

CONFERENCE, WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE AND STUDY FELLOWSHIP AS FACTORS
AFFECTING ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS' SERVICES IN KADUNA STATE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES KADUNA

BY

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Abstract

This research work assessed "Conference, workshop attendance and study fellowship as factors affecting academic librarians' services in Kaduna State university library Kaduna State". The research gave some background understanding on the effect of conference, workshop attendance and study fellowship provision on staff. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 36 respondents from the population of 40 academic librarians in Kaduna State university library Kaduna. The response rate showed that 36 copies was filled and returned in useable form. The result shows that the both universities provides conference, workshop attendance and study fellowship to library staff to improve their skills and knowledge thereby impacting it on the development of the library and general library services. The study further reveals suggestions on how to improve conference, workshop attendance and study fellowship provision in Kaduna State university library Kaduna State.

Keywords: *Conference, Workshop attendance, Study fellowship, Academic librarians' services*

Introduction

Human sources are the most treasured assets of any tertiary institution establishment in Nigeria. Human resources are personnel, staff or work force that performs various functions to see to the attainment of an institution's objective and it determines the success or failure of any organization or institution of learning. Human resources is defined as librarians, directors, lecturers, technical, unskilled and temporal staff employed to carry out the tasks of the institution by producing solution driven outputs that includes teaching, research, administrative works, accounting, budgeting, and many other activities that will lead to the achievement of set objectives of the institution. As for teaching, the lecturers are accountable for teaching and research and they help shape most of the employees involved in other institutional services, were as the administrative, technical and other workers that constitute the workforce provide a helping hand to the educational staff.

Universities as educational institutions play an important function in the improvement of mankind. To actualize educational roles, universities establish various institutions such as libraries to promote the reading and learning activities in the universities. University libraries are usually equipped with information and human resources for effective services to end-users. Part of the significant roles played by the academic library in Nigerian education system includes; provision of information resources for instruction, research, consultation and borrowing for target users. The size of a library and its collection matters a lot but its collection and size will becomes useless if the appropriate human resources are not in place to manage it and render it convenient and time saving for accessibility. Without the right human resources on ground, a library will only be whispered as a merely glorified warehouse. To buttress further, Insaideo (2001) posited that human resources are the major requirement for sustainable library services in any institution because if the library services are evaluated, the human resources

are in fact, the ones being evaluated due to the fact that their competency will show in their services. This is the reason why dynamic and efficient personnel who have all it takes to make the objective of the library an achievable reality.

According to Jatto (2005), it is necessary for university teachers to have professional training in order to impart necessary knowledge and skills to the students they train in their respective institutions of higher learning. Librarianship is a noble profession that has been continuously reshaped from manual, analogue, digital and virtual ways of carrying out day to day library functions. There is therefore need for conferences and workshops that will better shape librarians on what new technological means has been developed to solve emerging and existing problems. According to Eke (2011), a lot of presentations are done in conferences that are only applicable by presence, observation and discussion. Conferences are filled with presentations which can be observed by the way of discussion. In addition, the distinguishing factor between conference and workshop is the population of attendees. She adduced that the presence of large number of attendees makes it a conference and the number is not much, it is a workshop.

To best support a university society, a university staff should engage in a number of professional functions and master different abilities. Olubola, (2007) adduced that on annual basis, the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) and Nigeria Library Association (NLA) organize forums for conferences and workshops to provide an opportunity for librarians to share their wealth of experience, learn from one another, and also get updates about the best and trending practices in the librarianship profession. NLA & LRCN prioritized school library practice as a necessity towards meeting the needs of the 21st-century learners. They outlined and prioritized the roles that librarians must adopt for the empowerment of library users: leaders, instructional partners, information specialists, teachers and different program administrators in need of information services to improve their works. In addition, conferences and workshop attendance help the library staff to improve various skills to foster the improvement of library services to its users. Library staff tends to learn new techniques and technologies, develop a continuous improvement mentality towards the library services. With this development, librarians are better oriented and acknowledged to render adequate library services to users.

These forums brings about improvements and awareness on professionalism and further addresses societal, educational and research needs besides its emphasis on innovations that are trending for problem solving. NLA has encouraged librarians serving in the capacity of leaders to adopt "challenges and opportunities to empower learning through their roles as instructional partners, information specialists, teachers, and software administrators". Furthermore, the body asserted that as leaders, practicing librarians should be visibly active in their learning communities, and should also communicate with and engages in decision-making process and collaborative activities with other library stakeholders across institutions. Although leaders are best defined as relationship and partnership builders who integrate 21st century skills within the academic environment by showing commitment to professional ethics thereby taking participating in the local and global learning communities for the development of effective programs to advocate for student learning and literacy skills.

According to Uwem (2003) the main purpose of any professional training is not only for the acquisition of knowledge of managerial skills, rather, it is how these theoretical concepts can be put into practice to meet users' needs in the best feasible way. Therefore, in order to enable information services reach out to its diverse users, the library and its staff most improve their skills, knowledge and abilities of the trending information media. Buttressing further, Nwakanma (2003) insisted that librarians should be knowledgeable or capable of utilizing and showing the arising ICT facilities along with the training they receive which are of great importance for enhancing their traditional skills and understanding based on their ability to use ICT to solve similar problems with reduced time and effort. In today's world, Information professionals must be flexible to ICT and readily

manage changes occasioned by the inventions that replace traditional methods so as to merge the traditional needs to technological progress.

On the other hand, Uzorh (2002) opined that almost all the programs put in place for employees to acquire skills is for the upliftment of the organization's image and prospective chances of attaining higher status. The training and skills acquired by librarians prepares them better for the emerging future of instruction and improved services that will favorably meet international standards and as well, fulfill local requirements so that librarians will not be seen as outdated, irrelevant or current. Apart from conferences and workshop attendance, study fellowship is also a factor that positively affects academic libraries' services. Some library staff attends non-degree study in order to learn how to effectively run the library and also provide relevant and adequate library services to library users in order to improve the efficient use of the academic library. Every library staff wants to improve his academic statues and so they need study fellowship program. The staffs in the library that have diploma certificate want to get the First Degree Certificate, and a staff with first degree would pursue his masters' degree. The only way to achieve this is if the organization/library assists the staff to enhance their education standard and also offer them study fellowship. Librarians and other supporting staff will discharge their duties as expected if they acquire the necessary skills essential for the job at hand. Hence, the reasons behind this research work.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. find out if academic librarians attend conferences and workshops in their universities.
2. ascertain if academic librarians are given study fellowship by their institutions.
3. investigate the effect of conferences and workshop attendance in library services.
4. suggest ways of enhancing conference and workshop attendance and opportunity for study fellowships among the academic librarians in Kaduna State University Library Kaduna State.

Methodology

Survey research design is used because it enables a researcher to sample from the larger population so as to obtain data that can be used for generalization and conclusion about the entire population in the study. The population for the study consists of forty (40) librarians from Kaduna State University Libraries Kaduna. This population of 40 librarians is not too large; therefore the total population from the sample size. This was recommended by Ibrahim (2013) who reported that a researcher can adopt entire population or complete enumeration when the population is manageable. Data collected were analysed using simple descriptive statistical analysis using frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Results

Do academic librarians attend conferences, workshops and study fellowship in Kaduna State University library Kaduna State?

Table 1: Attendance of Conference, Workshop and Study fellowship

S/No	Statements	Yes		No	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Do you attend conferences in your university?	34	94%	2	6%
2	Do you attend workshops in your university	30	83%	6	17%
3	Does your university give their staff study fellowship?	27	75%	9	25%

(Field work 2019)

From Table 1, 34(94%) of the respondents revealed that they attend conferences, 30(83%) of them indicated they attend workshops and 27(75%) of them reported that their university give their staff study fellowship. This implies that librarians attend conferences more than workshops in University. Furthermore, the universities also give their staff study fellowship. From Table 4.3 the study revealed that the respondents benefited from their universities conference, workshop and study fellowship. This could be as a result of the fact that the university management and library staff are aware that individual development of the staff would automatically benefit and improve the services obtained in the libraries, and so they encourage and assist their library staff.

What are the effects of conferences and workshops attendance in library services?

Table 2: Effect of Conference and Workshop attendance

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Your university allows you to attend academic conferences.	13(36%)	19(53%)	3(8%)	1(3%)
2.	Your university allows you to attend academic workshops	10(28%)	17(47%)	5(14%)	4(11%)
3.	Attending conferences and workshops will bring about staff development	15(42%)	20(56%)	1(3%)	----
4.	You are more likely to apply your acquired skills and knowledge from conferences and workshops for improved general library services in your university library?	12(42%)	20(56%)	3(8%)	1(3%)
5	Attending conferences and workshops helps in learning new trends of CAS, SDI, document delivery services and reference services in the libraries	11(33%)	22(61%)	2(6%)	1(3%)

(Field work 2019)

Table 2 shows that 13(36%) of the respondent strongly agreed that university allows them to attend academic conferences, 19(53%) agreed, 3(8%) of them disagreed while 1(3%) of them strongly disagreed. Similarly, 10(28%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their university allows them to attend academic workshops, 14(47%) stated agreed, 5(14%) disagreed, while 4(11%) of them indicated strongly disagreed. Also, 15(42%) strongly agreed that attending conferences and workshops will bring about staff development, 20(56%) agreed, 1(3%) of them disagreed while, none of them strongly disagreed. Some 12(42%) of them strongly agreed that they are more likely to apply their acquired skills and knowledge from conferences and workshops for improved general library services in their university library, 20(56%) of them agreed, 3(8%) disagreed, while 1(3%) strongly disagreed. Similarly, 11(33%) of the respondents strongly agreed that attending conferences and workshops helps in learning new trends of CAS, SDI, document delivery services and reference services in their libraries, 22(61%) of them agreed, 2(6%) disagreed, while 1(3%) of them strongly disagreed. From Table 4.4 it shows that majority of the respondents strongly agreed as well as agreed that their universities allow them to attend conferences and workshops for personal development. From Table 4.4 the study revealed that the effect of conference and workshop attendance is positive on them. This could be attributed to the fact conference and workshop attendance brings about acquisition of different skills, knowledge and new trends of Current Awareness Services (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), improvement on document delivery and reference services for better provision of the general library services.

What are the effects of study fellowship to library services?

Table 3: Effect of Study fellowship provision

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Your university allows study fellowship for the staff	7(19%)	15(42%)	14(39%)	----
2.	Given study fellowship to staff brings about self-development	14(39%)	22(61%)	-----	----
3.	Giving study fellowship to staff brings about development of library services	8(22%)	28(78%)	-----	----
4.	Study fellowship brings about exploration of the new trends of technological tools that facilitate library services in your university	13(36%)	23(64%)	-----	----

(Field work 2019)

Table 3 shows that 7(19%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their university allows study fellowship for the staff, 15(42%) agreed, 14(39%) disagreed, while none reported strongly disagreed. The respondents 14(39%) also strongly agreed that given study fellowship to staff brings about self-development, 22(61%) agreed, none revealed disagreed, while none stated strongly disagreed. In addition, 8(22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that given study fellowship to staff brings about development of library services, 28(78%) of them agreed, none reported disagreed, while none revealed strongly disagreed. In the same vein, 13(36%) of the respondents strongly agreed that study fellowship brings about exploration of the new trends of technological tools that facilitate library services in the university, 23(64%) of them indicated agreed, none stated disagreed, while none revealed strongly disagreed. Their perceptions reflected a positive impact of study fellowship on librarians and the library. From Table 4.5 the study equally revealed that the respondents benefited from their universities study fellowship. This is probably because study fellowship is usually an opportunity giving to staff in most institutions including the university library staff to improve on the already existing knowledge. Thus study fellowship is important and beneficial for self-development of staff in order to improve and facilitate new trends of technology in the library and its services.

What are the possible ways of enhancing conferences and workshop attendance and opportunity for study fellowships among the academic librarians in Kaduna State University library Kaduna State?

Table 4: Suggestions on how to improve conference, workshop attendance and study fellowship

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1.	There should be introduction of first come first serve method of selection	12(33%)	24(67%)	-----	----
2.	There should be selection of candidates from different section of the library	9(25%)	27(75%)	-----	----
3.	Every section of the library should be fairly represented	5(14%)	31(86%)	-----	----
4.	Fund should be adequately made available by the university management for conference, workshop and study fellowship	3(8%)	33(92%)	-----	----
5.	There should be in-house training of paper or article writing for conferences	7(19%)	29(81%)	-----	----

(Field work 2019)

From Table 4, the suggestions on how to improve conference, workshop attendance and study fellowship revealed that 12(33%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there should be introduction of first come first serve method of selection, 24(67%) of them stated agreed, none indicated disagreed, while none revealed strongly disagreed. Similarly, 9(25%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there should be selection of candidates from different section of the library for conferences, workshops and study fellowships, 27(75%) of them stated agreed, none revealed disagreed, while none reported strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 5(14%) of the respondents strongly agreed that every section of the library should be fairly represented, 31(86%) of them indicated agreed, none stated disagreed while none reported strongly disagreed. Similarly, 3(8%) of them strongly agreed that fund should be adequately made available by the university management for conference, workshop and study fellowship of librarians, 33(92%) of them stated agreed, none revealed disagreed, while none reported strongly disagreed. Also, 7(19%) of the respondents strongly agreed that there should be in-house training of paper or article writing for conferences, 29(81%) of them agreed, none reported disagreed, while none stated strongly disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

The responses of the respondents that is 94% reported that they attends conferences, 83% attended workshops and 75% indicate that they attended study fellowship. This finding is in line with the work of Eke (2011) who pointed out that a lot of presentations are done in conferences and workshop that are applicable by presentation, observation and discussions. Majority of the respondent that is 61% indicate attending conference and workshop help in learning new trend of CAS, SDI among other, while 56% of the respondents agrees that attending conference and workshop will bring about staff development and acquired skill and knowledge to improve general library services in the university library. 53% of the respondent indicate that their university allow them to attend conferences and workshops. This findings corroborates to that of Uwem (2003) who found that the main purpose of any professional training is not only for the acquisition of knowledge of managerial skills, rather, it is how these theoretical concepts can be put into practice to meet users' needs in the best feasible way.

On effect of study fellowship 78% respondents indicate giving study fellowship to staff bring about development in library services, while 64% indicates study fellowship bring about exploration of new trends of technology tools that facilitate service in the university library and 61% indicates study fellowship bring about self-development. This finding are in line with Uzorh (2003) who pointed out that the best way ICT knowledge would be impacted to library staff is through sponsorship to conferences, workshops and provision for study fellowship.

On the issues of suggestion on how to improved conferences, workshops and study fellowship 86% of the respondents indicate there is need for every section of the library should be fairly represented, 75% suggest selection of candidate from different section of the library. While 67% of the respondents agreed with the introduction of first come first served method of selection. This is in line with Jatto (2005) where he stated that it is necessary for university teachers to have professional training in order to impact necessary knowledge and skills to the students they train in their respective institutions of higher learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can deduce that conference and workshop attendance as well as study fellowship enhance self and service development; and these as the study revealed are obtained in the studied institutions. For librarians to remain relevant there must be improvement in their wealth of experience, knowledge and better understanding of the profession. This is why it is important for them to attend conferences, workshops and study fellowships to harness the potentials for better service delivery to dynamic users in this world of rapidly changing technology.

Suggestions

Based on the result made from the following suggestions were made.

1. The government and proprietors should set aside fund for conferences, workshop attendance and study fellowship to keep librarians abreast on trends in the profession so as to better their services to the library users.
2. University librarians should prioritize conferences, workshop attendance and study fellowship as a way of increasing staff experience, promotion and brighter ideas for the improvement of services.
3. The library management should endeavor to give equal chances of self-development through conference and workshop attendance to all the staff.
4. Findings taught, revealed, learnt or presented at conferences, workshops and study fellowships should be published and distributed at affordable prices to librarians or the management should take up the responsibility of providing the published work for free.

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