

## In-service Training at Nnamdi Azikiwe Library (NAL), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This work examined in-service training at Nnamdi Azikiwe Library (NAL) University of Nigeria Nsukka. The study adopted descriptive survey guided by five research questions. Questionnaire and interview were used for data collection. The population of the study was 73 respondents comprised 52 professional and 20 para-professional, NAL staff and one non- staff. Mean and percentages were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that NAL support its staff on in-service training through organization of conferences, workshops etc. Result also showed that professional associations support in-service training in NAL, so are vendors of library products. The study concluded that in-service training though with many challenges is well entrenched at NAL. It was recommended that NAL staff should be given the opportunities to undergo in- service training and that there should be full financial support and time to attend in-service trainings*

### Introduction:

#### Brief overview of Nnamdin Azikiwe Library (NAL), University of Nigeria, Nsukka

NnamdinAzikiwe Library (NAL) was established in 1960, the same year that the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was established. At inception, it occupied two rooms temporarily in the faculty of education building. In 1961, it moved to a bigger building with a capacity of 350,000 volumes of books and 450 sitting capacity. In 2009, the library moved to a much bigger building with a sitting capacity of 7,500 and 804,000 volumes of books. Nnamdi Azikiwe Library subscribes to 150 journal titles, and has access to six current online databases. As the library grow, so its staff strengths and the demands of its clients for new and improved services. In 1993, the Nigerian government conferred academic status on Nigerian librarians. By this, publications became a criterion for the promotion of librarians in Nigeria in the same way as their counterparts in the classroom. The need for learning how to write and publish arose among the librarians at NAL. In view of the current demands, the researchers made preliminary investigation in NAL to know the existing situation concerning staff professional development. This investigation shows that the staff members attend in-service training. It was also observed that many studies exists in in-service training of librarians in Nigerian especially, public libraries, (Eze, 2012) and Research libraries, (Udoh-Ilomechine, 2009);

but little has being written on in-service training of librarians in academic libraries especially in NAL. It is this gap that this work intends to fill.

### Objectives

The general objective of this work is to examine in-service training at Nnamdi Azikiwe Library (NAL).Specifically, the work identifies

- Types of in-service training available in NAL
- Institutional support for in-service training at NAL.
- Examined the role of professional Associations in in-service training at NAL
- The contributions of vendors of library products to in-service training at NAL.
- The challenges of in-service training at NAL.

### Literature Review

In-service training of university library staff can take many forms or can be of many types and can be carried out in many ways. IFLA (2000), mentioned, conferences, short course, workshops and professional meetings as types of in-service training available in academic libraries in Nigeria. Street & Street (2006) opined that in-service training includes more than formal classes, workshops, or programs. Others like (Burton, 1997) as cited by (Ajidahun, 2007) enumerated training techniques to include on-the-job training; job

rotation; coaching; modeling and apprenticeship. There are various ways through which library institutions support their staff members for in-service training. (Simsova, 2000) argues that library institutions can show its support for in-service training through payment of course fees, allowance of time for study and recognition of the new knowledge and skills acquired. (Cary, 2001) had observed that though library can provide funding, release time, and the bestowal of positive evaluation for achievement, the most important contribution of library institutions to in-service training is that it confers structure to the entire enterprise. In the same vein, (Omar, 2014) and (Baily2013), posit that institutions establish an atmosphere of support and trust, offer incentives and rewards for participation, provide sustained moral and material support and ensure that new knowledge gained is put into practice. (Pan & Hovde, 2010) noted that Northern Illinois University Libraries organize cross training, mentorship and peer coaching activities for its staff. The authors added that these programmes enable the library to utilize its own technical resources and personnel, minimize cost and are easy to co-ordinate. These authors further observed that at the University of Oregon State, USA, the library organizes research & writing groups. Saponwhite cited in (Pan & Hovde, 2010) also note that such writing groups provide opportunity for peer critics of manuscripts, presentation and for discussion of professional issues.

Professional associations support in-service training of librarians in various ways. (Pan & Hovde, 2010), (Zadeh & Zadeh, 2014) observed that professional associations provide forum for learning and professional exchange through organization of conferences and workshops. These authors added that during such conferences and meetings, there are Presentations, posters, panel sessions, exhibitions, all intended to bring people in the profession together, keeping them abreast of current trends, problems, and solutions. (Esfandiyari, 2004) in (Dastgerdi, 2009) observed that in Turkey, the Librarianship Higher Education Center, the body responsible for organizing in-service training for librarians collaborates with other organizations like the National Documents organization to provide in-service training for librarians. Hiser cited in

Pan & Hovde (2010), observed that Library Associations provide Online forums in which the Association offers webinars (Online conferences) to members. There is a dearth of literature on the role of vendors of library products in in-service training. However, (Pan & Hovde, 2010) reported that Vendors of library products are also involved in providing in-service training for library staff.

A number of challenges have been observed to be concomitant with in-service training. (Rycus & Hughes, 2000) observed that failure to identify individual learning needs is one of the several conditions that undermine the quality, effectiveness and relevance of in-service training among librarians. Rycus & Hughes also noted that hosting in-service training at sites far from participants' homes impedes librarians' access to training, reduces attendance and greatly increases travel and lodging cost. (Bayrakci, 2009) observed that among teachers, the mode of delivering in service training is mostly through oral communication leaving out collaborative and other communicative activities in which teachers share their knowledge and experiences. The author went on to say that after the activities, there is usually no feedback in terms of evaluating and measuring the positive or negative outcomes of the training. (Madumere 2016) observed that inadequate training resources and funds; lack of sponsorship, limited resource persons for training programs and administrative bottleneck hinder in-service training. (Aziagba, 2009) notes that, most often family commitments may be an obstacle to people's attendance at in-service training. (Baily, 2013) posit that for in-service training to have the desired effect, the trainer must have the skill necessary to communicate and teach appropriate subject matter; and be able to establish clearly, the purpose, goals and objectives of the training sessions. Also, (Oma, 2014) posits that long training sessions may affect the effectiveness of training.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research method. The population of the study is 73. This consists 52 professional librarians 20 para-professional librarians in NAL; and 1 (one) non-staff. There was no sampling, the whole population was used because it is a manageable

number of people. The area of this study is Nsukka. Nsukka is in Enugu State. Enugu State is in the South-east geo-political Zone of Nigeria. Structured questionnaire and oral interview were used for data collection. Interview was conducted with the University Librarian of NAL, as a representative of the library institution, the acquisition librarian who is in close contact with Vendors of library equipments and products and the chairperson of the Nigerian Library Association, Enugu State Chapter. The questionnaire was made of two parts; A & B. Part A was used to elicit demographic information of the respondents while part B was based on the objectives of the study. Part B is made of 5 clusters, each cluster represents an objective of the study. The questionnaire was based on four point scale of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated by two academic staff of the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and one expert from Measurement and evaluation. The validated questionnaire was trial-tested on twelve librarians drawn from Enugu State University of Science and Technology Library. The trial test was computed by Cronbach alpha of internal consistency and reliability. The reliability coefficient was 0.82 which showed that the instrument was highly reliable. The researchers personally administered the copies of the questionnaire to the 52 academic librarians and 20 para-professional librarians in NAL. The interview, was also personally

conducted by the researchers. Seventy three (73) copies of questionnaire were administered while sixty nine (69) were returned. This gave a return rate of 96%. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics Mean and percentages. Mean scores of 2.5 and above and percentage score of 50% were considered as what the respondents agreed on while below 2.50 mean score and below 50% score is considered as not acceptable by the respondents.

**Results and discussion**

**Characteristics of the respondents.** Analysis of data on the demography of the respondents showed that there are 26 males and 46 female staff at NAL. 15 have doctorate degree, 16 master’s degree, 11 have Post graduate Diploma in Library and information Science, 13 have ordinary diploma in library and information Science and 17 have First Degree in Library information Science. Six of the respondents are between the age ranges of 25 - 34, twenty nine (29) are between 35 - 44, twenty five (25) are between 45 - 54, twelve (12) are between 55- 64 and one is 65 and above age range. None of the staff is under 25 years. Analysis of years of working experience in the library showed that fourteen (14) have worked for 1-5 years, twenty five (25) have worked for between 6 -10 years, twelve (12) have worked for 11-15 years, fifteen (15) have worked for 16-20 years and Seven (7) have worked for 21-25 years and above. (present this in a table its better)

**Table one 1:Types of in-service training in NAL**

S/N	Item statement	X	Decision
1	Conferences	3.33	A
2	Workshops	3.24	A
3	Seminars	2.73	A
4	Mentorship	2.40	D
5	Research writing groups	2.38	D
6	Peer-coaching programmes	3.00	A
7	Online forums	3.30	A
8	Online conferences (Webinars)	2.20	D

The result presented in table 1 indicates that the types of in-service training available in NAL include: conferences, workshops, seminars, mentorship, research writing, Online

forums and peer-coaching programmes. But out of all of these, online forums, conferences, workshops and peer coaching have the highest scores respectively.

**Table 2: Institutional support for in-service training**

S/N	Item	X	Decision
1	Organization of conferences	3.1	A
2	Organization of workshops	3.30	A
3	Organization of webinars (online conference)	2.73	A
4	Granting of study leave	2.76	A
5	Full funding of training	2.54	A
6	Partial funding of training	3.00	A
7	Making attendance of in-service training compulsory	3.00	A
8	Making attendance of in-service training a criteria a for promotion	3.03	A
9	Release time to attend workshop/conferences	3.10	A
10	Providing opportunity for staff to practice what they learned	2.80	A
11	Organization of mentorship programmes	2.80	A
12	Organization of peer-coaching programmes	2.80	A
13	Organization of research and writing groups	3.10	A

The result presented in table 2 indicates that the respondents agreed that all the above mentioned items are institutional support provided by NAL for its staff members. The evidence is seen in the mean rating of their responses to the questionnaire, which are all above the minimum acceptance level of 2.5 mean score.

During the interview session, the university librarian stated that the administration supports in-service in NAL through the listed items as

enumerated in the table above. The findings agreed with the work of Pan & Hovde (2010) who noted that Northern Illinois University Libraries organize cross training, mentorship and peer coaching activities for their staff. The result also is in line with the work of Simsova (2000) who argued that library institution can show its support for in-service training through payment of course fees, allowance of time for study and recognition of the new knowledge and skill acquired.

**Table 3: Professional Association support for in-service training**

S/N	Items	X	Decision
14	Organization of conferences	3.6	SA
15	Organization of workshops	3.5	SA
16	Organization of webinars (online conference)	2.2	D
17	Organization of Seminars	3.19	A
18	Organization of on-line forum for members	3.5	SA

Evidence from table 3 shows that professional association's support in-service training through organization of conferences, workshops and online forums. These findings are consistent with the finding of Zadeh & Zadeh (2014) who observed that professional associations provide forum for learning and

professional exchange through organization of conferences and workshops. However, the findings disagreed with the work of Hiser cited in Pan & Hovde (2010) who observed that Library Associations provide webinars (Online conferences ) to members.

**Table 4. Vendors of Library Product Support for in-service training at NAL.**

	F	%
1	Mount exhibition at conference venues	39 88.6
2	Provide souvenirs to grace the conference	41 93.2
3	Sell materials at subsidizes rates during conferences	23 52.3
4	Advertise in conference proceedings	41 93.2
5	Funding conferences	28 63.6
6	Organize workshops on the use of their equipment for librarians	21 47.7

Table 4 shows that Vendors of Library products support in service training at NnamdiAzikiwe Library (NAL) through advertising in conference proceedings, providing souvenirs to grace conferences, mounting of exhibition at conference venues, funding conferences and

selling materials at subsidized rates at conference venues. The interview session with the acquisition librarians confirmed the responses of the librarians gathered through questionnaire and analyzed in table 4.

**Table 5: Challenges Militating Against In-Service Training at NAL**

S/N	ITEM	X	Decision
19	Failure of organizers to identify individual training needs	3.2	A
20	Scheduling of in-service training at locations far from participants	3.1	A
21	Use of communication method that does not give room for collaboration in delivering in-service training	3.1	A
22	Lack of training facilities	3.3	A
23	Lack of sponsorship to training	3.6	SA
24	Lack of resource persons	2.9	A
25	Administrative problems	3.1	A
26	Family commitments	3.0	A

Table 5 shows that Lack of sponsorship to training, lack of training facilities, failure of organizers to identify individual training needs, scheduling of in-service training at locations far from the participants abode, use of communication method that does not give room for collaboration in delivering in-service training, administrative problems, family commitments and lack of resource persons are challenges militating against in-service training of librarians and para-professional librarians at NnamdiAzikiwe Library (NAL). “lack of sponsorship to training” with a mean score of 3.6 is the major factor that militates against in-service training in NAL. This findings is in line with the view of Madumere and Ezeani(2012),(not referenced) who observed that inadequate training resources and funds; lack of sponsorship, limited resource persons for training programs and administrative bottleneck hinder in-service training

**Summary of Findings**

Major findings of the study are:

1. The types on in-service training available in NAL include the followings: workshops, conferences. Seminars, mentorship amongst others.
2. NAL Support its staff on in-service training through organization of conferences, workshops, granting of study leave, making attendance of in-service training compulsory and as a

criteria for promotion. Organization of research and writing groups, releasing time to attend conference/workshops were all found to be means through NAL support in-service training.

3. It was discovered from this study that professional association support in-service training by organization of conference, workshops and online forum for members
4. Vendors contribute to in-service of librarians as gathered from interview and observation by displaying their wares wherever and whenever librarians are holding meetings, conferences and workshops, thereby enabling librarians to have access to tools, resources and equipment vital to work in libraries
5. Lack of sponsorship to training was found to be the major problem militating against in-service training.

**Conclusion**

This paper examined in-service training at NnamdiAzikiwe Library, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The work discovered that several forms of in-service training are available to professional librarians and para-professional librarians of the library. The Library institution support staff on in-service training through many ways like organization of conferences, workshops, granting of study leave, making

attendance of in-service training compulsory and as a criteria for promotion, Organization of research and writing groups, releasing time to attend conference/workshops. Professional associations as well as vendors of library products support in-service training of professional and paraprofessional librarians of NAL. Many challenges militate against in-service training of librarians at NAL. These include lack of training facilities and lack of sponsorship to training. On the bases of these findings the study concludes that in-service training though with many challenges is well entrenched

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. NAL staff should be given the opportunities to undergo in-service training
2. There should be full financial support and release of time to attend conferences and workshops.
3. Staff members should be encouraged to participate in-service training programmes to acquire the knowledge and skill that will help and enable librarians to keep in tandem with current trend in their job.

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