

# A Review of the Role and Problems of Personnel Training and the Success of Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*Personnel training is seen as a necessary tonic for effective and efficient services by the Academic library personnel, because with training, it enables the personnel to acquire and possess the necessary skills, to acquire and possess the necessary skills, capabilities, and attitude needed for efficient performance of their duties. This review examines the importance of personnel training in academic libraries. The study highlights that such factors like lack of finance, lack of staff, lukewarm attitude of staff, little attachment of library personnel to training militates against effective establishment of training programmes. The study recommends that enough funds should be provided by the government, and also that personnel on their own should go for training especially on computer technology.*

**Keywords:** *Training, personnel academic libraries*

## INTRODUCTION

An academic library plays very important roles in the development of any nation. They provide the necessary academic materials and information needed for training and co-ordinate research, which the nation needs for engineering of social, economic, industrial and technological development. The advancement of knowledge and professional practice in organizations require constant research activities. Academic libraries therefore are important and can be said to be the centres of research activities because of the necessity to achieve scientific and technological progress in the nation.

However, for the academic library to play this role where activities revolve it should be manned by efficient and effective personnel, supported with modern facilities to enable them render the required services to their clients. In an organization, the need for personnel training is an important factor to enhance performance. The quality of the labour force and the accelerated pace of development taking place in the country have made it necessary for the training of personnel in academic libraries to support development efforts.

Training is regarded as a response to a present problem Gane (1972) maintains that to have trained personnel is nothing it is their performance that counts. Personnel's training is the means by which the employees of the Academic library are prepared to cope with the task and challenges that are ahead of them from the time they are employed until when they finally leave the organization. The training of personnel in an academic library is usually carried out live, with the policies of that organization. According to Cowley (1982), once an individual is recruited into an organization he or she will receive initial training designed to integrate the new comer into the library but beyond this period of orientation, a continuous process of training/development are designed by the organization

to improve performance or prepare for involvement in new areas of activity. According to Diejomah (1982) Personnel training is the process which leads to the formation of values and attitudes, the development of the skills and the knowledge of a people, thereby contributing to the enhancement of an improvement in the quality of a nation's personnel of which a nation ultimately depends. From the above, it is revealed that personnel training leads to the formation of values and attitudes, the development of the skills which enhances and improves the quality of the employees on which the organization's growth and survival ultimately depends. In the view of Oadey (1970), personnel training is an activity, which deliberately attempts to improve a person's skill at a task, Oadey identified that the need for training arises as a result of matching the employee specification with the job requirements and organizational needs and for organizational viability and the transformation process and for technological advances (Dadey, 1970).

Cowley (1982) identifies personnel training in academic libraries as the identification and determination of the needs of the academic library for the future, the designing of programmes and their implementation and finally, some evaluation of the level of success and effectiveness. According to Rizzo (1980), personnel training in academic libraries has a critical approach to change. It is essential to monitor the needs of the organization constantly and to meet these needs of the academic library personnel it is normally done through training technique and strategies. These training of personnel as well as the organization conditions under which they work, are basic considerations in all institution dedicated to research activities.

***Purpose of Personnel Training in Academic Libraries:*** The general purpose of personnel training in academic libraries is to ensure that library personnel are motivated, productive and skilled in their jobs and that they understand and can implement library policies to its parent organization. Being aware of the possible impact of training of personnel, many in librarianship are active, building personnel training programmes in libraries and encouraging continuing education activities state-wide and nationally. The potential impact from concentrated, well planned personnel training efforts tend to attract, prepare and retain a committed core of capable people who are able to work as a team. In his contributions, Rao P. and Rao V. (1997) looks at personnel training as the teaching and learning activities carried out for the primary purpose of helping members of an organization. He indicated that the training objectives in libraries include:

1. To prepare the personnel both new and old to meet the present, as well as the changing requirements of the job and the library.
2. To prevent obsolescence in libraries.
3. To impart the new entrants the basic knowledge and skill needed for an intelligent performance of definite job in the library.
4. To prepare personnel for higher - level tasks.
5. To assist personnel to function more effectively in their present positions by exposing them to the latest concepts, information and technique and developing the skill they will need in their particular fields.

6. To build up a second line of competent officers and prepare them to occupy more responsible positions.
7. To broaden the minds of senior managers by providing them with opportunities for an interchange of expediencies within and outside with a view to correcting the narrowness of outlook that may arise from over - specialization.
8. To develop the potentialities of people for the next level job.
9. To ensure smooth and efficient working of a department.
10. To promote individual and collective morale, a sense of responsibility, co-operative attitudes and good relationship.

***Training and Development Programmes in Libraries:*** To give the right and appropriate training to the library personnel of an organization, a formal training and programmes are required. The programme cannot fulfill its purpose except it is formulated and planned to meet the training needs of the library. Below is a brief description of the various types of training programmes for academic library personnel.

***Conference Method:*** It is a method of individualization, instruction frequency with clerical, professional, scientific and supervisory personnel. In using this method, training involves primarily the communication of ideas, procedures and standards.

***Correspondence Courses:*** In this method, the personnel receive prepared lectures from the institution offering the course. The trainee then sits for an examination that will qualify him or her for the award of a certificate if he or she passes the examination.

***Seminar:*** A recognized expert meets with a small group of learners usually for the purpose of exploring a subject in depth.

***Workshop:*** According to Conroy (1978) workshop is the bringing together of a group with a similar background and common concerns about a topic. Instructors and resource persons may be used but the bulk of the responsibility for learning rests on the participants.

Other various methods of personnel training are In-Service Training, In-House Orientation, Performance Appraisal and Continuing Education.

***Factors Militating against Personnel Training in Academic Libraries in Nigeria***

1. Financial constraint: This is seen as a major first factor militating against personnel training programmes in academic libraries in Nigeria.
2. Inadequate Staff Strength: Lack of staff in academic libraries can hinder personnel from undergoing training.
3. Lack of interest on the part of the staff.
4. Lack of needs analysis and lack of written training policy is also a factor.
5. Poor responsive attitude on the part of management: Neglect from authority and non-availability of budget allocation for training programs for library personnel is also a factor blocking the full realization of personnel training programs in academic libraries.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Training of personnel in academic libraries is very important, if the library is to possess the quality of personnel needed to face the challenges that are ahead of the library. It is clear that personnel in academic libraries need to be trained and developed, so that they can possess the necessary skills, knowledge and attitude needed to cope with the change those technological, economic, legal political and social environments bring upon the library. Consequently, the following propositions are put forward as ways of improving on the quality of personnel in the academic libraries in Nigeria.

1. Personnel in academic libraries should try to see that they acquire both academic and professional qualifications in order to enhance their status in the society in particular and the government in general.
2. Sufficient fund should be provided by the government for the training of personnel in academic libraries in Nigeria.
3. It is also important to ensure that the library programme is included in the overall economic development plan for the future.
4. Personnel on their part should create avenues, for training themselves especially in the area of computer technology.
5. The librarian should ensure regular training development of all his staff.
6. In order to carry out the desired services satisfactorily, the required number of staff needed for the job should also be employed.

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