Assessing the Training Needs of Academic and Research Libraries Staff in Ghana

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Abstract: Academic and Research Libraries are transiting from the various traditional means of services provision since the dawn of the 21st century. As a result, training and retraining of staff have become imperative in the Library and Information Science profession. This paper takes a look at the training needs of staff in Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana. The main objective of the study was to investigate the training needs of staff of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana and make recommendations to improve them. The survey approach was adopted in conducting the study and questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data and findings were presented using tables, pie charts and graphs. The findings suggest that Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana organise training programmes for their staff. However, the frequency and duration of the training programmes are not enough to meet the needs of the staff. Also, staff in the Libraries have specific preferences but they are not given the opportunity to make inputs in their training programmes. The study recommended that the frequency, duration and methods of training should be improved. Needs assessment should be conducted in order to know the actual training needs of staff and all categories of staff should be given the opportunity to attend training programmes.

Keywords: Academic and research libraries, Ghana, Library and information science professionals, Staff development.

I. Introduction

Academic and Research libraries are set up mainly to support teaching, learning and research. They are the core of the academic set-up because; they stock information resource that is relevant to the various disciplines being pursued in the institution.

According to (1) all libraries aim to have efficient staff in order to provide a good library service to the community they hope to serve, whether that readership is using a public university, school or private library.

Training and development therefore, are of utmost importance in the library field, although each library organization must decide for itself what it means by a desired state of efficiency, as requirements will alter from library to library and country to country. However, the training and development should be designed to ensure efficient performance for the mutual benefit of the library system and the users.

Training and development of staff are crucial both in developed and developing countries (2). Added that training and development can solve a variety of manpower problems, which militate against optimal productivity in institutions. These can be summarized as increasing productivity, increasing the quality of work and raise morale of personnel, helping to develop new skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes for work, using rightly new tools and machines, processes and methods, reducing waste, accidents, turnover, lateness, absenteeism, and other overhead costs in organizations. It also helps in the implementation of new policies or regulations, fighting obsolescence in skills and technologies, increasing performance which meets the standard of performance for the job, developing replacements schedules, preparing people for advancement, improving manpower deployment and ensuing continuity of leadership and ensuring the survival and growth of the institutions in all times (2).

Similar studies by (3-5,1,6), supported this assertion. According to (7), nowadays librarians and library staff task have broadened with added responsibilities placed on them by the demands of the diverse research needs of the clients. They are challenged to be open minded and approachable to queries while knowing how to satisfy the information needs of the client. In a study on motivation and performance of librarians in public Universities in Ghana by (8) 45.8% of the respondents rated career development and training as the first most important factor in their jobs. Also in their study on Training and Development Issues: Evidence from Polytechnic Libraries in Ghana (7), recommended that the organization of training and development programmes should be designed to meet the professional career advancement of library staff.

In Ghana, training for library staff and Continuing Professional Development (CPD's) are mostly organised by institutions, the

Ghana Library Association (GLA), Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries, Ghana (CARLIGH), Donor and International Agencies like INASP, EIFL, AAU etc. It is against this background that the researchers found it important to research into the training needs of library staff in Ghana in order to serve as a guide to institutions, the Ghana Library Association (GLA), Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries, Ghana (CARLIGH), Donor and International Agencies in their training programmes.

The main objective of the study is to assess the training needs of staff in academic and research libraries in Ghana in order to identify possible shortfalls and strengths and make recommendations.

II. Research Methodology

Using a survey research design, data was collected from various categories of Library staff: Senior members, Senior staff and Junior staff. Questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions were used to collect data. Ten (10) academic and research libraries in six (6) Regions of Ghana were purposively selected for the study. This purpose was to incorporate all categories of academic and research libraries in Ghana in the study. Two (2) Public Universities, two (2) Technical Universities, two (2) Private Universities, two (2) Nursing Training Colleges and two (2) Research Institutes were selected for the study. Another reason for selecting these institutions was the fact that all categories of library staff (Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff) were found in the institutions. The number of questionnaire administered in the institutions was determined by their staff strength.

One hundred (100) questionnaire were randomly administered in the selected institutions and out of these, Eighty-two (82) were retrieved giving a response rate of 82%. In the process of administering the questionnaire, the researchers took the opportunity to sensitise staff in the institutions on the importance of Continuing Professional Development Programmes (CPD's).

The findings of the study were presented in Frequency Tables, Pie Charts and Bar Graphs. The results were analyzed and deductions and logical conclusions were made from them. Some of the variables in the survey include demographic information of the respondents, length of service, training programmes attended, duration and relevance of the training programmes, level of knowledge of trainers and whether respondents have been able to transfer what they learnt to their jobs. Respondents were also asked to indicate their training needs and mode of training delivery preferences. Suggestions to improve the training of staff in the institutions were also offered by the respondents.

III. Findings and Discussions

Table I: List of Institutions Surveyed

No.	Institution	Participants	Frequency	Percentage
1	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology	30	25	30.40
2	Kumasi Technical University	20	16	20.40
3	Garden City University College	4	4	4.90
4	Christian Service University College	4	4	4.90
5	Council for Industrial and Scientific Research	10	8	8.70
6	Premier College of Nursing	3	3	3.70
7	College of Integrated Healthcare	3	3	3.70
8	Akrofi Christaller Institute	4	4	3.70
9	University for Development Studies	14	10	12.10
10	Tamale Technical University	8	6	7.40
	TOTAL	100	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017
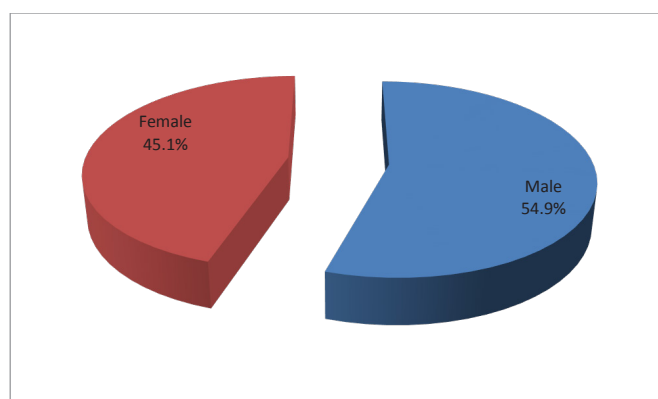
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Fig. 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

The survey indicates as in Fig. 1 above that the respondents were made up of 54.9% males as against 45.1% females. This means that the respondents were male dominated.

TABLE II: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Age	Frequency	Percent
21 - 30 years	27	32.9
31 - 40 years	20	24.4
41 - 50 years	29	35.4
Above 50 years	6	7.3
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As seen from Table II above, majority of the respondents were young whose ages range between 21-40. This group forms 47 (57.3%) of the total respondents. Only 6 (7.3%) of the respondents were aged 50 years and above. With a high percentage of young and energetic human resource in the institutions, Continuous Professional Development Programmes (CPD's) will benefit individual staff in particular and their institutions and the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession in Ghana in general.

TABLE III: HIGHEST QUALIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Secondary School	34	41.5
Diploma/HND	19	23.2
Degree	8	9.8
Postgraduate	21	25.6
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

As seen from Table III, majority of the respondents 34 (41.5%) are Secondary school leavers and the least category are the degree holders 8 (9.8%). Since most of the trainings in the LIS

profession in Ghana are on the - job trainings, all the category of staff can improve their skills and competencies irrespective of their qualifications.
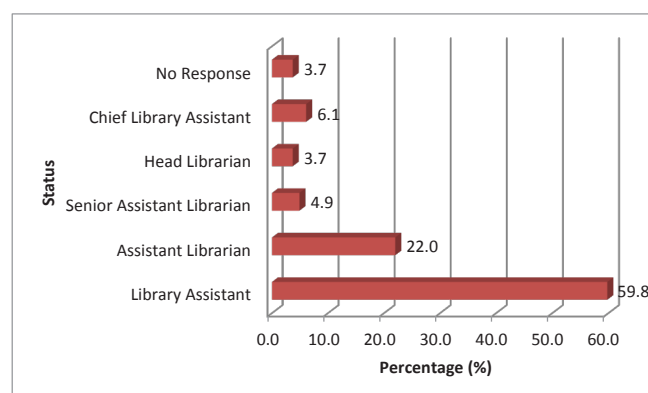
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Fig. 2: Current Status of Respondents

On the current status of respondents, the survey revealed that majority of the respondents were Library Assistants and the least categories were the Head Librarians. This is normal in academic and research libraries because most academic and research libraries employ many Library Assistants and other category of staff whilst there is only one Head Librarian in a particular Library.

TABLE IV: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE LIBRARY PROFESSION?

Period	Frequency	Percent
1 - 4 years	13	15.9
5 - 8 years	15	18.3
9 - 12 years	15	18.3
12 - 15 years	20	24.4
Over 15 years	16	19.5
No Response	3	3.7
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Those who have worked in their libraries from 12-15 years constitute the majority 20 (24.4%) and those who have worked from 1-4 years were the least category 13 (15.9%) while those who have worked between 5 and 12 years were 30 (36.6%). In considering the training needs of staff, the number of years individuals have worked in their respective libraries should be taken into consideration because all things being equal, fairly new staff lack experience and those who have worked in libraries for many years have some level of experience behind them. Also those with less years of service are mostly young so the Library and Information Science profession in Ghana will benefit from their skills and competencies if they are given the needed training.
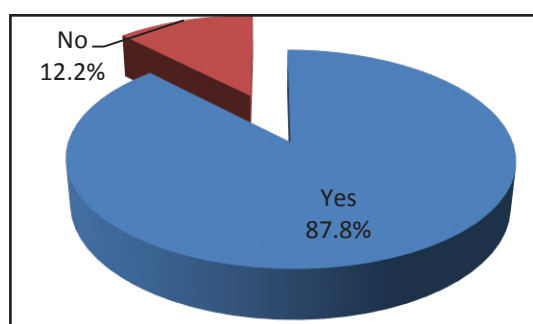
Source: Field Survey, 2015

Fig. 3: Have You Participated in any Training Programme(S) Since Your Employment?

From Fig. 3 above, 87.8% of the respondents have participated in training programme(s) since they were employed. Only 12.2% indicated that they have not attended any training programme since they were employed. The reason for this percentage of respondents who have not attended training programmes might stem from the fact that selection of staff for training programmes is centred on some particular staff or certain category of staff, for example Senior Members or Senior staff thereby leaving some category of staff out. Another reason might be lack of funds or unwillingness on the part of management to sponsor many staff members to attend training programmes.

Table V: How Many Training Programmes Have You Participated in the Past Five Years?

Number of Training Programmes	Frequency	Percent
None	25	30.5
One	32	39.0
Two Times	11	13.4
Three Times	10	12.2
Four or more	4	4.9
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

On a follow up question on how many respondents have attended training programmes in the past five years, 32 (39.0%) indicated that they have attended only one training programme whilst those who have attended training programmes 3-4 times together were 14 (17%) and those who have attended 2 times were 11 (13.4%). It can be deduced from the responses that there is more room for training programmes for academic and research library staff in Ghana so various institutions, GLA, CARLIGH and Donor Agencies should seize the opportunity and organise more training programmes for library staff in

Ghana.

Table VI: What was Your Assessment of the Training Programme(S)?

Assessment	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	17	20.7
Good	40	48.8
NA	25	30.5
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

When the respondents were asked to assess the training programmes, 40 (48.8%) said that the training programmes they attended were good, 17 (20.7%) rated their training programmes as excellent. None of the respondents rated the training programmes as satisfactory or bad. This is a plus for training programmes for Library staff in Ghana. It is also a challenge for institutions and organisations to also organise training programmes that will measure up to existing standards in future.

Table VII: In Your Opinion How Relevant was the Training to You in Terms of Personal and Organisational Needs?

Response	Personal Needs		Organisational Needs	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Extremely useful	10	12.2	11	13.4
Very useful	28	34.1	28	34.1
Useful	16	19.5	18	22.0
Not useful	3	3.7	-	-
NA	25	30.5	25	30.5
Total	82	100.0	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

On the relevance of the training programmes to the staff in terms of personal and organisational goals, as shown on Table VII, only 3 (3.7%) indicated the trainings were not useful. This shows that most of the training programmes the respondents participated were relevant to their personal and organisational goals. However, the 3 (3.7%) who indicated that the training(s) they participated in were not useful should be investigated further in order to correct the anomalies. This can serve as a guide in planning and organisation of future training programmes.

TABLE VIII: THE PURPOSE OF TRAINING YOU ATTENDED WAS....

Purpose	Frequency	Percent
In line with organisational goal(s)	34	41.5
More on generational knowledge	11	13.4
Specific to your area of operations	11	13.4
To enhance my knowledge on IT	1	1.2
NA	25	30.5
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Majority of the respondents 34 (41.5%) indicated that the purpose of the trainings they attended were in line with their organisational goals whilst 11 (13.5%) indicated that the trainings were more on general knowledge and also specific to their areas of operation. Only 1 (1.2%) said that the training he/she attended was to enhance his/her knowledge in ICT. This shows that there is the need to organise more training programmes to enhance the knowledge of library staff in ICT.

TABLE IX: HOW DO YOU GRADE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRAINERS?

Grade	Frequency	Percent
Excellent	15	18.3
Very Good	29	35.4
Good	13	15.9
NA	25	30.5
Total	82	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The level of experience and knowledge of trainers is very important for effective and successful organisation of any training programme. The respondents were therefore asked to grade the level of knowledge of trainers in the trainings they attended. The respondents graded the trainers excellent, very good and good as shown in Table IX. None of the trainers was graded satisfactory or bad. This is a clear indication that selection of resource persons for library training programmes for academic and research libraries in Ghana has been done with people of specialised knowledge in the training programmes in mind.

IV. WAS THE DURATION OF THE TRAINING ADEQUATE?

When the respondents were asked whether the durations of the trainings they attended were adequate, 25 (30.5%) said "Yes" whilst 32 (39.0%) said "No". Twenty-five (25) representing 30.5% did not respond to the question.

V. HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO TRANSFER WHAT YOU LEARNT TO THE JOB?

In responding to a follow-up question on whether respondents have been able to transfer what they learnt on the job, 43 (52.4%) responded in the affirmative whilst 14 (17.1%) said "No". Twenty-five (25) representing 30.5% did not respond to the question.

TABLE X: RANK THE FOLLOWING SKILLS TRAINING NEEDS IN ORDER OF YOUR PREFERENCE ON THE SCALE OF 1 - 3

Services	1	2	3	No response	Total
Routine Library Technical Skills					
Cataloguing	65 (79.3)	11 (13.4)	5 (6.1)	1 (1.2)	82 (100)
Classification	6 (7.3)	68 (82.9)	7 (8.5)	1 (1.2)	82 (100)
Indexing and Abstracting	10 (12.2)	2 (2.4)	69 (84.1)	1 (1.2)	82 (100)
Routine Library Services					
Reader Services	54 (65.9)	19 (23.2)	7 (8.5)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)
Reference Services	16 (19.5)	49 (59.8)	15 (18.3)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)
Public Relations	10 (12.2)	12 (14.6)	58 (70.7)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)
ICT and Technical Skills					
Basic computer skills	17 (20.7)	61 (74.4)	3 (3.7)	1 (1.2)	82 (100)
Intermediate computer skills	11(19.3)	43(75.4)	2(3.5)	1(1.2)	82 (100)
Advance computer skills	23 (28.0)	5 (6.1)	53 (64.6)	1 (1.2)	82 (100)
Online Resources					
Online Database	67 (81.7)	6 (7.3)	7 (8.5)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)
Institutional Repositories	11 (13.4)	66 (80.5)	3 (3.7)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)
Open Access and copyright issues	2 (2.4)	8 (9.8)	70 (85.4)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)
Information Storage and Retrieval					
Information organization and storage	45(54.9)	13(15.9)	22(26.8)	2(2.4)	82 (100)
Searching databases and online resources	22(26.8)	51(62.2)	7(8.5)	2(2.4)	82 (100)
Evaluating information and information sources	13 (15.9)	16 (19.5)	51 (62.2)	2 (2.4)	82 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2017

VI. Training Needs Preference

The respondents were asked to rank their training needs on a scale of 1-3 by using the skills shown on Table X. The skills were grouped under routine library technical skills, routine library services, ICT and technical skills, online resources and information storage and retrieval. The objective was to know the training needs priorities of the respondents in order to make recommendations to address them. As seen from responses above the respondents indicated that online databases 67 (81.7%), cataloguing 65 (79.3%), reader services 54 (65.9%), information organisation and storage 45 (54.9%) and advanced computer skills 23 (28.0%) were their priorities by ranking them ahead of the other skills. Even though the other skills were also important to them academic and research libraries in Ghana should take note of the training priorities of their staff and organise more training programmes for them in those areas.

VII. Mode of Training Delivery Preferences

TABLE XI: Mode of Training Delivery Preferences on the Scale of 1-3

Mode	1	2	3	No response	Total
Instructional face to face method	20 (24.4)	43 (52.4)	17 (20.7)	2 (2.4)	82 (100.0)
Online/Webinar method	15 (18.3)	21 (25.6)	44 (53.7)	2 (2.4)	82 (100.0)
Practical hands-on method	45 (54.9)	16 (19.5)	19 (23.2)	2 (2.4)	82 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Concerning the mode of training delivery preference as seen in Table XI, majority of the respondents 45 (54.9%) ranked practical hands-on method of training as their first preference.

20 (24.4%) indicated instructional face to face method as their second preference and 15 (18.3%) ranked online/webinar method as their third preference. The preferences are very important indicators that should be taken into consideration in the planning and organization of future training programmes for library staff in Ghana.

VIII. Recommendations by Respondents

When the respondents were asked to offer suggestions on how to improve library training programmes in Ghana, they willingly made the following suggestions.

Suggestions to improve the training of staff in Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana

- Staff needs to be trained quarterly.
- Regular workshops should be organised for members.
- Regular needs assessments should be conducted before training.
- More days must be allocated for training.
- Method of training should be looked at since training of heads to train subordinates may result in vital information loss during delivery.
- All staff must participate in future trainings.
- There should be more face to face and hands on training programmes than online ones.

IX. Conclusion

It can be concluded in no uncertain terms from the findings of the study that, training opportunities have been made available to library staff in academic and research libraries in Ghana, and that the trainings have improved their skills and addressed organizational needs.

However, there is more room for improvement. Individual staff have preferences in terms of training needs but they are not given the opportunity to make recommendations to organisers of the training programmes. The training programmes are most of the time imposed on staff by the organisers, managers of libraries and sponsors, with staff having no input in the duration, frequency and methodology of the programmes.

The situation has been compounded by the lack of research on the training needs of staff in academic and research libraries in Ghana. The respondents expressed high interest in trainings like online databases, copyright, basic computer skills, information retrieval, institutional repositories, cataloguing and classification. Majority of the respondents also preferred face to face and hands on training methods to online and webinar methods.

Training of staff in academic and research libraries in Ghana would be greatly enhanced and more beneficial to institutions and individual staff if the recommendations in this study are adhered to and implemented.

X. Recommendations

- Organisers of training programmes for staff of academic and research libraries in Ghana should consult staff and take their training needs into consideration. This can be done by conducting pre training needs assessments and post training evaluations.
- More research should be conducted in training of staff in academic and research libraries in Ghana.
- The quality and quantity of training of staff of academic and research libraries should be improved.

- There should be more trainings with the face to face and hands-on methods as against the online ones.

- The training programmes should be on regular basis, preferably on quarterly basis.

- All categories of staff in academic and research libraries should be given equal opportunities to attend training programmes, whether internal or external. This can be achieved by drawing training plan or schedule for all staff at the beginning of every academic year.

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