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## TRAINING NEEDS OF STAFF AND STUDENTS IN THE USE OF SOFTWARE PACKAGES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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### ABSTRACT

*The increasing pace of technological change necessitates the need for library staff and patrons to be properly trained in computer application. The study examined the extent of training programmes on the use of software packages in academic libraries. A total of 80 information professionals and 300 undergraduate students purposively selected from four academic libraries in South-West Nigeria constituted the population for the study. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, interview and observations and analyzed using simple percentage calculation. Findings of the study revealed that the core modules needed to operate on full automation were not available in some libraries. Also, most of the students were not exposed to training on the use of library software packages. Among the challenges associated with the training programmes were inadequate training facilities, poor attitude of staff to training and inadequate financial support. Training in the use of software is important for maximum use of the software for effective service provision. Library management should provide regular and consistent instruction to users, make available facilities for skills training to the staff and ensure adequate financial support for staff training and development.*

**Keywords:** Database, Database Management Software Packages, Training and Development, Library Automation, Skills-gap

### INTRODUCTION

The electronic age has brought about adoption and use of application software packages in Nigerian university libraries. Nwezah (2005) stressing the importance of IT affirms that IT has enabled the library to

achieve enhanced level of productivity and handles a volume of transaction which would have been impossible without the use of computers. The traditional methods of managing records and public catalogue were time consuming, cumbersome and could not keep pace with technological innovations. Automation saves the labour involved in managing the card catalogue, to keep it up – to – date with respect to the collection, checking out and checking in books, generating statistics and reports. This gave rise to the creation of databases in order to meet up with the trends.

French (2002) described a database as a comprehensive, consistent, controlled and coordinated collection of structured data items. Databases are set up in order to meet the information needs of major parts of any organization by storing a vast quantity of data for specific purpose. In the library and information center environment, databases take the place of the card catalogues and provide means of having access to the library collection using a collection of programmes known as Database Management System (DBMS).

According to Whitten, Bentley and Ditman (2001), DBMS is specialized computer software that is used to create access, control and manage the database. It provides the controlled interface between the user and data in the database. DBMS are crucial to libraries because they support all the activities of the library management by offering a range of searching facilities so that the information in the database can be accessed. They also offer several advantages over traditional file system such as fewer data storage requirement, better data integrity and better data management. Among the database management software packages used to handle specific tasks in libraries are ALICE for Windows, GLAS, X-LIB, CD/ISIS, TINLIB and a host of others. The use of these software packages for maximum productivity requires continuous training for the library staff and users.

Oladunni (2000) observed that human resource is the most valued asset of any organization. This was corroborated by Iheama – Chama (2000) who was of the view that of all the resources of any organizations, human resource appears to be the most important asset. Nwachukwu (2005) citing Ochogwu (1992) submitted that in order to bridge the gap brought about by digital information, there is need for human resource development and training of librarians and patrons in computer application.

With recent advancement in IT, there is need for library management to update their employee's skills to keep pace with the development if they

are to remain relevant and effective. Walker and Janes (1999) were of the opinion that IT have resulted in an increasing need for user training if the most efficient use is to be made of these powerful technology. Libraries must ensure that both library staff and patrons are exposed to training programs that can broaden their knowledge and the skills needed to achieve the goal of library automation. There is need for human resource development through conferences, seminars, workshops and other refresher courses designed, developed and implemented by library management with the aim of empowering library staff and the end-users to keep abreast of modern trends.

lyiola (2007) defines training as “the systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by an individual to perform adequately on a given task”. He buttressed the fact that such training is intended to provide learning experience that will help people to perform more effectively in their present or future jobs. He further stated that people are the cornerstone of any organization and their ability to be responsive and flexible in a rapid changing world would enable them use their skills to contribute to the success of their organization.

Olise (2005) describes training as “the systematic modification of behaviour through training, which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience”. He was of the opinion that training helps to manage change and acquaint people with the knowledge and skills needed to adjust to new situations and also improve level of performance of service. Furthermore, Mathis and Jackson (2004) see training as a “process whereby people acquire capabilities to aid in the achievement of organizational goals”.

A review of several studies on the necessity of training in the effective use of IT are discussed by Adeniji and Adeniji (2008), Gbaje (2007), Omogor (2006), Obajemu and Ibegwan (2006), Nok (2006), Bozimo (2006), Balarabe (2005), Zaid (2004) and Falaiye (2002). They are of the opinion that education and training in the areas of ICT is crucial to the success of computerization of library functions and services.

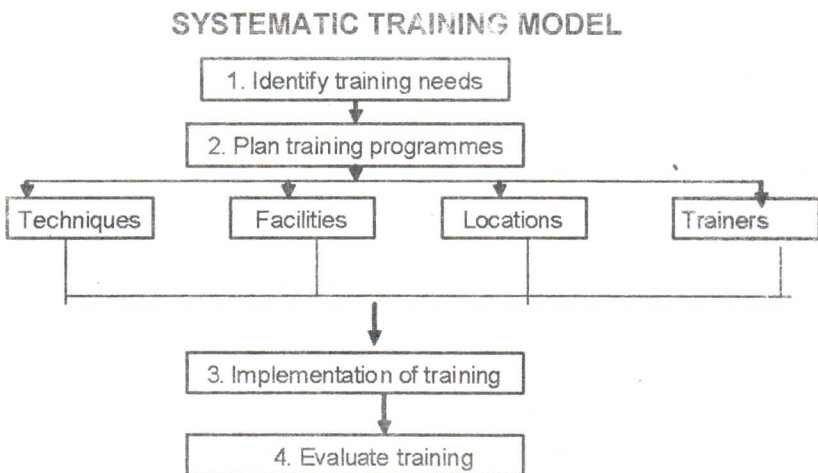
Ajibade (2009) noted that there is skill – gap in the world of IT which is affecting both the government and private establishments. He observed that labour market is groaning due to lack of computer skills and that the inability of many people to acquire adequate knowledge of computer has resulted in low productivity. Nwalo (2005) highlights three (3) areas of staff training needs. These according to him include staff orientation, general computer literacy and specialized training for key staff.

Many researchers have provided some useful insights to factors that need to be put into consideration if training is to be result – oriented and contribute more effectively to the attainment of organization goals.

Findings from studies such as those carried out by Iyiola (2007), Mole (2004) and Oladunni (2000) all highlight the place of training needs assessment which should centre on both the organization as it relates to its goals to determine where training emphasis should be placed and the assessment of individual employee for training. They are of the view that such training should be adequately defined in terms of objectives, content, adequacy and relevance to the needs of the organization concerned. They all stressed the need for the training to accommodate and cater for the needs and interests of both the staff and users of the library. This must also be evaluated from time to time in order to measure achievement.

A four-stage model which was specifically developed for the industrial training boards in the 1960s given by Armstrong (2006) revealed the followings as necessary:

- Identify training needs;
- Decide what sort of training is required to satisfy those needs;
- Use experienced and trained trainers to implement training;
- Follow up and evaluate training to ensure that it is effective.



**FIGURE I:**  
**Systematic Training Model**  
 Source: Michael Armstrong (2006)



## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The world presently is ICT-driven and there is need for library managers to be fully equipped. The use of computer-based systems in libraries, archives and information centers is widely acknowledged. One primary role of library managers is to meet the information needs of their users. Electronic information resources provide librarians with challenges, as the methods of storing, organizing and disseminating information have undergone tremendous changes over the years. Advanced technologies are rapidly changing the role of information professionals and the range of competencies that are required to meet them. There is need for consistent investments on personnel by library management to enable them deliver the right level of services to their users and need to equip the end – users with computer literacy skills to search the library catalogues and ensure efficient retrieval. This study therefore seeks to explore the training needs of staff and students in the use of database management software packages in Nigerian university libraries.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- (i) identify the library software, facilities and services available in the selected libraries;
- (ii) assess the training programmes available for staff and other library users;
- (iii) find out methods employed by library management in developing the skills of staff and students in the use of IT facilities;
- (iv) identify challenges militating against training programmes in the selected university libraries.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design on training programmes on the use of library software packages in the selected university libraries; the target population for the study consisted of undergraduates and information professionals in four (4) universities in South West, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select three hundred (300) undergraduates that were registered library users and eighty (80) library staff comprising professionals, system librarians and paraprofessionals in four university libraries Ogun and Lagos States. The universities were: University of Lagos, Akoka, (UNILAG); University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, (UNAAB); Lagos State University, Ojo (LASU) and Covenant University, Ota, (CU). Questionnaire coupled with interview schedule guide were the instruments used to elicit information from the respondents while data were analyzed using frequency distribution and

percentages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

UNILAG and UNAAB libraries were using GLAS software package while LASU and CU were using ALICE for Windows software package (Table 1). UNILAG and CU libraries had both automated and implemented all the core library modules while UNAAB and LASU had duly computerized their OPAC and cataloging in the area of OPAC and cataloguing.

**TABLE I:  
PROFILE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES SAMPLED**

<b>LIBRARY</b>	<b>YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT</b>	<b>SOFTWARE IN USE</b>	<b>YEAR OF AUTOMATION</b>	<b>STATE OF AUTOMATION</b>
University of Lagos, Akoka (UNILAG)	1962	GLAS	1995	Full Automation
University of Agriculture Abeokuta (UNAAB)	1988	GLAS	1995	Partial Automation
Lagos State University Ojo (LASU)	1984	ALICE	2004	Partial Automation
Covenant University Ota, (CU)	2002	ALICE	2002	Full Automation

Two questionnaires were administered to the two categories of respondents, eighty (80) for information professionals and para-professionals and three hundred (300) for student, out of which 290 were used for analysis. This showed a return rate of 70% for staff and 78% for students (Table 2).

**TABLE II:  
QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE RATE**

LIBRARY	Distributed Questionnaire		Usable Questionnaire		Response Rate %	
	Staff	Students	Students	Staff	Students	
UNILAG	25	80	20	68	80	85.0
UNAAB	20	70	11	51	55	72.9
LASU	15	80	11	62	73	77.5
CU	20	70	14	53	70	75.7
TOTAL	80	300	56	234	70	78.0

### IT Facilities and Services of the Surveyed Libraries

The result from the observation revealed that all the libraries had all the following ICT facilities: computer with CD-ROM work stations, OPAC, Local Network, Internet Services, etc. These ICT facilities were used to provide organized access to information resources and to increase the efficiency of library service.

### Availability and Adequacy of Training Programme

Training on the use of GLAS software package was carried out for the staff and students of UNILAG and UNAAB libraries. More than half of the students in UNAAB (58.8%) submitted that they did not receive training (Table 3). Training was also conducted for the staff of LASU and CU libraries, while only 20.9% of the students in LASU admitted that they did not receive any software training.

**TABLE III:  
TRAINING PROGRAMME ON SOFTWARE USE**

AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMME	UNILAG				UNAAB				LASU				COVENANT			
	Staff		Students		Staff		Students		Staff		Students		Staff		Students	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
YES	20	100	60	88.2	11	100	21	41.2	9	81.8	49	79.1	14	100	53	100
NO	-	-	8	11.8	-	-	30	58.8	2	18.2	13	20.9	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	20	100	68	100	11	100	51	100	11	100	62	100	14	100	53	100

Seminars/Workshop/Conferences were the training method used most for the library staff in all the university libraries except UNAAB with more than 60% of the respondents (Table IV). However, in-house training was the method used mostly for the UNAAB library staff.

**TABLE IV:  
METHOD OF TRAINING STAFF**

METHODS	UNIVERSITIES							
	UNILAG		UNAAB		LASU		COVENANT	
	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%
In - house Training	8	40	7	63.6	4	36.4	4	28.6
Seminar/ workshop/ conferences	12	60	3	27.3	7	63.6	10	71.4
Others	-	-	1	9.1	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	20	100	11	100	11	100	14	100

The students in UNILAG were trained on the use of software during orientation (60.3%) while those in LASU (54.8%) and CU (52.8%) were trained through the use of a manual on the use of Alice for windows software (Table V).

**TABLE V:  
METHOD OF TRAINING STUDENTS**

METHODS	UNIVERSITIES							
	UNILAG		UNAAB		LASU		COVENANT	
	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%	<i>Freq</i>	%
When admitted into the institution	41	60.3	14	27.5	15	24.2	25	47.2
As a course of study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Use of Manual	19	27.9	7	13.7	34	54.8	28	52.8
No response	8	11.8	30	58.8	13	21.0	-	-
TOTAL	68	100	51	100	62	100	53	100

Majority of the UNILAG and UNAAB staff admitted that the training given to them on the use of GLAS was adequate, (60%) and (72.7%) respectively, while (10%) and (27.3%) of the staff were of the opinion that the training was not adequate (Table VI). Also, (82.4%) of UNILAG students expressed their satisfaction with the training. Only (21.6%) of UNAAB students agreed that the training was adequate. At LASU, where ALICE for Windows software, package was in use, 18.2% of the staff rated the training given as adequate while 36.4% indicated fairly adequate and 45.4% submitted that the training was not adequate. Over half of the student respondents showed that they were satisfied with the training, while 37% disagreed (Table 6). Both library staff and students of CU agreed that training on ALICE for Windows was adequate.

**TABLE VI:  
ADEQUACY OF TRAINING ON GLAS AND  
ALICE FOR WINDOWS SOFTWARE PACKAGES**

AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMME	UNILAG				UNAAB				LASU				COVENANT			
	Staff		Students		Staff		Students		Staff		Students		Staff		Students	
Very adequate	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7.1	6	11.3
Adequate	12	60	24	35.3	8	72.7	11	21.6	2	18.2	14	22.6	10	71.4	27	50.9
Fairly adequate	6	30	32	47.1	-	-	4	7.8	4	36.4	20	32.3	3	21.4	19	35.8
Not adequate	2	10	10	14.7	3	27.3	26	51.0	5	45.4	23	37.0	-	-	-	-
No response	-	-	2	2.9	-	-	10	19.6	-	-	5	8.1	-	-	1	1.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>

Four areas were identified as challenges associated with training programmes on the use of software packages. These include inadequate training facilities, poor attitude of staff to training, insufficient skilled personnel and inadequate financial support (Table 7). Majority of UNILAG, UNAAB and LASU staff respondents agreed to inadequate training facilities, attitude of staff to training and insufficient skilled manpower as problems affecting training in their respective libraries. UNILAG respondents did not support inadequate finance as challenge to training programme. In the case of CU library, most of the respondents disagreed with problems highlighted above except the issue relating to

poor attitude of staff to training, where 9 (64.5%) responded. Similarly, UNILAG respondents did not support inadequate finance as a challenge to training programme (Table VII).

**TABLE VII:  
STAFF RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES MILITATING  
AGAINST TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

PROBLEM	UNIVERSITIES															
	UNILAG				UNAAB				LASU				COVENANT			
	Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree		Agree		Disagree	
Inadequate training facilities	14	70	6	30	11	100	-	-	11	100	-	-	4	28.6	10	71.4
Poor attitude of staff to training	16	80	4	20	9	81.8	2	18.2	9	81.8	2	18.2	9	64.3	5	35.7
Insufficient skilled personnel	15	75	5	25	11	100	-	-	10	90.9	1	9.1	2	14.3	12	85.7
Inadequate financial support	5	25	15	75	11	100	-	-	7	63.6	4	36.1	3	21.4	11	78.6

## DISCUSSION

This study has inquired into training programs on the use of library software packages in some selected universities libraries. The four libraries were automated, although using different library software. UNILAG and UNAAB used GLAS while LASU and CU used ALICE for windows software package. Both UNILAG and CU had computerized their library activities in the areas of circulation, cataloguing, serials control and on – line Public Access Search, while UNAAB and LASU had their services automated in the areas of OPAC and cataloguing as at the time of the study. These findings lend credence to the view of Utulu (2008), Odion and Adetona (2009) who reported that universities consider investment on IT facilities as critical to their mission.

The study also showed that the university libraries in this survey provided training and education on the use of software packages for their staff. Majority of the students in UNILAG and CU submitted that they received training. The result revealed that average number of UNAAB and LASU

students respectively admitted that they did not receive training. This implies that there is need to provide regular and more serious instruction to users if they are to experience full advantage of the online catalogue over the card catalogue. This finding supports the assertion of Edem (2008) and Adedoyin (2008) who were of the view that orientation on the use of computer for information retrieval should be made mandatory for all students during library orientation programmes.

On the methods adopted in training staff and students, it was found that most of the staff respondents from UNILAG, LASU and CU admitted that they received training through seminars/workshops/conferences. More than half of UNAAB staff respondents submitted to in – house training as the major method through which they received training. On the other hand, instruction (orientation) given to freshers was rated highest among student respondents from UNILAG; while the use of manual at OPAC section took the lead among respondents of LASU and CU. Majority of UNAAB student respondents did not respond. In support of this, Fred-Adegbulugbe (2010) emphasized the need for right education and appropriate training on the use of computer.

Majority of the staff and students of UNILAG and CU found the training on use of library software packages either adequate or fairly adequate. Few of UNILAG staff and student respondents expressed their dissatisfaction while majority of CU students found the training adequate. Based on the reactions of majority of UNAAB and LASU staff respondents, they submitted that the training was adequate. Similarly, most of the students of UNAAB and LASU respectively submitted that the training is not adequate. The result showed that training of staff and students should be given preference as stressed by Bozimo (2006) who is of the opinion that human capacity building is critical to the success of computerization.

Four areas were identified as challenges associated with training programme on the use of software packages. The result showed that UNILAG, UNAAB and LASU staff respondents agreed with most of the problems highlighted. However, majority of CU respondents did not support these issues as hinderances to effective training programmes. These findings lend credence to the result of the study conducted by Makondo (2004) at the University of Zambia Library. He was of the opinion that lack of commitment from both the university and library management can threaten IT survival.

## CONCLUSION

The challenges of training and development are a critical issue that academic libraries need to give urgent attention. The fact remains that training and retraining of staff and patrons is fundamental to the success of computerization in order to improve on their skills and make positive changes that will advance the relevance of academic libraries. The transition from manual to the automated system has not only changed all procedures but has also brought extra measure of complexity to activities of all the staff involved. Users are now using IT to do what was formerly being done for them by library staff and this makes their expectation greater and demanding. The goal of the information provider should be to achieve reasonable performance levels that users need and value than providing services in the same old way.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings this paper, the followings are recommended:

- development of computer culture among the library staff and users;
- provision of regular and consistent instruction to users on how to search the library on-line, and use Public Access Catalogue (OPAC);
- provision of training workshops with regular in-house programs in order to promote skills needed to working efficiently; and make adequate financial provision for staff training, development and acquisition of all core modules relevant to library operations.

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