discovered that the librarians lack the requisite expertise to handle the ICT facilities and navigate the wealth of information resources available on the web. He also found that many specialized databases were never utilized such as Science Direct, AGRIS, BLACKWELL America Society. The study recommended coherent policy on ICT training and retraining of staff on continuous basis, procurement of state of the art ICT equipment and facilities in the libraries; increase in the budgetary allocation to the libraries and attitudinal change by the librarians so as to imbibe ICT culture.

Abubakar (2012) investigated the phenomenon called digital divide among librarians in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Library, Bauchi. A total of 20 professional librarians were selected as sample from the institution and the design of the study was survey. The instrument for data collection was observation, interview and structured questionnaire. Data collected for the study were analyzed using percentages and frequency count. The study revealed that computers, Internet connectivity and other related ICT facilities were available in the library but not utilized, and only 15% of the professional librarians attended training.

Findings of the study

Data analysed from the study revealed that:

ICT Programmes Available In FAN Library are:

- *Computer appreciation*
- *Digitization*
- *Keywording*
- *Uploading*
- *Downloading*

Challenges Facing Academic Librarians

- *Insufficient technical manpower*
- *Training sessions not individualized*
- *No entry behavior test before training is commenced*
- *Low perceived behavioral control*
- *Low morale of trainees*
- *Training curriculum is sometimes not covered*
- *Short duration of training*
- *Non- sustenance of training*
- *No evaluation after training*

Challenges Facing Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library

- *Poor Funding*

- *Inadequate professional manpower to conduct training.*
- *Inadequate ICT facilities*
- *No written policy on manpower development*
- *Insufficient number of academic librarians*
- *Lack of enabling environment to practicalise knowledge in training.*
- *Poor Internet Connectivity*
- *Irregular power supply*
- *Non-sustenance of training programmes*

Possible Strategies
Based on the challenges listed above, the following were recommended:

- *Sufficient fund should be provided*
- *ICT training policy should be written*
- *Adequate ICT facilities should be provided*
- *More professional librarians should be employed*
- *Entry behavior should be conducted before training is commenced*
- *Performance should be evaluated and feedback given at each training*
- *Alternative power supply should be provided*
- *Reward should be attached to performance to increase morale of trainees*
- *Duration of training programme to be extended*
- *Training should be sustained*

Conclusion

The quality of personnel in any library greatly influences the performance output of that Library. In this era of library automation, training of academic librarians is of paramount importance. Academic libraries need to respond to challenges associated with ICT driven library services as it concerns the librarians who will render such services. Training will promote their skills acquisition and boost their morale and desire to serve. The management of Festus Aghagbo Nwako Library can improve ICT training for their librarians by incorporating ICT programmes such as digital library architecture and software, web marking languages, database development, web design and networking skills, digital archiving, preservation, cataloguing, indexing and collection development in a digital environment. The strategies recommended in this paper will usher in better and more effective service delivery in the library.

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