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STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

Purpose: *The paper aimed to find out staff development programmes and library development in public universities in Imo State*

Methodology*: The study adopted correlational research design. The population of this study is 161 library staff of the four institutions studied. They comprise library staff of Federal University of Technology, Owerri; Imo State University, Owerri; University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umuagwo and Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe University, Ogboko. The sample for the study is 161 library staff. The entire population was used because it is small and manageable. Hence, census method serves as the sampling technique. The instrument used in collecting data for the study is a four point modified Likert rating scale. The data collectred for the study were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation and hypotheses were tested using t-test.*

Finding*: The result of this study revealed that there is a significant high positive relationship between seminars/conferences and library development; there is a significant moderate positive relationship between workshop and library development; and there is a significant high positive relationship between formal professional education and library development.*

Originality/Value: *Based on the findings, it was recommended that library management should try as much as possible to approve and sponsor the staff to attend seminars and conferences so that they can have the opportunity to interact and with professionals from other institution on newer ideas that can help to develop the library; the management should encourage workshops training to enable the staff learn from a number of training activities that can help them carryout works for library development; and library staff should also be encouraged to enroll for formal professional education to enable them have a full knowledge of job specifications of the library and understand best practices to the development of the library.*

Keywords: *Library staff, Staff training, Seminars, Conferences, Workshop, Formal professional training, University library*

Paper type*: Empirical research*

Introduction

Staff constitute the formal workforce of an organization and represent one of its most valuable resources. They comprise all individuals employed within an organization at various levels and positions, whose collective efforts determine the success or failure of that organization. According to Tracey (2012), staff are a vital organizational resource responsible for managing and coordinating activities that contribute to organizational

growth and development. In the context of a library, staff members form the human resource base that ensures the effective functioning of the institution. Library staff include professionals, para-professionals, clerical workers, and support personnel who are officially engaged to carry out different responsibilities within the library system. These personnel possess the managerial and technical abilities required to coordinate, direct, and control other resources of the library to ensure effective service delivery and optimal utilization of information resources. As the key drivers of development in the library, staff members must continuously improve their competencies to meet the evolving information needs of users. This underscores the importance of regular training and retraining programmes for library personnel in the modern information environment (Asante & Alanna, 2013).

Training refers to the systematic process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for effective job performance. Smriti as cited in Okorie (2024) defines training as organized teaching and learning activities designed to help members of an organization develop and apply the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes required for specific tasks and organizational goals. Similarly, Beach, cited in Smriti (2018), describes training as a structured process through which individuals learn the knowledge or skills needed to accomplish particular objectives. Essentially, training aims at improving employees' competence and enhancing their effectiveness in carrying out their duties. Regardless of existing qualifications or experience, continuous training remains essential for staff development and improved job performance.

University libraries, like other information institutions, depend on skilled personnel to effectively deliver services that meet the needs of their users. The ability of library staff to perform efficiently is largely influenced by the training opportunities available to them. When staff members participate in well-structured training programmes, they are better equipped to provide quality services and manage library resources effectively. Several approaches to staff training have been identified in the literature. Akanwa (2016) notes that strategies such as mentoring, participative management, job rotation, continuing education or in-service training, conferences, seminars, workshops, study visits, library tours, and electronic training are widely used in academic libraries. In a similar vein, Jibrin, Momohjimohm and Dauda (2022) mention training techniques such as on-the-job

training, in-house lectures and demonstrations, vestibule training, computer-assisted instruction, internship, apprenticeship, audio-visual instruction, role playing, business games, and case study methods. The inclusion of training programmes in any organization is crucial because it enhances employees' performance and contributes to institutional growth (Great Learning Team, 2021). In this study, particular attention is given to commonly practiced training methods for library personnel, including seminars and conferences, workshop and formal professional education.

Librarians as well as other professionals do acquire professional growth through conferences and seminars. Eze (2012) defines conferences and seminars as meetings on specialized subject area and often held in a day or more to discuss a topic of interest relevant to the organization. This type of training may be arranged in the enterprise or may be acquired from specialized institutes imparting such training. In seminars and conferences, a trainee has to leave his place of work and devote his entire time or training purposes. He does not contribute anything towards production during training. Lectures or classrooms, seminars or team discussions, conferences, and advertisements are a variety of methods often referred to as off-the-job training.

A workshop is an actively engaging training programme where staff practically participate in activities related to the new knowledge or skill being imparted. Polvo (2021) perceives it as an interactive training where participants carry out several training activities rather than passively listen to a lecture or presentation as it is with seminars and conferences. In workshops, staff can work individually or in groups to solve job-related tasks to improve their skill, knowledge, and experience. By so doing, staff are exposed to recent knowledge and use of modern facilities for job efficiency in areas like information research, internet surfing and manipulation.

In formal professional training, knowledge is imparted with the use of a textbook or a teaching machine. It involves breaking information down into meaningful units and then arranging them in a proper way to form a logical and sequential learning programme or packages. The programme involves presentation questions, factors, or problems to the trainee and the trainer receives feedback or the basis of the accuracy of his answers.

Statement of the Problem

The information environment has experienced significant transformation due to the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies. These technological developments have

influenced virtually every aspect of information management, including the creation, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information resources. They have also affected library collections and collection development practices, service delivery methods, and the roles and competencies required of information professionals. In addition, the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of library users have evolved as a result of these changes. Consequently, libraries are expected to adapt to these emerging trends in order to remain relevant and effective in providing information services.

In order for libraries to keep pace with these developments and avoid becoming obsolete, it is necessary for library staff to continually update their knowledge and skills through appropriate training programmes. Staff members are the key agents responsible for implementing innovations, managing modern information systems, and delivering efficient library services. Continuous training therefore becomes essential for equipping them with the competencies needed to function effectively in the changing information environment.

Despite the recognized importance of staff development, observations indicate that many public university libraries still operate largely within traditional frameworks with minimal evidence of modernization in their practices. This situation raises concerns about whether library personnel are being adequately exposed to relevant training opportunities. It is possible that insufficient staff training programmes, lack of exposure to appropriate professional development activities, or training that does not adequately reflect current technological trends may be responsible for this situation. As a result, a gap may exist between the knowledge and skills possessed by library staff and the competencies required to effectively manage modern library services.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the staff development programmes and library development in public universities in Imo State, with the aim of determining how staff development programmes contribute to the growth and improvement of library services.

Objectives of the Study

The general aim of the research is to examine staff development programmes and library development in public universities in Imo State. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Examine the coefficient of relationship between seminars/conferences and library development in the university libraries studied;
2. Identify the coefficient of relationship between workshop and library development in the university libraries studied; and
3. Ascertain the coefficient of relationship between formal education and library development in the university libraries studied.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. What is the coefficient of relationship between seminars / conferences and library development in the university libraries studied?
2. What is the coefficient of relationship between workshop and library development in the university libraries studied?
3. What is the coefficient of relationship between formal professional education and library development in the university libraries studied?

Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between seminars/ conferences and library development in the university libraries studied.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between workshops and library development in the university libraries studied.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between formal professional education and library development in the university libraries studied.

Review of Related Literature

Seminar/Conferences as a Training Programmes and Library Development

A seminar is an organized teaching and learning discussion on key issues that improve staff knowledge and understanding of the job and serve as avenue for promotion of the staff and the library usually led by advanced personnel in the profession. Salman and Aleem (2018) see seminar as advancement to professionalism which grants librarians opportunity to link and interact with experts, develop and maintain social relationship with other professionals at the national and international levels. While Alala, Aguwa and Onyegbula (2022) aver that seminar is one of the viable tools used to improve service delivery in academic libraries, Vega and Connell (2017), posit that they help to refresh staff both physically and professionally. Seminars are better opportunities for librarians to get abreast with new knowledge, ideas, and latest developments in the field which enhances service delivery.

Librarians as well as other professionals do acquire professional growth through conferences. Conference is a meeting on specialized subject area and often held in a day or more to discuss a topic of interest relevant to the organization. For Salman and Aleem (2018), conferences, seminars and workshops serve as advancement to professionalism. It is a form of workshop with a larger number of people aimed at promoting collaboration, and creating opportunity for librarians to meet researchers, scholars and library professionals they can work, interact and share knowledge with various vendors for collection development purposes in the library. This type of training may be arranged in the enterprise or may be acquired from specialized institutes imparting such training.

Conferences have also been described as a fertile ground for socializing, which in turn leads to building friendships based on common interests (Iwuchukwu & Echedom, 2020). Benefits of conference attendance to library growth revolve around collection development, developing staff relationships with fellow professionals, marketing their libraries and gaining knowledge of new and emerging technologies, particularly as related to their specific job descriptions. Tomaszewski and MacDonald (2009) in identifying the impacts of conferences on library development assert that librarians attend conferences for professional development and continuing education to learn new trends, new technologies, and to build professional network that protest library growth and development.

In seminars and conference, a trainee has to leave his place of work and devote his entire time for training purposes. He does not contribute anything towards production during training. They are filled with presentations followed by discussions. Iwuchukwu and Echedom (2020) concluded that conferences enable professional development such as knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer communication, and technology skill updates. Vega and Connell (2017) studied librarians' attitudes toward conferences and concluded through a survey of 794 people that the major reason librarians attend conferences is for professional rejuvenation and networking. Tysick (2002) reported that collaboration opportunities came primarily through networking and secondarily through attending specific events.

Conferences can be done physical or virtually. Eze (2012) notes the purposes of NLA conference as:

1. Promotion of unity among the library profession.

2. Safeguard and promote the professional interest of librarians.
3. To promote bibliographic study, research and cooperation among libraries.
4. To lawfully observe due process for the attainment of the library goals.

To promote the establishment of libraries and information centers.

Workshops as a Training Programme and Library Development

A workshop is an actively engaging training programme where staff practically participate in activities related to the new knowledge or skill being imparted. Yoon as cited in Worlu, Mugri and Akpakip (2017) noted that in a related understanding sees workshop as a type of interactive training where participants carry out a number of training activities rather than passively listen to a lecture or presentation as it is with seminars and conferences. In workshop, staff can work individually or in group to solve job related tasks to improve their skill, knowledge and experience. By so doing, staff are exposed to recent knowledge and use of modern facilities for job efficiency in areas like information research, internet surfing and manipulation.

Workshops offer staff a free opportunity to participate in high-quality professional training programmes designed to provide work support, technical assistance, and the increased collaboration needed to ensure library successful operation and growth. In support of the above statement, Yoon as cited in Worlu, Mugri and Akpakip (2017) , wrote that through workshops, staff can learn that they are the single most important factor in raising achievement and the staff initiative can be enhanced to strengthen their support for library development. Baro, Eze and Nkanu (2012), assert that workshop exposes librarians to skills in areas such as using different search engines to search databases, use of social media, knowledge of relevant websites, and knowledge of e-library plan. In addition, workshops can also provide a basis for professional standards that provide the backdrop to discussions about performance and future development. The workshop standards define the professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills for trainers at each career stage. Above all, they serve as platforms for answering existing challenges within the profession and for knowledge-sharing. This will thus, assist and improve library service delivery and development of academic libraries (Alala, Aguwa & Onyegbula, 2022).

Formal Professional Training and Library Development

Formal professional training is post experience courses which enable library professionals and para-professionals to gain more competent skills, expertise and

abilities in their job. It could be in form of distant education, sandwich courses, short courses, and part time programmes. Iwuchukwu and Echedom (2020) are of the view that training should take the form of continuing education, industrial attachment, formal professional education programmes leading to certificates, diploma and degrees, on-the-job learning from experienced colleagues, coaching and special project and off-the-job lectures, seminars, discussions and instructions of various types.

Formal professional training serves as the most productive way to beat the various emerging challenges in the profession. Uchendu (2014) noted that formal professional training is an opportunity in which a senior library assistant gains admission into a library school for a two year diploma in librarianship for promotion into the level of library officer and thus should be supported through study leave and study fellowships. Uchendu further state that continuing education for library employees enables them gain current and up-to-date knowledge of library trends. Adejare, Olaore, Udofia and Emola (2020) noted that formal training contributes to employee productivity in the organizations.

Writing on the nature and the quality of formal training that should be provided in library schools, Iwuchukwu and Echedom (2020) are of the view that professional library education should not be mere training. The education imparted from professional training programme should be capable and adequate for effective professional performance on job postings after certification. Such effective performance on the part of the professionals leads to improvement in library operations which is sustainable for a certain period before a need for retraining can arise. Knowledge is imparted with the use of textbooks or a teaching machine in formal professional training since it involves breaking information down into meaningful units and then arranging them in a proper way to form a logical and sequential learning programme or packages. The programme involves presentation questions, factors or problems to the trainee and the trainer receives feedback or the basis of the accuracy of his answers.

Formal professional training exposes librarians to knowledge and equip them with skills that matches the constant changes in the library environment and profession thereby promoting and keeping the library profession in vogue while protecting the interest of the librarians. According to Iwuchukwu and Echedom (2020), it is a life time learning process that is both individualized and universal. Due to the changes in the information world, the

most effective and productive way to beat these challenges is to seek out formal professional training in librarianship.

Methodology

The correlation design was adopted for the study. This design is considered appropriate because it is a quantitative method where there exist two or more quantitative variables from same group to determine if there is relationship between them. This is therefore the basis for using it to study staff training and library development in selected academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria. The population of this study is 161 library staff of the four institutions studied. They comprise Library staff of Federal University of Technology, Owerri; Imo State University, Owerri; University of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Umuagwo and Kingsley Ozuomba Mbadiwe University, Ogboko. The sample for the study is 161 library staff. The entire population is used because it is small and manageable. Hence, census enumeration method serves as the sampling technique. The instrument used in collecting data for the study is a four point modified likert rating scale. To analyze the data collected for the study, mean scores and standard deviation were computed while t-test was used for testing the hypotheses

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between seminars/conferences and library development?

Table 1: The Means $(\overline{X})$, Standard Deviations (S), Coefficient of Correlation (r), Coefficient of Determinant $(R^{\square})$ concerning Relationship between Seminars/Conferences and Library Development

Variable	$\overline{X}$	S	r	$R^{\square}$
Library Dev.	83.05	7.70		
			.67	0.45
Seminars/Conferences:	15.90	2.60		

Presented in Table 1 are the means and standard deviations, coefficient of relationship and coefficient of determinant between seminars and conferences and library development. From the table, the mean rating scores of seminars and conferences as staff training method and library development are 83.05 and 15.90 respectively. Their respective standard deviations are 7.70 and 2.60. The

coefficient of relationship between seminars and conferences and library development is .67. This coefficient indicates that there is a positive relationship between seminars and conferences and library development. This means that as staff are increasingly sent on seminars and conferences they increase their commitment to library development. The coefficient also falls within the range of high relationship (.61 – .80), indicating that the relationship between seminars and conferences and library development is high. The coefficient of determinant of 0.45 shows that 45.0% of variation in library development is explained by seminars and conferences attended by the staff.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between Seminars/Conferences and library development in university libraries in Imo State.

Table 2: The Sample Size (n), Calculated t-value (t_{Cal}), p-value (p), Tabulated t-value (t_{Crit}) and the Decision Concerning Relationship between Seminars/Conferences and Library Development

n	*r*	*R*	t_{Cal}	*p*	t_{Crit}	*df*	*Decision*
161	.67	0.45	11.34	0.000	1.96	158	*Reject* H_{02}

The calculated t-value of 11.34 which is greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.000 which is less that the significant value of 0.05 showed that the coefficient of relationship between seminars /conferences as a staff training method and library development is significant. This p-value (0.000) tells us that the probability of getting a correlation coefficient of .67 in a sample of 161 library staff if the null hypothesis was true (that, there was no relationship between seminar/conferences and library development) is very low or nearly zero. Hence, there is a genuine relationship between seminars/conferences and library development. This shows that there is a significant relationship between seminars/conferences and library development.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between workshop and library development?

Table 3: The Means $(\bar{X})$, Standard Deviations (S), Coefficient of Correlation (r), Coefficient of Determinant (R) Concerning Relationship between Job Rotation and Library development

Variable	$\bar{X}$	*S*	*r*	*R*
Library Dev.:	83.05	7.70		
			.42	0.18
Workshop:	14.65	2.11		

Presented in Table 3 are the means and standard deviations, coefficient of relationship and coefficient of Determinant between workshop and library development. From the table, the mean rating scores of librarians on workshop and library development are 83.05 and 14.65 respectively. Their respectively standard deviations are 7.70 and 2.11. The coefficient of relationship between workshop and library development is .42. This coefficient indicates that there is a positive relationship between workshop and library development. This means that as staff are rotated in the library they learn different job requirements which enables them to contribute meaningfully to the development of the library in any unit they find themselves. The coefficient also falls within the range of moderate relationship (.41 – .60), indicating that the relationship between workshop and library development is moderate. The coefficient of determinant of 0.18 shows that 18.0% of variation in library development is explained by the rate at which the staff are subjected to workshop.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between workshop and library development in the libraries studied

Table 4: The Sample Size (n), Calculated t-value (t_{Cal}), p-value (p), Tabulated t-value (t_{Crit}) and the Decision Concerning Relationship between Workshop and Library Development

n	*r*	*R*	t_{Cal}	*p*	t_{Crit}	*df*	*Decision*
161	.42	0.18	5.82	0.000	1.96	158	*Reject* H_{03}

The calculated t-value of 5.82 which is greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.000 which is less that the significant value of 0.05 showed that the coefficient of relationship between workshop as a method of staff training and library development is significant. This p-value (0.000) tells us that the probability of getting a correlation coefficient of .42 in a sample of 161 library staff if the null hypothesis was true (that, there was no relationship between workshop and library development) is very low or nearly zero. Hence, there is a genuine relationship between workshop and library development. This shows that there is a significant relationship between workshop and library development.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship of formal professional education and library development?

Table 5: The Means $(\bar{X})$, Standard Deviations (S), Coefficient of Correlation (r), Coefficient of Determinant (R) Concerning Relationship between formal professional education and library development

Variable	$\bar{X}$	S	r	R
Library Dev.	83.05	7.70		
			.60	0.36
Formal Professional Training	19.75	1.87		

Presented in Table 5 are the mean and standard deviations, coefficient of relationship and coefficient of Determinant between formal professional education and library development. From the table, the mean rating scores of librarians on formal professional education and library development are 83.05 and 19.75 respectively. Their respectively standard deviations are 7.70 and 1.87. The coefficient of relationship between formal professional education and library development is .60. This coefficient indicates that there is a positive relationship between formal professional education and library development. This means that the more the librarians are receiving formal professional education in librarianship, the more prepared they will also be to work towards the development of the library. The coefficient also falls in into the range of moderate relationship (.41 – .60), indicating that the relationship between formal professional education and library development is moderate. The coefficient of determinant of 0.36 shows that 36.0% of

variation in library development is explained by formal professional education received by the staff.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between formal professional education and library development in libraries studied.

Table 6: The Sample Size (n), Calculated t-value (t_{Cal}), p-value (p), Tabulated t-value (t_{Crit}) and the Decision Concerning Relationship between Formal Professional Education and Library development

n	*r*	*R*	t_{Cal}	*p*	t_{Crit}	*df*	*Decision*
161	.60	0.36	9.43	0.000	1.96	158	*Reject* H_{05}

The calculated t-value of 9.43 which is greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.96 and the p-value of 0.000 which is less that the significant value of 0.05 showed that the coefficient of relationship between formal professional education and library development is significant. This p-value (0.000) tells us that the probability of getting a correlation coefficient of .60 in a sample of 161 library staff if the null hypothesis was true (that, there was no relationship between formal professional education and library development) is very low or nearly zero. Hence, there is a genuine relationship between formal professional education and library development. This shows that there is a significant relationship between formal professional education and library development.

Summary of Findings

The major findings of the study are presented below.

1. There is a significant high positive relationship between seminars/conferences and Library development.
2. There is a significant moderate positive relationship between workshop and Library development.
3. There is a significant high positive relationship between formal professional education and Library development.

Discussion of the Findings

Relationship between Seminars/Conferences and Library development

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between seminars/conferences and library development. This relationship was found to be positive. The fact that there is

relationship between seminars/conferences and library development shows that as seminars/conferences increases library development also increases. Findings that are in congruence with discovery of this study abound. While the finding of Alala, Aguwa and Onyegbula's (2022) study aver that seminar is one of the viable tools used to improve service delivery in academic libraries, Vega and Connell (2017), posit that seminars are better opportunities for librarians to get abreast with new knowledge, ideas, and latest developments in the field which enhances service delivery. Similarly, Tomaszewski and MacDonald (2009), identifying the impacts of conferences on library development assert that librarians attend conferences for professional development and continuing education to learn new trends, new technologies, and to build professional network that protest library growth and development.

Relationship between Workshop and Library development

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between workshop and Library development. This relationship is positive. This shows that as workshop provided to the librarians increases the library development also increases. This relationship is within the range for high relationship indicating that the relationship between workshop and Library development is high. The coefficient of determinant showed that workshop contributed to the 18% of the variation in Library development. This finding is in agreement with Baro, Eze and Nkanu (2012), assertion that workshop exposes librarians to skills in areas like using different search engines to search databases, use of social media, knowledge of relevant websites, and knowledge of e-library plan and also provide a basis for professional standards that provide the backdrop to discussions about performance and future development. It is also in tandem with Alala, Aguwa and Onyegbula's (2022) opinion that workshop serve as platform for knowledge-sharing and answering existing challenges within the profession which, aids and improves library service delivery and development of academic libraries.

Relationship between Formal Professional Education and Library Development

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between formal professional education and library development. This relationship is found to be positive. This shows that as formal professional education by the librarian's increases Library development also increases. This relationship is within the range for high relationship indicating that the relationship between formal

professional education and library development is high. The coefficient of determinant showed that formal professional education contributed to the 36% of the variation in Library development. This finding is in line with the findings of Adejare, Olaore, Udofia and Emola's (2020) who noted that positive impact exists between formal training and employee productivity in the organization. Also, Uchendu (2014) noted that formal professional education enables library employees to gain current and up-to-date knowledge of library trends.

Conclusion

This study examined staff development programmes and library development in public universities in Imo State with particular focus on seminars/conferences, workshops, and formal education. The findings revealed that staff training plays a significant role in enhancing library development, as all the training variables examined showed positive relationships with various indicators of library growth and improved service delivery. This implies that investment in staff capacity building is essential for the modernization and effectiveness of university libraries. Specifically, the study established a positive relationship between participation in seminars and conferences and library development. These platforms expose library staff to emerging trends, professional networking, and new ideas, which contribute to improved service innovation and adoption of best practices. Similarly, workshops were found to have a strong positive relationship with library development, as they provide practical, hands-on training that enhances the technical and operational competencies of staff. In the same vein, formal education demonstrated a significant positive relationship with library development, indicating that higher academic and professional qualifications equip library personnel with advanced knowledge and skills necessary for effective library management and service delivery.

Overall, the study concludes that staff training in its various forms is a critical determinant of library development in public universities in Imo State. Libraries that prioritize continuous training and professional development of their staff are more likely to experience growth, improved service quality, and better adaptation to the evolving information environment.

Recommendations

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

1. Library management should try as much as possible to approve and

sponsor the staff to attend seminars and conferences so that they can have the opportunity to interact with professionals from other institutions on newer ideas that can help to develop the library.

2. The management should encourage workshops training to enable the staff learn from a number of training activities that can help them carryout works for library development.
3. Library staff should also be encouraged to enroll for formal professional education to enable them have a full knowledge of job specifications of the library and understand best practices to the development of the library.

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