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STAFF RETOOLING PRACTICES AS INHIBITING FACTORS FOR INFORMATION SERVICE DELIVERY IN AGBOR LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF DELTA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The way information is delivered, accessed and distributed in libraries and information centres across the world has changed in the twenty-first century. The change has led to an improvement in information literacy among library patrons, who are now more adept at using sophisticated search engines for selecting reliable information sources and information and communication technology (ICT) tools for study and research. Survey research method was used for the study. Three research questions were developed. The population for the study comprised twenty four (24) staff in the library/ department of library and information science at university of Agbor, library, Delta State. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection from the respondents based on four (4) point rating scale. A midpoint mean of 2.5 was accepted as positive criterion mean response. The study revealed that seminars, conference/workshops, in-house training, further education, staff orientation, classroom training/ job rotation, mentorship and local and international conference are staff retooling practices identified. The finding further discovered inhibiting factors faced staff retooling practice such as inadequate finance, stringent policy, relevant ICT equipment, such as Internet facilities, projector, interactive board and computers, among others should be made available in classrooms and at the e-library to make teaching and learning of ICT-enabled courses easier among others.

Keywords: Retooling; Practices; Service delivery; Information provision; Staff development.

Introduction

The expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for research, learning, and teaching in universities and libraries has greatly increased the need for a revision of the topics and delivery strategies of library training. The outdated approaches to offering library training are no longer effective with the 21st-century library users, making a change necessary. Change has been described as one of the most difficult thing to apply in an organization, but a vital element for any business that wants to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive and fast-paced world (Madsen, 2018). Omeluzor, Alarape, Dika and Ukangwa (2017) noted that users of academic libraries including students, staff and faculty may not have any basic skill or knowledge in using ICT-library based information resources and therefore the need for ICT-based library instruction.

As a result, it is necessary for library employees to learn new skills by utilizing accessible retooling techniques such as staff employees, functional duties may also shift, necessitating retraining in their new jobs. If staff development opportunities are to be successful under such conditions, they may need to be customized. The issue of inadequate skills remains despite the staff retooling procedures that are accessible and provide opportunity for library workers to refresh their abilities. When the skills are not updated as dictated by current information changing environment, the information service delivery is compromised which affects the quality of service tendered. This call for the big question whether the library staff are aware of the retooling practices available and inhibiting factors on information service delivery. Gbaje and Ukachi, (2011) posited that training can take many forms and each library should use the mix of training strategies that best meets their needs. Among the methods of training are in-house training program, outside training opportunities, Self-paced training, workshops and seminars and Training from library schools. Meanwhile, staff retooling practices and inhibiting factors on information service delivery in university library, Agbor is the pivotal opinion of this research.

A brief background of University of Delta, Library Agbor

The University library which is strategically located along the new Agbor-Warri road, is in the functioning site of the university. The library opened with the inception of the college in 1980, with one of the classroom housing the medical unit but was later unit transferred to its present site. At its inception, it had an initial take-off stock of about 500 volumes of books and some tides of journals. Today, the stock of the library has risen to about 35,000 volumes of books, journals and magazines. The Size of the Old library site is50x85sqm while the New site has (i)

100x80sqm (ii) 160x85sqm (iii) 100x80sqm with the sitting capacity of 277 seats.

The library offers to readers such services as lending, reference, assistance to readers in finding needed information, reading space, photocopying and a bindery service. It also, aids students with facilities for writing their term papers, projects and other research materials to lecturers and other advanced readers. The library also help students to find materials to augment their lecture notes, classroom, assignments, etc. It also provides other administrative staff with materials, to further develop themselves academically in their various pursuits of higher degrees. Besides, in 2021 the permanent site library was built from the TETFund Library intervention, the E-library was also established to meet with the modern information demands of the staff and students of the university. The library is expected to collect materials within eight faculties, namely. Arts, Education, Environmental Science, Engineering Information Technology, Law, and Management Sciences. The following are the various units in the library.

- Readers Service Unit
- Reserve Unit
- Reference Unit
- Serial Unit
- Technical Service Unit
- Reprographic Unit
- Bindery Unit
- E-Library Unit. (University of Delta, Agbor Handbook, 2022, pg. 12)

Objectives of the Study

This research work examined staff retooling practices as inhibiting factorsfor information service delivery in Agbor library university of Delta, Nigeria. The following objectives guided the study:

1. To identify the existing staff retooling practices in Agbor library university of Delta
2. To examine factors inhibiting staff retooling practices for information service delivery in university library Agbor, Delta
3. To suggests possible solutions for enhancing staff retooling practices for effective information service delivery in library Agbor, university of Delta

Review of Related Literature

So many types of staff training are available in different higher institutions. There are various ways library staff receive exposure to enlightenment in their respective work related areas. This can come in form of orientation, seminar

programmes, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) related programs ,on the job training, conferences , workshops, position rotation, coaching and special project committee (Robbins & coulter ,2013; Cannice & Kootz,2011). All academic libraries need all kinds of training in other to give a satisfactory service to the users. Training acts as a motivational process used in developing the best talents and abilities in any worker to enable the staffer be efficient and effective in the performance of their expected duties. Staff training and development, also known as staff retooling, is the process by which the individual staffer, group of staffers or the organisation commits its staff to abilities and skills to better perform their functions, solve problems and achieve set goals and objectives (Ballantyne et al., 2002). It involves the acquisition of new skills and knowledge by a member of organisation thus empowering them to perform better in the discharge of their duties and delivery of services. Long et al (2016) posit that training and development is an educative process in the organisation; one which enables employees to learn new ideas and also polish on old ones while strengthening on the already possessed skills and knowledge. Likewise, Sambo, et al (2022) and Oduwole (2004) also agreed that staff training helps to equip library staff with new technological skills needed to enhance job performance and prevent skill obsolescence. Additionally, Sambo, Imran and Akanbi (2022) in their study digital literacy skills among certified librarians in Nigerian libraries: Library overview. It was revealed that certified librarians had digital literacy skills that they sponsor themselves for digital literacy training.

A study was conducted by Omeluzor, Sambo and Akanbi. (2019) in federal university of petroleum resources Effurun Nigeria on retooling academic library instruction: leading the users aright in the 21st century. It was revealed that

teaching with ICT tools and one on one mentoring, interactive class discussion, practical training (hands on desk) on the use ICT tools, live demonstration and instruction, online instruction and library guide among others were used. Study by Maina and Waithaka (2017), however, found that library employees gain immensely from off the job training through knowledge transfer that takes place during their training.***Odongo,*** (2020) in his study, revealed that conferences/workshop, classroom training, staff orientation, mentoring, further education, regular ICT training and job rotation were effective for training library staff. Similarly, Mbagwu and Madu-Malechy (2022) in their studies revealed that workshop, seminar, local and international conferences, in –house training, periodic ICT training and regular orientation were highlighted among the training methods available for the library staff in Imo State University and Federal Polytechnic Nekede.

The integration of ICT with library instruction in universities in Nigeria is faced with several challenges. According to Laleye (2015), successful integration of educational technology in the school system depends largely on the attitude of teachers towards the role played by modern technologies in teaching and learning. While attitude of teachers remain a critical factor, other factors are chronic absence of ICT instructional materials, ineffective policy implementation and a lack of other resources (infrastructure) to aid teaching and learning. These challenges were foresighted by the Commonwealth of Learning International in 2001 as serious challenges facing higher education in Nigeria on ICT literacy knowledge integration into academic courses and programmes (Ololube, et al, 2009). Likewise, study by Okoye (2013) on user education in federal university libraries across Nigeria revealed that the major challenges facing the program include lack of practical and demonstration on the use of the Internet to conduct researches, inadequate ICT facilities in teaching, and inadequate number of professional staff to conduct user education. Similarly, Mbagwu and Madu-Malechy (2022) opined that, inadequate funding, lack of management interest, poor library administration were highlighted as the problems militating against training and retraining of library staff.

According to Gitau (2016) conducted a study on the practices of staff retooling in which he sought to establish the relationship between staff training and development and delivery of information services in selected public university libraries in Kenya. Likewise, Omeluzor, et al 2019), in their study revealed that there is a significant upgrading by incorporating ICT with library instruction among the respondents in searching for information on the internet, e-databases and OPAC; retrieving and downloading of information from the Internet, and preparation of presentations using MS Power-point. The study further found that academic librarians were aware of the various avenues they can explore to get relevant training and development such as seminars, conferences and workshops. In addition the study disclosed the main reason for academic librarians to engage in training and development was to enhance service delivery.

Methodology

Descriptive survey technique was adopted for the study. The study covered teaching and non-teaching library staff at department of library and information science, university of Delta, Agbor Library. The population of the study comprised of twenty-four library staff. Twenty were non-teaching staff while four were teaching staff. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection and was based on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree

(D); and Strongly Disagreed (SD). A total of twenty four copies of questionnaire were distributed to the library staff of university of Agbor, department of library and information science. All the questionnaire were retrieved. The data was analysed using percentages, frequency table and mean scores of 2.5 was used as a positive response criterion mean. For clarity, each item was presented in a table and all findings were presented as the table revelled

Results

Research Question 1: **What are the staff retooling practices in Agbor library university of Delta?**

Table 1: Staff retooling practices in library Agbor University

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Retooling practices	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Staff orientation	6	9	4	5	2.66	Accepted
Seminars	20	4	0	0	3.83	Accepted
Job rotation	6	9	4	5	2.66	Accepted
Local and international conference	4	10	4	6	2.5	Accepted
Classroom training	5	11	3	5	2.66	Accepted
Conference/workshops	10	9	2	3	3.08	Accepted
Mentorship	3	11	7	3	2.58	Accepted
In-house training	9	6	6	3	2.87	Accepted
Further education	8	7	3	6	2.70	Accepted

Criterion Mean= 2.50

The table 1 revealed the various retooling practices among the respondents which indicated that all the item mentions were above criterion mean of (2.5). Seminars (3.83); conference/workshops (3.08); in-house training (2.87); further education (2.70); staff orientation, classroom training /job rotation (2.66); mentorships (2.5); local and international conference (2.58).

Research Questions 2: **What are factors inhibiting staff retooling practices for information service delivery in university library Agbor, Delta**

Table 2: **Factors inhibiting staff retooling practices**
Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Inhibiting factors	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Lack of support from employer	3	11	7	3	2.58	Accepted
Lack of motivation	5	8	9	2	2.66	Accepted
Inadequate finance	10	9	2	3	3.75	Accepted
Time constraints	2	6	7	9	2.0	Rejected
Staff lack of interest in library routing	2	5	5	7	1.66	Rejected
Unconducive environment	8	7	3	6	2.70	Accepted
Stringent policy	18	6	0	0	3.08	Accepted
Inadequate ICT skills among staff	15	9	0	0	3.62	Accepted
Insufficient staff to handle ICT tools	6	10	3	5	2.70	Accepted
Inadequate ICT facilities in the library to accomplish task on schedule	3	11	7	3	2.58	Accepted

Criterion Mean= 2.50

The table 2 revealed factors inhibiting staff retooling practices in university library, Agbor. The study revealed that majority of the criteria were above (2.50) except, staff lack of interest in library routing and time constraints which are below the criterion. It further shows that the following factors were making it difficult for teaching and non-teaching staff of university of Agbor library in other to delivery efficient and effective services in the library/ library department of the institution. Inadequate finance (3.75); stringent policy (3.08); inadequate ICT skills among staff (3.62); insufficient staff to handle ICT tools / unconducive environment (2.70); lack of motivation (2.66); lack of support from employer/ inadequate ICT facilities in the library to accomplish task on schedule (2.58).

Research Question 3: What are the possible solutions for enhancingstaff retooling practices for effective information service delivery in library Agbor, university of Delta?

Table 3: Possible solutions for enhance staff retooling practices and services
Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Possible solution	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
Seminars	15	9	0	0	3.62	Accepted
Encourage learning opportunities	6	8	6	4	2.66	Accepted
Rewards employee loyalty	6	8	4	6	2.58	Accepted
Training re -training of the staff	20	4	0	0	3.83	Accepted
Mentoring	5	9	2	8	2.5	Accepted
Leverage digital courses	7	7	2	8	2.54	Accepted

Criterion Mean= 2.50

The table 3 revealed the possible solutions for enhance staff retooling practices for effective information services delivery in university library Agbor. Training re-training of the staff (3.83); seminars (3.62); encourage learning opportunities (2.66); rewards employee loyalty (2.58); leverage digital courses (2.54) whereas mentoring (2.5).

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that, seminars, conference/workshops, in-house training, further education, staff orientation, job rotation, mentoring and local and international conference were the retooling practices available at Agbor library, university of Delta.. This is in line with Omeluzor et al (2019). Supported by ***Odongo,*** (2020) in his study, agreed that conferences/workshops classroom training, staff orientation, mentoring, and further education, regular ICT training and job rotation were effective. Similarly, Mbagwu and Madu-Malechy (2022) in their study revealed that, workshop, seminar, local and international conferences, in –house training, periodic ICT training and regular orientation were highlighted among the training methods available for the library staff in Imo State University and Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Neked.

The result revealed that inadequate finance, stringent policy, inadequate ICT skills among staff, insufficient staff to handle ICT tools, unconducive environment, lack of motivation, lack of support from employer and inadequate ICT facilities in the library to accomplish task on schedule are the major inhibiting

facing staff retooling practices in university of Agbor, library. This is corroborated by Okoye (2013) on user education in federal university libraries across Nigeria revealed that the major challenges facing the program include lack of practical and demonstration on the use of the Internet to conduct researches, inadequate ICT facilities in teaching, and inadequate number of professional staff to conduct user education. Likewise, buttressed by Mbagwu & Madu-Malechy (2022) opined that, inadequate funding, lack of management interest, poor library administration were highlighted as the problems militating against training and retraining of library staff.

The finding also, revealed that possible solutions forenhancing staff retooling practices for effective information service delivery in university of Agbor library were training re-training of the staff, seminars, encourage learning opportunities, rewards employee loyalty, leverage digital courses and mentoring. This finding is alongside the finding of Sambo, et al (2022) and Oduwole (2004) also agreed that staff training helps to equip library staff with new technological skills needed to enhance job performance and prevent skill obsolescence.

Conclusion

The study investigated staff retooling practices as inhibiting factors for information service delivery at Agbor library, university of Delta. Staff retooling practices are prerequisites for library staff to remain pertinent in shifting information environment. The study had established that seminars, conference/workshops, in-house training, further education, staff orientation, job rotation, mentoring and local and international conference were the retooling practices available at Agbor library, university of Delta. The study found that inadequate finance, stringent policy, inadequate ICT skills among staff, insufficient staff to handle ICT tools, unconducive environment, lack of motivation, lack of support from employer and inadequate ICT facilities in the library to accomplish task on schedule are the major inhibiting factors facing staff retooling practices in Agbor library, university of Delta. The study therefore revealed that possible solutions for enhancing staff retooling practices for effective information service delivery in Agbor library, university of Delta were training, re-training of the staff, seminars, encourage learning opportunities, rewards employee loyalty, leverage digital courses and mentoring.

The following are the recommendations based on the findings of the study

1. There is the need for adequate funding and re-training program for all categories of library staff to enhance harmonizing value services to library users.

2. University management should support their staff by sponsoring them to participate in various retooling practices.
3. Management should employed more capable staff and staff retooling practice policy should be amend towards staff development.

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