

Training and Gender Distribution of Personnel: Implications for Public Secondary School Libraries Performance in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Training and gender distribution of Personnel: Implications for Public Secondary School Libraries Performance in Cross River State, Nigeria, looks at effect of training and retraining on performance of school library personnel. Training is an important factor in personnel and organizational performance. The aim was to examine the impact of training and gender distribution of personnel on public secondary school libraries performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. Ex-post facto exploratory design was utilized in analyzing secondary data and it was discovered that personnel in Cross River State public secondary school libraries were not adequately trained, which accounts for the low performance of libraries in schools. It was discovered that many school libraries were not open due to inadequate personnel. In conclusion, training of personnel plays significant role in their performance and that of the library as a unit of school organization which is not tenable in Cross River State. It was recommended that short training programmes be instituted, state government should employ trained library professionals and paraprofessionals, with the introduction of training programmes in appropriate institutions for the teeming population of lower-level paraprofessionals, in order to ensure improved performance. As more women are employed by public secondary school libraries in Cross River State, their training will help in areas of empowerment and reducing gender inequality affecting women negatively in other male dominated areas in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Training, Gender distribution, School libraries, Performance, Personnel*

1.0 Introduction and the problem

Training is a key element of all human organization. It is through training that employees of organisations of all types learn the norms and tasks required of them to function and conform to the direction of goal attainment. Public secondary school libraries are units of school organisations in which personnel requires adequate training to effectively and efficiently perform the functions of the library in school organisations. Armstrong (2005) defines training as “the planned and systematic modification of behavior through learning events, programmes and instructions which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skills and competence needed to carry out their work effectively”. In essence, training remains the inevitable guide to work performance and goal achievement.

Library personnel are people employed to work in library, by performing various tasks required to be carried out in the library organization or unit of an organization. The personnel consist of male and female categories. This presents an important gender issue. The public secondary

school library refers to a school library, which is a unit of secondary school owned and funded by the government. Performance refers to ability to achieve set goals as well as accomplish tasks related to the goal or objectives. According to Brumbach (1988), performance involves both behavior and result. The input of library personnel is the outcome of their behavior, while the objective or function of library successfully performed or otherwise constitutes the result.

Training and performance of personnel goes hand in hand, which varies with gender categories as indicated by Kidder (2002) Training produces skills and competence through learning, which involves change in learners' (personnel) behavior. Without having desired behavior from organizational workforce, required level of performance cannot be achieved. It is due to this fact that organisations the world over devoted significant proportion of their budget to employee training and retraining to prepare employees to changes in organisations, work task, environment, etc., making them adjustable and adaptable to contemporary demand, thereby sustaining performance. What is the situation of performance in public secondary school libraries? Are library personnel adequately trained? And, what is the impact of such training, if any, on performance of public secondary school libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria?

2.1 Conceptual review and analysis

School library: This is a type of library located within a school, which provides variety of resources, books, reading materials, information technology facilities, to students, staff and other stakeholders of school organisations like parents. A standard school library should be automated to utilize internet and other modern information communication technology (ICT) facilities to promote learning. According to Morris (2013), a school library is a repository and coordinator for all learning or instructional materials used in secondary school. The school library stock is related to the school curriculum and vice versa. School libraries are learner-centered in which library holdings are determined by curriculum of school.

Function of School Library and Librarian: School library perform general broad-based library functions to school stakeholders, namely: students, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, identified students from other schools and general public from school host community in rare cases. The basic functions are: collection development, acquisitions, cataloguing, processing, circulation, information services, documentary delivery and library promotion (Library World, 2018).

Collection development, acquisitions, cataloguing and processing are core technical functions performed by all libraries. Collection development involves determination of materials to acquire into a library within stipulated budget, which is also called selection. Acquisition is the actual purchase of library materials. Cataloguing involves creating bibliographical records for all items in a library collection, while processing is the act of preparing library materials for use, which entails labelling, fixing numbers, stamping and protective measures.

Circulation is the process of registering new borrowers, charging and renewing borrowed items, discharging and returning items back to their locations. Information services or reference work include: answering questions, quick reference, research, information referral and advising readers. Documentary delivery is an interlibrary loan service, where librarians locate other libraries where materials are arranged for borrowing. Library promotion is the projection of library service in order to maintain good image of the library, as well as positive relationship with library users.

Basic general functions school library performs include the following, according to Mahwasane (2017) and National Library New Zealand (2020):

1. Providing learning space for students to carry out independent work or use learning aids like computer and other equipment.
2. Hosting of special events in school, like authors' and publishers' visits.
3. Providing varieties of learning opportunities, like online learning.
4. Developing reading habits in students by providing varieties of library materials.

5. Facilitating group discussion and learn study among student library users.
6. Storage of documents, information and other materials helpful in educational programmes.
7. Making available textbooks and other educational resources for all subjects as needed by teachers and students in line with approved school curriculum.

A school library that performs these functions with core technical functions of library, provides great support to teaching and learning, as will be seen in learning outcome, in terms of students' academic performance in examinations, test and building of their personalities.

The school librarians play very important role in making the library perform its functions. The school librarian is the key line personnel who is expected to coordinate other school library personnel to carry out their duties and responsibilities in order for the library unit of the school to achieve its set goals and objectives. Morris (2013), California School Library Association (CSLA, 2018) and Library World (2018) summarized functions of school librarians as line personnel, thus:

1. As a teacher, who develops curriculum of information literacy and inquiry
2. As an instructional partner, who collaborates with teachers by ensuring that books are available in library in line with subjects' curricula
3. As information specialists who develop resources base for school information and communication technology.
4. As a programme administrator who manages school information resources and communication centre.
5. Classroom visitor to mobilise students to make effective use of library resources.
6. Other functions which include: finding and organization of information; clerical duties, as well as interpretation of school library users and stakeholders' information needs.

Consequently, library paraprofessionals assisting the school librarians help in maintaining good catalog and circulation system, processing new materials, help users locate materials, collection of replacement cost for lost items, shelving of items correctly, keeping records and statistics, cleaning the library, monitor users, carrying out inventory, creating awareness about new materials, and assist with special projects (CSLA, 2018). To what extent these functions are efficiently and effectively carried out reveals the usefulness of school library which also functions in line with level of training given to or acquired by school librarians and library paraprofessionals that jointly constitutes library personnel.

Training of library personnel: Generally, training entails teaching and learning processes aimed at helping employees or members of organization and group acquire knowledge, attitudes, skills and abilities, to apply same in areas needed to move such group or organization forward. Training is simply a planned process of enhancing job skills, attitudes and knowledge of personnel in organization. The primary purpose of training is to enhance performance or the planned and systematic modification of behavior through learning, events, programmes and instructions which enables individuals to achieve the levels, knowledge, skills and competence needed to carry out their work effectively (Armstrong, 2005).

Nwachukwu (1988) identified four goals of training in any organization, namely: increased productivity, lower turnover rate, boost morale and promote better coordination. Meier (2018) identified the following purposes of internal training in organisations: increases retention of employees; helps in building work group teams; increase productivity and efficiency of workers; promote adjustment and preparation to change in organization. Training is an important element of organization, which shows that organisations of diverse nature can hardly strive or survive without training. In this regard, library personnel require training to perform library functions effectively and efficiently.

Armstrong (2005) identified three broad types of training, namely; on-the-job training technique on- or off-the-job technique, and off-the-job training. On-the-job training includes: demonstration, coaching, job rotation, planned experience and mentoring. On or off-the-job techniques include assignments, guided reading, job (skill) instructions and projects. Off-the-job

training involves discussion, role-playing, lecture, talk, simulation, group exercise, case study, distance learning, outdoor learning, e-learning, workshops, assertiveness training and development programmes. Personnel development refers to the growth or realization of an employee's ability and potential through long term learning and educational experience need for career progression or advancement.

Training includes pre-job training and progress through career life of an employee. As training is anchored on learning, it is a career long process which should be carried out to induct employees into modern skills and new work techniques. Are library personnel adequately trained and prepared for the task of carrying out library functions in public secondary school libraries in Cross River State?

2.2 Gender Training and Performance

Gender reveals the classification of human beings into male or female, which is a social construct spelling out roles, norms and behaviours associated with either male or female, which differs from society to society. Male and female genders are important categories to study in work groups and how each group perform. Kidder's (2002) study revealed significant difference in gender groups relationship with performance of organisation and recommended higher education in university and colleges to enhance gender group performance.

Gender distribution of library staff impact greatly on utilization of training and performance. Major concern of sustainable social development is gender equality with emphasis on equal opportunities for both gender in diverse settings, including work organisation. Bryant, Bussell and Haspern (2019) revealed that gender identity and self-perception of gender identity through role performance and expectations influence professional librarian performance of work in library organisation. Their study showed that library work is female dominated work unlike other learning exercises which require high intellectual application like engineering that are dominated by male. Males have high work mobility moving from one organisation to another, thereby causing waste in cost of training, as they move away. Work mobility is lower in women dominated work as women stay in work longer to utilize skill harnessed on training to improve work performance. The gender distribution of Cross River State public secondary school libraries personnel will provide a yardstick to determine the usefulness of staff training or otherwise on performance.

2.3 Library Personnel in Cross River State Public Secondary School Libraries, Gender Distribution and Training

In the 1970s and 1980s, few school libraries personnel were trained up to Diploma level in order for them to progress in the Library Officer Cadre which requires holders of Advanced Level general Certificate of Education (GCE) or holders of Diploma in Library Science to progress through from Assistant Library Officer to Chief Library Officer. Entry to Librarian Cadre to progress from Librarian II to Director of Library Services were for holders of university degree, with second class lower division to first class. Librarian cadre did not have up to 10 personnel as there was no school offering university degree in Library and Information Science in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States through the 1980s. Consequent upon this, there was no librarian to man any secondary school library in Cross River State, even to date, where the bulk of professional librarians in Cross River State work in academic institutional and public libraries, but not in school libraries in Cross River State.

Civil Service Training Centre Cross River State then, now the Cross River State Management Development Institute, introduced Library Assistant course in the 1980s in order to train personnel at the "Library Assistant cadre", which is equivalent of the "clerical cadre" for general duty staff. The purpose of introducing Library Assistant training course was to bridge the manpower needs by providing paraprofessionals to assist few librarians and library officers in running both public and school libraries in Cross River State, as well as provide avenue for career advancement to "Library Attendants" that were recruited from people with basic education then,

being First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC). Library attendants progressed from “Library Attendant – GL 01, to Head Library Attendant – GL 03”, while Library Assistant progressed from “Library Assistant II – GL 03” to “Chief Library Assistant GL 08”. An employee requires Diploma to advance from Library Assistant cadre to Library Officer cadre, which were all paraprofessionals.

University of Calabar established its Library and Information Science Unit in 1994 to run programmes of Diploma in Library Science and Bachelor of Library and Information Science, which becomes a substantive Department of Library and Information Science in April, 2012 in the Faculty of Education, running programmes at undergraduate and post-graduate level, up to Doctorate degree (Department of Library and Information Science, 2020). This shows training and development opportunities for secondary school library personnel in Cross River State.

TABLE 1
Population of library staff in Cross River State Secondary School Libraries

Education Zone	LGA	No. of schools	No. of library staff	No. of schools without library staff
Calabar Zone	Akamkpa	18	3	15
	Akpabuyo	6	4	2
	Bakassi	3	1	2
	Biase	16	5	11
	Calabar Municipality	15	16	0
	Calabar South	7	5	2
	Odukpani	15	3	12
Ikom Zone	Abi	11	6	5
	Boki	27	7	20
	Etung	10	4	6
	Ikom	16	5	11
	Obubra	15	3	12
	Yakurr	15	2	13
Ogoja Zone	Bekwarra	5	3	2
	Obanliku	12	4	8
	Obudu	21	8	13
	Ogoja	14	10	4
	Yala	19	7	12
Total		245	96	150

Source: Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Secondary Education Board, Calabar (2015) [10]

In the data in Table 1 above, all the 96 library staff in public secondary school libraries in Cross River State Ministry of Education were all Library Assistants, out of which all were in possession of Senior Secondary Certificate of Education (SSCE) and General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE –O/L), only 24 (25 percent) were in possession of Library Assistant Training of Management Development Institute, in which the training programme ended in the early 1990s with the commencement of Diploma and Degree Programmes in Library and Information Science in University of Calabar. In essence, there is no library officer or Librarian in any of the secondary school libraries in Cross River State.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Public Secondary School Library Personnel in Cross River State

	LGA	No. of libraries	Male	Female
Calabar Zone	Akamkpa	3	1	2
	Akpabuyo	4	-	4
	Bakassi	1	-	1
	Biase	5	2	3
	Calabar Municipality	16	4	12
	Calabar South	5	3	2
	Odukpani	3	-	3
Ikom Zone	Abi	6	4	2
	Boki	7	2	5
	Etung	4	1	3
	Ikom	5	1	4
	Obubra	3	-	3
	Yakurr	2	1	1
Ogoja Zone	Bekwarra	3	-	3
	Obanliku	4	2	2
	Obudu	8	3	5
	Ogoja	10	2	8
	Yala	7	4	3
Total		96	30	66

Source: Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Secondary Education Board, Calabar (2015)

In the total number of 96 public secondary school library personnel, 30 (31%) were male and 66 (69%) were female. This shows that there were more female than male where training programmes will impact positively and translate to increased performance as work mobility of female gender is low. In this situation, engagement in training library personnel that are predominantly women is not likely going to lead to wastage of training cost.

3.0 Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Secondary data was used to establish empirical validity of findings and conclusion, obtained from textbooks, journals, web sources and official records. Expost facto exploratory design examines event after its occurrence, in which training of library personnel represents events under examination to observe its effect on performance of library functions by library personnel both male and female. Exploratory design was chosen because of lack of data in the problem area. Scope of analysis was limited to Cross River State public secondary school libraries and its personnel. Training of library personnel and gender distribution serve as independent variables, while performance of public secondary school library personnel serve as dependent variable. Approval for use of secondary data was provided by the management of Cross River State Secondary Education Board, which released the data after approval.

The Scientific Management Theory of Frederick Taylor presented the foundation of analyzing training and public secondary school libraries performance. Taylor (1911) lay emphasis on training, to provide the one best way of doing the work in order to enhance both employee and organisations productivity. He identified scientific selection, inducement, progressive training and development of the workmen to fit the job as a requirement of enhancing workmen performance and productivity. Consequently, Taylor's (1911) postulate brings both the independent (training) and dependent variables (performance of functions) together and provided appropriate basis for analysis of secondary data obtained. This brings back the primary question; are secondary school library personnel in Cross River State trained to ensure effective and efficient secondary school libraries functioning or performance?

4.0 Analysis, Interpretation, Discussion and Summary of Findings

The study area is divided into three educational zones, namely: Calabar Zone, Ikom Zone and Ogoja Zone. Calabar Zone consists of six local government areas, with eighty (80) secondary schools and eighty (80) secondary school libraries. Thirty-six (36) library staff are in 80 secondary schools, showing that forty-four schools are without library staff of any kind, as indicated in Table 1.

In Ikom Zone, there are ninety-four secondary schools and ninety-four secondary school libraries, with sixty-seven (67) library staff spread across six local government areas. This shows that 27 secondary school libraries are without staff. While in Ogoja zone, there are seventy-one (71) secondary schools and secondary school libraries respectively, manned by thirty-two (32) staff, spread over five local government areas. Ogoja zone as indicated in Table 1 has a deficit of thirty-nine (39) library staff.

According to records of Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Secondary Education Board (2015), none of the secondary school library personnel has qualification from Diploma to University degree. Hence, no Librarian or library officer to guide in administering public secondary school libraries in Cross River State. Consequently, most school libraries are not in use, but under lock and key, as there are no staff assigned to manage them. In such situation, library functions are not performed in one hundred and fifty (150) schools, representing sixty one percent (61%) of the two hundred and forty-five (245) secondary schools in Cross River State.

It is unfortunate when basic library functions of collection development, acquisition, cataloguing and processing are not performed in public secondary school libraries. This implies that students and other school stakeholders do not enjoy or have access to school libraries to enjoy library functions. In this case, students lack learning space to do independent work, no special event hosting, no varieties of learning opportunities, no development of reading habits and group discussion, old stock are not updated, text and other libraries resources are not made available to teachers and students.

The sixty nine percent (69%) of public secondary school library personnel shows gender inequality. Despite the inequality seen, it reveals women drive towards opportunity utilization and empowerment through employment. This situation also indicates that mobility will be low and expenditure on training then will remain in the library of schools for a longer period, without wastage due to employee mobility and turnover.

Despite current available training programmes in the university, products of such training are not employed into the Cross River State public secondary school library system. This condition is likely to give rise to increasing unemployment in Nigeria and many induce associated social vices, like crime. Wherever people are trained and they do not have opportunity to practice what they were trained on over time, they will forget and resources expended in such training become wasted. Even the available training space for library professionals and paraprofessionals has not been optimally utilized in terms of employment of graduates despite availability of actual vacancy.

The absence of librarians in Cross River State public secondary school libraries also shows that students and other stakeholders who constitute users of school libraries, failed to benefit from the professional competence and expertise as noted by California School Library Association (2008), which stated that the school librarian serves as: teacher, instructional partner, information specialist, programme administrator, classroom visitor and determiners of information needs. Consequently, public secondary school library information are not properly organized.

In summary, the findings are:

1. Public secondary school libraries in Cross River State are grossly understaffed.
2. Existing staff are not adequately trained to effectively and efficiently perform library technical and non-technical functions.

3. There is no training available to library paraprofessionals of the lower level in Cross River State, in terms of training facility and programme for Library Assistants that constitutes the only category of personnel in public secondary school libraries.
4. Need for urgent employment of librarians and library paraprofessionals of the category of "Library Officers" in public secondary school library system in Cross River State.
5. Lack of on-the-job short training programmes to increase competence.
6. The large number of women employed to provide library services in school though it shows gender inequality, provide stability to utilize benefit of training, especially women.
7. Gender distribution regarding Cross River State public secondary school library personnel does not reflect contemporary trend in gender categorization, such as: transgender, gay, homosexual, etc. This provides opening for further studies rooted in primary data from respondents to determine their gender categories.

5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

Training of personnel is a very important function every organization should plan and provide adequate budget for in order to enhance the performance of employees and boost organizational productivity. No organization can strive well without training staff to perform basic tasks so that goals and objectives of such organization are achieved. Cross River State public secondary school libraries are staffed with personnel without adequate training to perform contemporary school library functions. Majority of secondary schools are without functional libraries, as there are no personnel to work in such libraries. Consequently, library functions are not carried out in more than half of the school libraries all over the state. Training of personnel is grossly inadequate in Cross River State public secondary school system to boost their libraries' performance.

It is recommended that Management Development Institute of Cross River State should re-introduce "Library Assistant Programme" to boost training of lower library paraprofessionals in order to create pool of staff to be posted to all secondary schools. State government should as a matter of urgency employ university graduates of Library and Information Science programmes in order to raise quality and standard of professionals in public secondary school libraries in Cross River State. Short on-the-job training programme on areas of core competence and skill be instituted for public secondary school library personnel in Cross River State, to boost their skills and enhance work performance. Attention should be given to restoring public secondary school libraries through renovation, updating of holdings and stock, as well as upgrading facilities to incorporate e-library services. As noted by Taylor (1911), training of personnel provides the one best way to improve workers' level of performance and boost organizational productivity. Where there is no adequate training, there can never be improvement in performance. Such is the case of personnel in public secondary school libraries in Cross River State that are unable to provide efficient and effective services, due to inadequate training. The observed inequality in male to female ratio of public secondary schools' library employee provides prospect in retaining trained personnel for improved performance and development of school libraries organisations.

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