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# **An assessment of the Ghana Library Authority In-Service Training for Junior Library Assistants**

**Newman Engmann; Raphael Kwame Kavi; Grace Obeng-Koranteng and Kwabena Asiedu Bugyei**

## **Abstract**

This study assessed the operation and impact of staff performance and service delivery of the In-service training programme for Junior Library Assistants of the Ghana Library Authority. The ever increasing growth in the volume of publications in all fields of knowledge coupled with the advent of information and communication technologies in libraries has widened the scope of library services. There is therefore the need for public libraries to train their staff in order to perform effectively and efficiently. The survey method was used and data was collected using open and closed ended questionnaires and interviews. In all, 80 questionnaires were administered to 47 staff and 33 ex-workers of the Ghana Library Authority.

The findings showed that most Junior Library Staff of the Authority lack basic skills in library routine work and this could be attributed to the suspension of the GLA In-service training programme. The study also revealed that the bulk of the Junior Staff at the GLA had qualifications ranging from GCE O' level and SSSCE to Diploma. The study further revealed that the suspension of the programme was as a result of several factors such as the absence of a Board, training budget and a non-functioning training department. The study recommended among other things the resumption of the In-service training programme to enable all untrained Junior Library Staff receive training.

## **Keywords**

In-service training, Skills development, Library Assistants, Capacity building, Public library, Ghana

## **Introduction**

Education and training basically provide opportunity to staff to expand their knowledge base and their performance at work. With time, it also helps the individual to build up his/her confidence and be able to understand his/her job and responsibilities positively. However, for an individual to build up his potentials, the need to have a place where books and other forms of records could be kept for the transmission of knowledge and ideas progressively becomes indispensable. In this regard, a setup of a library to hold these knowledge and ideas is the best approach. It is imperative for a public library as a store house of knowledge, to have well trained staff to be able to educate users and assist them to access the needed information. This will enable library professionals' discharge their work very efficiently and effectively in their chosen profession. The need for constant training and development of library staff in public libraries is therefore necessary owing to the growing impact of modern technology.

Castelyn (2007) appreciated training and development as of utmost importance in the library field. Although it was noted each library organization decides for itself, a desired state of efficiency of requirements will differ from library to library. Castelyn was of the view that, all libraries aim to have effective and efficient staff in order to provide a good library service to the public they hope to serve, whether that readership is using a public, university, school or private library.

## **Brief Overview of the Ghana Library Authority**

The early history of the Ghana Library Authority (formerly Ghana Library Board (GLB) can be traced as far back as 1946 when the then Anglican Bishop of Accra, the late Rt. Rev. John Orfeur Aglionby donated £1,000 for the commencement of library services in Gold Coast. The Aglionby Library Management Committee in collaboration with the British Council Advisory Committee worked towards library development in the then Gold Coast. The work of the Committee resulted in the passing of the Gold Coast Library Board Ordinance, Cap 118, in December 1949, which became operational on January 1, 1950. The British Council later handed over its Librarian, Miss E. J. A. Evans and a book stock of 27,000 volumes to commence the public library service (Ghana Library Board, 2010). However, it was not until 1970 that the Ghana library Board (GLB) was established by an Act of Parliament (Act 372), with the functions to establish, equip, manage and maintain public libraries in the country.

Fegan (1940) a British Council librarian noted that, it would be prudent for expatriates to train some librarians who would in turn train their own assistants. As a result, Fegan trained twelve staff from selected four British West African colonies in Achimota College in 1944. Six of these were from the Gold Coast, five from Nigeria and one from Sierra Leone. It was a joint sponsorship of the British Council and the Colonial Office (Ghana Library Board Silver Jubilee Brochure 1950-1975, 1975).

When the Ghana Library Board was officially established in 1950, one of its important duties was staffing and training. It was recognized that, professional librarians should be recruited to run libraries in the near future. Another duty of the Board was to give part-time tuition to prepare staff for the entrance examination of the British Library Association (BLA) which later became the first professional examination designed to test a candidate's suitability for the profession of a librarian. Later a Carnegie award was handed over to the Board after it was formed. This award was entirely devoted to staff training. (Ghana Library Board Silver Jubilee Brochure, 1950-1975, 1975).

The In-Service training continued to be the main source of supply of library staff up to 1960. The Board became a training ground for its staff as well as the staff of many other libraries in the country who did their initial training at the Board's libraries through its training scheme. The Board's training program was later taken to the University of Ghana, Legon to begin the first degree program at the Library Department of the University. But the Academic Board of the University later decided on a one year professional training program, so the first degree program was abandoned and a one year certificate in librarianship program for Sub-professional staff in libraries was introduced.

Although the library school was moved to the Department of Library and Archival Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, the Ghana Library Board continued with the In-service Training program, to provide orientation for its staff, and to prepare them for the certificate course. The In-Service training program was also used as a basis for promoting untrained junior library assistant to launch them into a career as middle level staff supporting professional librarians.

### **Statement of the problem**

In-service training is a vital instrument in all professions, including librarianship. Training is used as a means of improving the job performance of staff, increase productivity and enhance staff effectiveness in tackle shortcomings on the job to a maximum satisfaction. In-service training serves as an aid to introduce new recruits to the library profession especially in this new era of rapid technological change where, the role of library staff in information delivery is even more demanding than ever. There is therefore high demand on library staff to provide quality and high level library service. One way of achieving high level quality service delivery is to constantly upgrade the skills and competencies of the staff through education and training.

The Ghana Library Authority, realizing the importance of training instituted an In-service Training Programme at its inception. Conversely, this laudable idea of training new people for the library profession and maintaining high level of performance in the profession has been suspended since the year 2000. Public libraries as service institutions depend primarily on the quality of their staff to provide the diverse and complex library services demanded by the public. Olaniyan et.al (2008) noted that, the role played by staff training and development can no longer

be over-emphasized. Staff training and development are based on the premise that staff skills need to be improved for organizations to grow.

It is against this background coupled with the fact that since its inception, there has been only one review of the syllabus in the early 80s, thus, the researchers wanted to find out whether the reviewed syllabus that is used is in consonance with current developments in the profession and also, seek to find out the ripple effects of the suspension of the In-service training on service delivery in the public library system.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the syllabus of the program in terms of its consonance with current development in the profession and to find out the effects of the suspension of the In-service training on service delivery in the public library system.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study was carried out under the following specific objectives to:-

- Find out if the Ghana Library Authority has a training department
- Assess the Ghana Library Authority's policy on training
- Find out why the In-service training programme was suspended
- Find out how often the syllabus is revised to bring it in line with current developments in the profession
- Assess the impact the In-service training programme has on staff performance
- To ascertain the effects of the suspension of the In-service training on service delivery.

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **Definition and Importance of Public Library Services**

Public libraries are a world-wide phenomenon, whilst other types of libraries are meant for specific groups of users. A public library is not restricted to any group of users. It is universal and serves all kinds of people including children, people with disabilities and prisoners. Public libraries are generally managed, financed and supported by governments, local communities and occasionally by non-governmental organizations. The services provided by public libraries are without any form of discrimination based on gender or race.

Gill et al (2001) describes the public library as an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. According to Gill, the public library also provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment. They serve as the intellectual, cultural and recreational centre of a community. Public library collections cover a wide spectrum of users varied as all the items that can be collected in any type of library. The collections of a public library include books, journals, periodicals, newspapers and magazines, museum projects, artifacts and manuscripts.

### **The traditional role of library assistants**

Generally nearly every organization refers to the library assistant as a reference assistant, technical assistant or library technician. These terms are widely used in the library world to describe all the supporting staff, paraprofessionals, non-professionals and library assistants other than the professional staff. These category of staff are normally trained to support professional librarians in various library operations to perform technical duties without direct supervision, and to supervise the execution of various technical and clerical operations. More often, library assistants are employed for routine tasks.

Library assistants are an inseparable part of the total workforce of the library and need to be developed for both their own needs as well as for the library's goals. These staff are trained for future senior positions after their internal examinations and in-service courses. Library assistants are involved in the day-to-day activities of a library. Their duties include sorting and shelving of books, counter duties, booking of overdue and reservation cards, book processing and preparation, simple cataloguing and classification, stock taking checking and receipts of books and periodicals. They also register new library users and help them to use library facilities effectively. Library assistants are the people behind the meticulous compilation of book titles for order. They sort the books and periodicals consulted by library users and arrange them on shelves on daily basis. They help to make the experience of a library patron less tedious. They are always available to help users locate desired titles, and answer some of their queries. (Jennerich, 2006; Education Portal, 2012).

Similarly, Bamidele et al. (2013) were of the view that, library assistants help librarians and library technicians organize materials and make them available to the public. They start their career by performing simple tasks and eventually perform more advanced tasks that may include working at the circulation desk, issuing library cards to library patrons, lending and receiving library materials, inspect returned material for damage, repair damaged books and magazines, sort and shelve materials.

### **The Changing Role of Library Staff**

The term “paraprofessionals” in the context of this study, according to the Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science (ODLIS, 2002) has been described as a:-

Member of the library support staff, usually someone who holds at least the baccalaureate degree, trained to understand specific procedures and apply them according to pre-established rules under normal circumstances without exercising professional judgment. Library paraprofessionals are usually assigned high-level technical support duties, for example, in copy cataloging and serials control. In smaller public library systems in the United States, branch librarians are sometimes paraprofessionals.

Today, most of the library assistants are recruited with diploma or certificate and are termed para-professional staff. Library assistants’ functions are found to have increased in diversity of tasks and responsibility. Most of these workers are often referred to as paraprofessionals, library technicians, or support staff who perform tasks that were the sole purview of professional librarians in the not-so-distant past (Fragola, 2009).

Contributing to the subject, Fielden (1996) noted that, in some libraries, a new type of “Assistant” post have been created which involve library orientation, subject searches and reference enquiries and providing support to students in the use of standard application software and library orientation. Indeed, with the changing role in the new information technology, the need to re-designate library assistants as “Information Assistants” has become necessary. Now the roles of Library Assistants include duties such as, supporting information technology and library and media services. Majority of staff in public libraries have regular contacts with users at the issue desks and information help desks. It is against this role that, staff identifies a need for



training to provide them with the kind of skills and knowledge required, when helping users to access electronic resources and when using software packages to process information needs.

In support of the above, the American Association of Law Libraries (2013) reiterated that, the library assistant is responsible for the acquisition, distribution and maintenance of the firm's printed material resources. Therefore, the competency required includes shelving of books and maintenance of the library in a neat and orderly manner; acquiring and organizing print library materials; originating correspondence including ordering publications, renewing subscriptions, resolving billing problems, tracing missing issues and returning unwanted or duplicate materials. Other duties include checking in all subscriptions, journals, newsletters, new volumes, loose leaf supplementation, processing of books that have been checked into the system. Also duties such as photocopying, circulation of table of contents and highlight pages of various publications, maintenance of the library catalogue, filing loose leaf supplements, new books, providing reference services to clients by answering questions, retrieving materials, and filling interlibrary loan requests as well as resolving of direct questions or problems with subscriptions to the appropriate person for resolution, are duties of library assistants in some libraries.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Training can be described as a planned effort to assist employees in learning job-related behaviours that will improve their performance (Lewis et al, 2007). Dessler (2008) believes that training is the process of teaching or giving new employees the basic skills they need to perform their jobs. Usually an organization facilitates the employees' learning through training so that their modified behavior contributes to the attainment of the organization's goals and objectives.

According to the American Library Association (2013), training requirements for library assistants are generally minimal and most libraries prefer to hire workers with a high school diploma. Library assistants receive most of their training on the job indicating that the type of training given to them is based on the job to be performed.

Martin (2005) also reports that, education, training and development assume that some form of learning takes place within the individual. In other words, the individual is affected in one way or other as a result of the training process. Thus education implies change due to acquisition of new skills. It is important to first differentiate education from training. It is clear that education is

mainly theory based. It teaches a person to think. It does not teach a person what to do in particular situations, but it gives the person tools to figure out what to do in any situation. To sum up, education can be described as the development of the human mind, which increases the powers of observation, analysis, integration, understanding, decision making, and adjustment to new situations.

Cole (2005) in his attempt, drew a line between training and education or development. He defines training as preparation for an occupation or for specific skills which is job oriented and narrower in conception than education or development which covers broader view of knowledge and skills acquisition geared toward improving employee potential in general.

Cole (2001) as cited by Nassazi (2013) listed some benefits in training as high morale for staff, lower cost of production, lower turnover, change management, provide recognition, enhanced responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion as well as improvement in the availability and quality of staff.

In the nutshell, training can be said to be job specific while development seeks to enhance the employee potential for present and future performance. Training should be on-going since job demands are dynamic with respect to information and technological revolution. It is therefore, a systematic development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job (Olaniyan & Ojo, 2008); Al-Ajlouni, Athamneh and Jaradat, 2010).

Halim and Ali (1997) categorized training into two broad types as pre-service training and in-service training. They are of the view that pre-service training is more academic in nature and is offered by formal institutions following definite curricula and syllabuses for a certain duration to offer a formal degree or diploma. In-service training, on the other hand, is offered by the organization from time to time for the development of skills and knowledge of the incumbents. Pre-service training was describe as a process through which individuals are made ready to enter a certain kind of professional job such as agriculture, medicine, or engineering. According to them, the contents of this form of training according are mostly technical subjects.

On the other hand, Halim and Ali presented In-service training as a problem-centered, learner-oriented, and time-bound series of activities which provide the opportunity to develop a sense of

purpose, broaden perception of the clientele, and increase capacity to gain knowledge and mastery of techniques. It may broadly be categorized into five different types: (1) induction or orientation training, (2) foundation training, (3) on-the-job training, (4) refresher or maintenance training, and (5) career development training. All of these types of training are needed for the proper development of extension staff throughout their service life.

### **The Need for Education and Training of Library Assistants**

In order, to provide quality library service, it is important that all categories of library staff be given the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and skills to meet acceptable standard. According to Antwi (2002), education and training is fundamental in upgrading the skills of staff of any organization especially in this era of technological advancement. It is therefore very important for any organization, such as Public Library Institutions to provide the opportunity for its staff to upgrade their knowledge and skills through education and training

Bakewell (1989) in his view noted that, one person giving a response to a customer may greatly harm a good image built over a long period. Therefore, Library Assistants should be given overall training by the organization. He suggests two types of training for personnel of an organization, that is, basic training about the operation of the organization and external training, meeting other people at conferences and workshop is also necessary to the development of library staff.

Similarly, Khan and Rafiq (2013) noted that, adequate training is becoming part and parcel of every successful organization's policy because capacity building of workforce has now been a source of getting competitive edge in the business world. Training, however, either in classroom or experiential, it does through that learning process that organization better sharpen the skills of its workforce.

Khan and Rafiq (2013) further cited Chaudhary (2001) that, the changing scenario of management and leadership styles, communication media, domain/subject knowledge and other significant factors are also responsible to drive the passion of Library and Information Science (LIS) community to keep pace with the changing times. Other factors that have promoted the discussion of continuing education for librarianship are the rapid growth of new knowledge;

social needs of highly educated population; introduction of new technology in libraries; outreach programs to attract new groups of library users; and changing trends in library services.

Lockhart and Majal (2012) in their submission reiterated that, library staff training and development is a crucial element in ensuring positive user experiences within libraries. A staff component consistently exposed to relevant training and development interventions should not be underestimated. Citing Connor (2009), Lockhart and Majal noted that, in an academic library's for example, its single most valuable resource is its workforce. Without educated, well-trained, and motivated librarians and library staff, an academic library program is ill -prepared to meet the needs of its clientele or the challenges that face institutions of higher education.

## **Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was the Survey method due to its well defined advantages that could be used to investigate problems in realistic setting, considering the amount of information gathered and a large amount of data that could be collected with relative ease from a variety of people and also allows the researcher to examine many variables (demographic and lifestyle information, attitudes, motives and intentions). The study sought to assess the Ghana Library Authority (GLA) in-service training programme for library assistants and looked at the background details of staff of GLA and the form of training they have had since joining the Authority. The main research instrument for data collection was administered questionnaire comprising of close and open ended questions that allowed the respondents to formulate answers on their own by expressing their opinion in a written form. Data collected for this study was from primary sources, which included questionnaires and interviews. Secondary sources which represent materials that have been gathered previously include books, journals, dissertations and other relevant literature from the Department of Information Studies library, University of Ghana, Legon, The Balme Library, University of Ghana, Legon and the Greater Accra Regional Library, Accra.

The population for this study included staff who have benefited from the in-service training programme and those staff in the system who have not had the opportunity to benefit from the programme. The sampling frame for the questionnaire administration was all current and past mainstream workers of the GLA. The sample size for the current mainstream workers was

estimated to be 47 representing 58.8%, while those outside the GLA were 33 (41.2%) who are no longer working with the Authority. In all, 80 questionnaires were administered.

This study adopted two main techniques in selecting the sample. These are the Convenience and the Snowball Sampling Techniques. The convenience technique was used to get respondents who have benefited as well as those who have not benefited from the in-service training and are still with the Authority. On the other hand, Snowball Sampling Technique was used for those who have benefited and are no longer with the Authority. The total population for the study was 80.

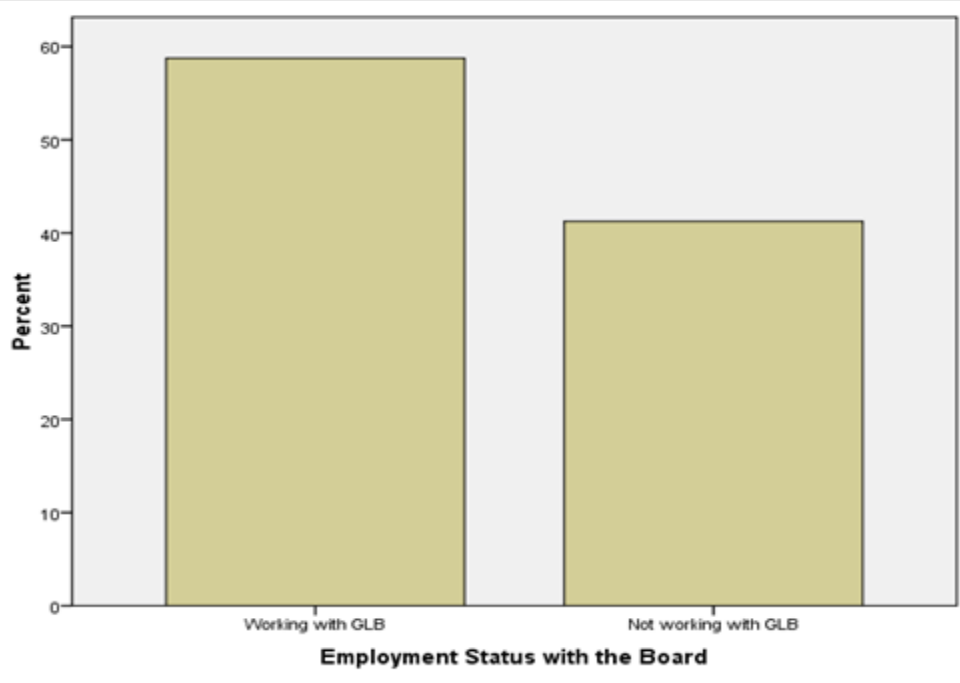
A structured interview was held with the Regional Librarians/ Training Directors and other management members to collect more data that could clarify some points and elaborate on other issues which were not addressed in the questionnaire. The interview provided an instant feedback and allowed direct interaction between the researchers and the management members. This enabled the researchers to gain a thorough understanding and insight of the problem under study. It also offered the respondents the leeway to express themselves as much as possible to elicit a more detailed and precise information for the study.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Background Information of Respondents**

The study that covered 80 respondents revealed that, the In-service training for junior staff was suspended in 2000. In all, 80 questionnaires were administered with 47 representing 58.8% of respondents still working with the Ghana Library Authority (GLA), while 33 (41.2%) were ex staff of the Authority. Figure 1 presents the distributions in the form of a bar chart.

**Figure 1: Employment Status of Respondents**



**Source: Field Survey**

28 (35%) and 52 (65%) of the respondents were females and males respectively. The distribution of the respondents according to gender is given in Table 1

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	28	35.0	35.0
Valid Male	52	65.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

The modal age group of the respondents was 48 and above. The distribution was as follows: 16 (20%) each for age groups 18 – 23 and 30 – 35 whilst 9 (11.2%) for each of 24 – 29 and 42 – 47. Also 3 (3.8%) for 36 – 41 and 27 (23.8%) for 48 and above. The employment status of the respondents were observed to be dependent on their age distribution. Table 2a presents the cross-tabulation for the age groups and the current employment status of the respondents. A chi-square

test gave a Pearson chi-square value of 35.556 (N= 80, df = 5,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) responding in a very high dependency between the age groups and the current employment status. The likelihood ratio that the employment status does not depend on the age groups was 0.0%. Table 2b presents the chi-square table for the cross-tabulation.

**Table 2a: Age - Employment Cross-Tabulation Of Respondents**

		Employment Status		Total	
		With GLA	Out of GLA		
Age	18-23	Count	16	0	16
		% within Age	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	24-29	Count	9	0	9
		% within Age	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	30-35	Count	11	5	16
		% within Age	68.8%	31.2%	100.0%
	36-41	Count	2	1	3
		% within Age	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
	42-47	Count	3	6	9
		% within Age	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	48 & Above	Count	6	21	27
		% within Age	22.2%	77.8%	100.0%
	Total	Count	47	33	80
		% within Age	58.8%	41.2%	100.0%

**Table 2b: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.556 <sup>a</sup>	5	.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.686	5	.000
N of Valid Cases	80		

**Source: Field Survey**

With regards to educational background, most of the respondents have completed tertiary education in the University or Polytechnic system. In all 49 (61.2%), 3 (3.8%), 2 (2.5%), 20 (25%) and 6 (7.5%) of the respondents have completed University, Polytechnic, GCE A' Level, SSS/SHS and GCE O` Level respectively. However, most of the respondents have no formal knowledge in areas relating to library and information studies. The study revealed that 28 (35%) do not have any qualification in librarianship with 4 (5%), 16 (20%), 18 (22.5%) and 14 (17.5%) having certificate, diploma, degree and masters in areas relating to librarianship. It should be noted that, none of the 80 respondents had M Phil degree in Library Studies. Table 3 below shows the distribution of respondents according to library related qualifications.



**Table 3: Library Qualification of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Certificate	4	5.0	5.0
Degree	18	22.5	27.5
Diploma	16	20.0	47.5
Valid M.A	14	17.5	65.0
N/A	28	35.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

Table 4 presents the number of years that respondents worked or have worked with GLA. Even though the modal group is 1-5 years, the difference between this group and the rest do not show wide variation. 14 (17.5%), 17 (21.2%), 16 (20%), 9 (11.2%), 14 (17.5%), and 10 (12.5%) of the respondents worked or have worked for GLA for less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years and 21 and above respectively.

**Table 4: Work Experience of Respondents**

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	17	21.2	21.2
11-15	9	11.2	32.5
16-20	14	17.5	50.0
Valid 6-10	16	20.0	70.0
Above 21	10	12.5	82.5
Less than 1	14	17.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

The study shows that most of the respondents were in the junior rank levels of the profession. The first four highest representations were Assistant Librarian (19, representing 23.8%); Junior Library Assistant (17, representing 21.2%); Library Assistant (13 representing 16.2%) and Librarian (7, representing 8.8%). The remaining 24 (30%) included a Chief Library assistant, 6

Library Officers, 3 Principal Library Assistants, a Regional Librarian, 6 Senior Library Assistants, 3 Senior Library Officers and a Senior Librarian. Table 5 presents the rank distribution of the respondents.

The data also revealed that most of the respondents have held their current ranks for 5 years or less. Table 6 presents the number of years that respondents have held their current ranks. About 56, representing 70%, have held their current position for five years or less. The remaining 30% is evenly distributed between the year groups of 6-10 and above 10. When the current ranks and the years the respondents have held their current position were cross-tabulated and chi square value determine for their dependencies, it was observed that the number of years the respondents have held their current position was very much dependent on their current rank ( $\chi = 108.3$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 44$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**Table 5: Current Ranks/Positions of the Respondents**

Rank	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Asst. Librarian	19	23.8	23.8
CLA	1	1.2	25.0
JLA	17	21.2	46.2
LA	13	16.2	62.5
Librarian	7	8.8	71.2
LO	6	7.5	78.8
Valid N/A	3	3.8	82.5
PLA	3	3.8	86.2
Regional Librarian	1	1.2	87.5
SLA	6	7.5	95.0
SLO	3	3.8	98.8
Snr. Librarian	1	1.2	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

**Table 6: Current Ranks of Respondents and number of years held**

Years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	37	46.2	46.2
6-10	12	15.0	61.2
Valid Above 11	12	15.0	76.2
Less than 1	19	23.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

### **Training departments**

There are seven main sections or departments under the GLA excluding general administration. The seven sections are cataloguing, reference, extensions, electronic support, lending, children and schools and colleges department. The study shows that 42 (52.5%) of the respondents have served in only one department; also 22 (27.5%) have served in between two and four departments. On the other hand, the data indicates that 7 (8.8%) have served in five departments or more. Contrary, 9 (11.2%) out of the 80 respondents have never served in any of the seven main departments. Detailed analyses of these 9 respondents revealed that they are in administrative management positions. The information in Table 7 presents the number of departments in which respondents have worked throughout their career.

**Table 7: Number of Departments that Respondents has worked in**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
> 5	7	8.8	8.8
2 - 4	22	27.5	36.2
Valid NONE	9	11.2	47.5
Only 1	42	52.5	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

On a deeper analysis, it was realized that, except gender, the number of departments that the respondents have served depended on age, level of education and library qualification, rank and the number of years worked. For instance with the number of years worked, the p-value was 0.018 ( $\chi = 28.550$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 15$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.5% likelihood of no dependency. Tables 8a and 8b give the cross-tabulation and the chi-square parameters respectively for number of years respondents have worked and the number of departments worked. The others are summarized as follows:

Age: p-value of 0.010 ( $\chi = 37.328$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 15$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.0% likelihood of no dependency.

Level of education: p-value of 0.006 ( $\chi = 27.689$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.2% likelihood of no dependency

Level of library qualification: p-value of 0.000 ( $\chi = 38.532$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 12$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.0% likelihood of no dependency.

Current rank/position: p-value of 0.000 ( $\chi = 88.686$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 33$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.0% likelihood of no dependency.

**Table 8a: Cross-Tabulation of Service Duration and Number of Departments Served by Respondents**  
 No. of Departments Worked

		2 - 4	> 5	None	Only 1	Total
Service Duration	1-5	5	0	2	10	17
	11-15	4	0	1	4	9
	16-20	4	2	4	4	14
	6-10	5	2	0	9	16
	Above 21	3	3	2	2	10
	Less than 1	1	0	0	13	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>80</b>

**Source: Field Survey**

**Table 8b: Chi-Square Test**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.550 <sup>a</sup>	15	.018
Likelihood Ratio	32.898	15	.005
N of Valid Cases	80		

a. 19 cells (79.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .79. **Source: Field Survey**

### **Computer literacy**

The study shows that only 2 (2.5%) of the respondents were not computer literate. The computer expertise level of the respondents can be said to be on a higher level. Thus, 62 (77.5%) respondents have adequate computer skills with an additional 16 (20.0%) having computer ability that can be built on for various purposes. However, 8 (10.0%) described their level of

expertise as excellent and 24 (30.0%) were very good, whilst 30 (37.5%) were classified as good. Table 9 below indicates the computer expertise level of the respondents.

**Table 9: Computer Expertise Level of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Computer expertise	Excellent	8	10.0	10.0
	Good	30	37.5	47.5
	N/A	2	2.5	50.0
	Not so good	16	20.0	70.0
	Very Good	24	30.0	100.0
	Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

It was observed that the computer expertise level of the respondents was dependent on age and level of library qualifications only. Tables 10a and 10b present the cross-tabulation and the chi-square results for computer expertise and level of library qualification respectively.

Figure 2 also presents the bar chart illustration of the computer expertise level and age of the respondents. All the respondents within the age of 18 – 23 are computer literates. Out of the 16, 4 (25%) graded themselves “not so good” with 1 (6.3%), 3 (18.8%), and 8 (50.0%) grading themselves as “excellent”, “very good” and “good” respectively. The 2 respondent who are not computer literates were between the age brackets of 24-29. However, 3 (33.3%) out of the total of 9 respondents who are of that age class graded themselves “excellent”. Surprisingly, all the 27 respondents that are 48 years or above, were all computer literates with 4 (the highest by scores) graded as “excellent”. An additional 10 (37.0%) and 11 (40.7%) of the 27 having “very good” and “good” computer expertise level. In all, the chi-square test for the dependency of computer expertise level on age registered a p-value of 0.005 ( $\chi = 40.164$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.0% likelihood of no dependency.

**Table 10a: Cross-Tabulation of Age and Computer Expertise of Respondents**

Count	Computer Expertise Rating					Total
	Excellent	Good	N/A	Not so good	Very Good	
18-23	1	8	0	4	3	16
24-29	3	2	2	1	1	9
30-35	0	7	0	3	6	16
36-41	0	0	0	1	2	3
42-47	0	2	0	5	2	9
≥ 48	4	11	0	2	10	27
Total	8	30	2	16	24	80

**Source: Field Survey**

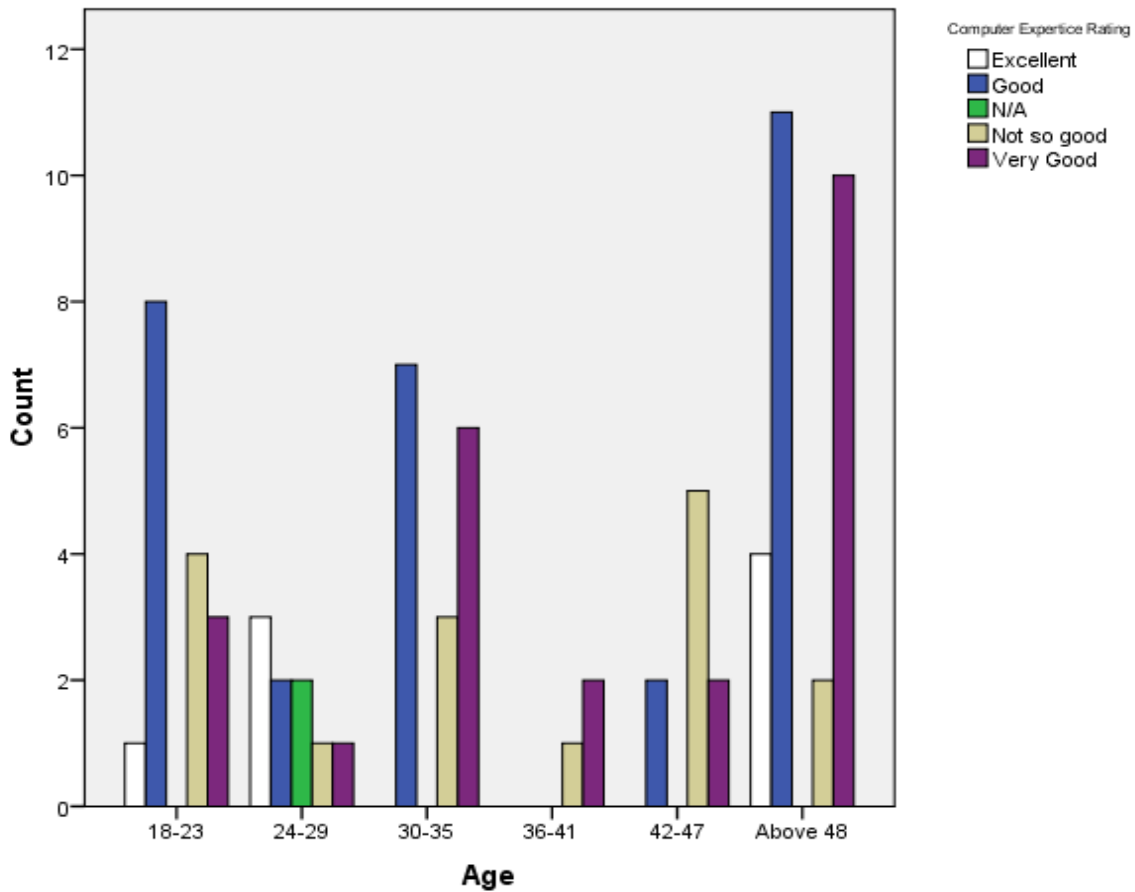
**Table 10b: Chi-Square results for computer expertise level and level of library qualification of respondents**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.164 <sup>a</sup>	20	.005
Likelihood Ratio	34.133	20	.025
N of Valid Cases	80		

a. 25 cells (83.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .08.

**Source: Field Survey**

**Figure 2: Bar Chart of the Computer Expertise Level of the Various Age Classes**



**Source: Field Survey**

All the respondents with qualification in library and related areas are computer literate. Even though all library related certificate qualification holders were all computer literates, none of the four respondents were rated “excellent” or “very good”. The distributions of the other three levels of qualifications were not different from each other. Most of the respondents found themselves rating “very good” and “good” and not “excellent”. However, it is significant to note that 4 (28.6%) of the respondents with M.A qualification rated their expertise to be “excellent”.

In all, the chi-square test for the dependency of computer expertise level on library qualification registered a p-value of 0.022 ( $\chi = 29.361$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.4% likelihood of no dependency. Table 11 below shows details of cross-tabulation and chi-square test of computer expertise rating and level of library qualification



**Table 11: Cross-Tabulation of Computer Expertise Rating and Level of Library Qualification**

Count		Computer Expertise Rating					Total
		Excellent	Good	N/A	Not so good	Very Good	
Level of Library Qualification	Certificate	0	2	0	2	0	4
	Degree	1	5	0	5	7	18
	Diploma	1	10	0	0	5	16
	M.A	4	3	0	0	7	14
	N/A	2	10	2	9	5	28
Total		8	30	2	16	24	80

**Source: Field Survey****Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.361 <sup>a</sup>	16	.022
Likelihood Ratio	34.665	16	.004
N of Valid Cases	80		

a. 18 cells (72.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10. **Source: Field Survey**

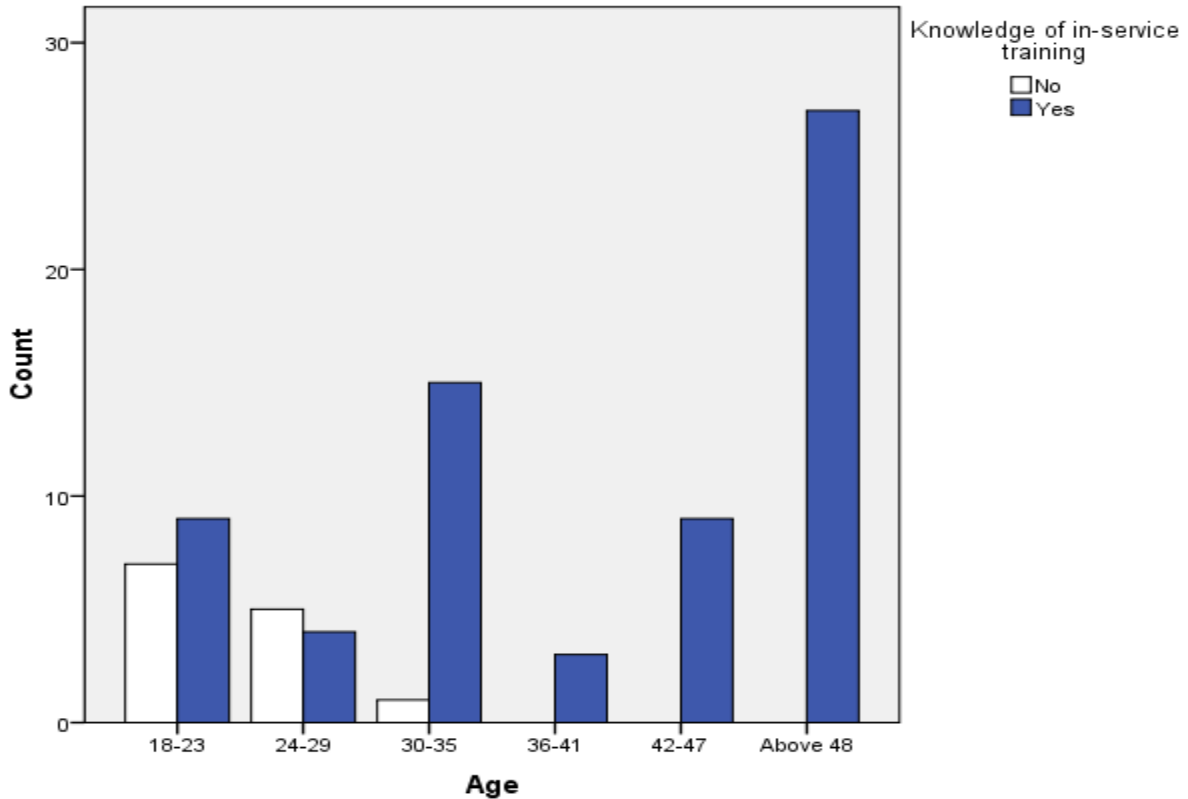
**Awareness of the GLA In-Service Training Programme**

Knowledge of the In-service training programme was noted to depend on the age and duration of service. The younger generation exhibited a higher rate of ignorance of the existence of the programme. Also, more respondents who have worked longer with the GLA acknowledged greater awareness of the programme than those who have worked for shorter periods. The study revealed that, 30 (16.2%) of the respondents knew nothing about the GLA's In-service training programme for the Junior Library Assistants. Even though the knowledge of respondents of the GLA's In-service training was not based on their ranks/position, it was noted to depend on age and duration of service.

It was also noted that the number of respondents with no knowledge of the In-service training decreased consistently from 7 for the 18 - 23-year class to 5 for the 24 to 29 year class, whilst 1 for the 30 to 35-year class before leveling to zero for the other older year classes. Figure 3 presents the cross-tabulation result for age and knowledge of the GLA's In-service training in bar chart. The chi-square test for the dependency of knowledge of the GLA's In-service training on

age registered a p-value of 0.000 ( $\chi = 27.850$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.0% likelihood of no dependency.

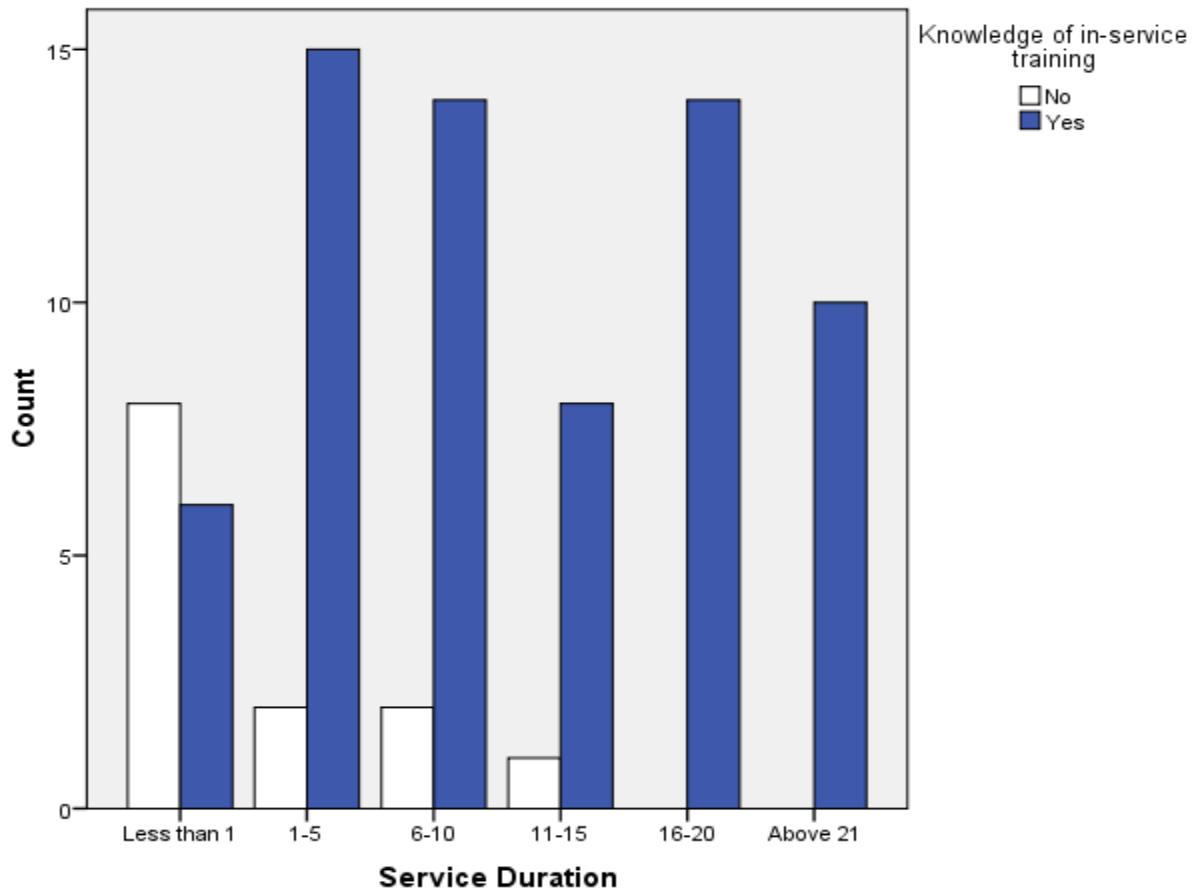
**Figure 3: Bar Chart of the Knowledge of the GLA In-Service Training for Junior Library Assistant (JLA) according to Age of Respondents**



**Source: Field Survey**

A similar trend in the age-knowledge of In-service training was observed for the cross-tabulated result of service duration and knowledge of In-service training. The modal class for the “No knowledge” responses shows that, the respondents who have spent less than a year in the service followed as 1 to 5 and 6 to 10 year respectively, whilst the older generation registered zero count. Figure 4 presents the bar chart illustration for this result. The chi-square test for the dependency of knowledge of the GLA In-service training on age reported a p-value of 0.000 ( $\chi = 22.450$ ,  $N = 80$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ) with 0.1% likelihood of no dependency.

**Figure 4: Bar Charts of the Knowledge of the GLA's In-Service Training for JLA According to Age of Respondents**



**Source: Field Survey**

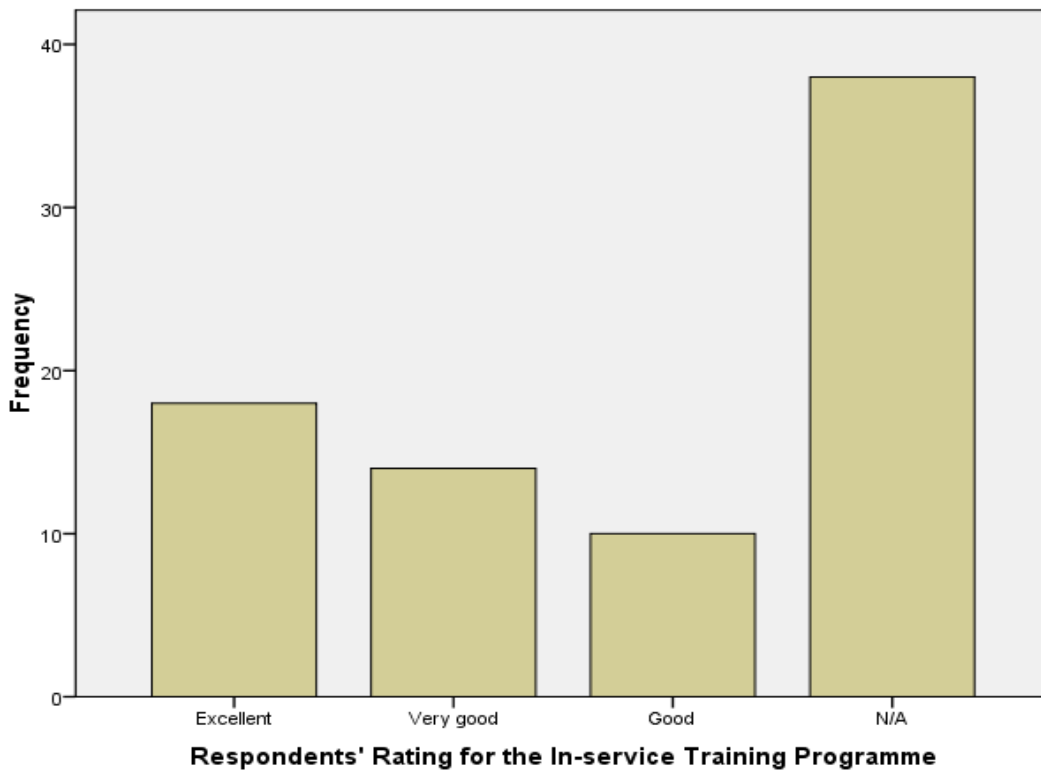
### **Impact of the In-Service Training Programme**

The study found that, most of the respondents had benefited from the GLA's In-service training for Junior Library Assistants. The study discovered the benefits of the In-service programme to include impartation of skills to participants to perform efficiently on the job; serving as the foundation for staff who decides to take the profession as a life time career; facilitates entry into the tertiary institutions for study in librarianship and ensuring a balanced distribution of semi-trained staff needed to man some of the most deprived service points in the country.

It emerged that, more than 50% of the respondents benefited from the GLA's In-service training for Junior Library Assistants. 43 (53.8%) attended the programme during the years 1982 to 1999 for a duration of either 6 weeks or 3 months. The duration of the programme was noted to be

inconsistent with the years of attendance. For instance, the duration for the programme in 1983, 1991, 1995 and 1999 were 3 months whilst in 1994 was 6 weeks.. The researchers observed that, 3 months was the average period for most of the participants who attended the training. The training programme encompassed the normal routine library work with course content covering areas like reference work, cataloguing and classification, adult and juvenile library management, technical services, lending services, binding and art work, book processing, mobile library services, indexing and abstracting and general clientele services. None of the respondents that benefited from the training programmes rated the programme “not beneficial”. 18 out of the 43 graded the programme “excellent”. Figure 5 below presents the result in a bar chart.

**Figure 5: Benefit Ratings for the In-Service Training**



**Source: Field Survey**

According to the respondents, the benefits of the programme were as follows:

- i. It impacts skills to participants to perform efficiently on the job.
- ii. It serves as the foundation for staff who decides to take the profession as a life time career
- iii. Entry into the tertiary institutions for study in librarianship becomes fairly easier as a result of the In-service training
- iv. The In-service training programmes have ensured a balanced distribution of semi-trained staff needed to man some of the most deprived service points in the country.

Cole (2001) as cited by Nassazi (2013) summarizes the impact on training as follows:-

- High morale – employees who receive training have increased confidence and motivations;
- Lower cost of production – training eliminates risks because trained personnel are able to make better and economic use of material and equipment thereby reducing and avoiding waste;
- Lower turnover – training brings a sense of security at the workplace which in turn reduces labor turnover and absenteeism is avoided;
- Change management – training helps to manage change by increasing the understanding and involvement of employees in the change process and also provides the skills and abilities needed to adjust to new situations;
- Provide recognition, enhanced responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion and
- Help to improve the availability and quality of staff.

## Effects of the Absence of In-Service Training on Job Performance

The study revealed that, 30 (81.1%) of the 37 respondents who did not attend the In-service training were lacking in one of the four areas of job performance. Out of them, 10 (33.3%), 3 (3%), 5 (16.7%) and 12 (40%) lacked the ease of information finding; confidence in dealing with people; work interest and understanding of library operation respectively. The major lack was therefore noted to be the understanding of the library operation. Table 12 presents the affected areas of job performance for the respondents.

**Table 12: Affected Area of Job Performance for Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Information finding difficulty	10	12.5	12.5
Lack confidence in dealing with people	3	3.8	16.2
Lack of work interest	5	6.2	22.5
NA	50	62.5	85.0
Understanding of library operation	12	15.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

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### Source: Field Survey

The above findings confirm Korsah, (1991) assertion that, where public library workers acquire In-service training, it helps the individual to gain:-

- Confidence in dealing with patrons
- Makes it easier when finding information for people
- Aids staff understanding of the processes involved in library operations and also gain interest in the work they do.

The study also discovered that, most of the respondents who have not attended the In-service training attributed the suspension of the programme, as the main reason for not benefitting from the programme. In all, 23 out of the total of 29 indicated the above reason. The remaining 6 that indicated lack of qualification and other reasons were later known to be part of those that had no knowledge of the GLA In-service training programme. The main result is presented in Table 13 below.

**Table 13: Reasons Why Some Respondents have not attended the In-Service Training Programme**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Don't			
Qualify	2	2.5	2.5
NA	51	63.8	66.2
Valid Others	4	5.0	71.2
Suspended	23	28.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	

**Source: Field Survey**

### **Reasons for Suspension of the Programme**

Further investigations conducted into the study revealed other reasons behind the suspension of the GLA In-service training programme as follows:-:

#### **1. Absence of a Board**

At a point in time, decisions coming from the Board were so vital such that, issues of training were of much concerned to the Board. Crucial decisions like funding for training were of important to members of the Board because, they valued the relevance of training new staff. However, with the dwindling of the fortunes of GLA, the Board went out of existence. Thus, difficulties in taking critical decisions on training was left in the hands of few persons acting in

management positions, hence the absence of the Board meant that, no one could take a firm decision on training.

## **2. Weak Management Team**

At a point in time, only three (3) key members of senior staff constituted the management team. This reduction in strength and capacity of management resulted in a less productive management team which could not see to the effective implementation of the bonding system. This, coupled with the low salary structure of staff resulted in the mass movement of trained personnel from the GLA.

## **3. Non-Functioning Training Department**

The study revealed that, the training department of the GLA only existed in name due to lack of qualified personnel and logistics to aid training. When key personnel left the service, there were difficulties in engaging the right personnel for the training programme.

## **4. Training Budget**

The study also revealed that there was no budget for training. Subventions coming from Government only covers salaries, administrative expenses and services. Inadequate funding made it difficult for management to continue running the training programme.

## **5. Ghana Library Association (GLA)**

The Ghana Library Association had no dealings with the Ghana Library Authority. At a point, the Ghana Library Association attempted to intervene in the affairs of the Authority, but their genuine concerns were misinterpreted resulting in their being shoved aside from the affairs of the GLA.



## **Conclusion**

The need for staff training and development cannot be over-emphasized. Individual professionals need to learn new knowledge to prevent the onset of professional alienation in job performance and to adjust to the culture and changes prevalent in the profession. An active involvement in In-service training, updates the skills of the professional and at the same time enables him/her to advance professionally.

There is evidence from the study that training programmes are essential ingredients for library staff. The staff of the GLA is not left out in this regard.

It can also be concluded from the study that In-service training enhances the status, confidence of staff, give them in-depth knowledge of the work, and most importantly improves employee's output.

From the study it can be deduce that even though majority of the staff were aware of the importance of training to their professional advancement, the environment at the GLA did not allow some to embark on this important activity. The study gave some reason for the suspension of the in-service training programme that included the absence of a Board, weak management team, and non-functioning training department among others. Management of the GLA need to resume the in-service training programme for junior staff.

## **Recommendations**

The changing role of libraries and the impact of information technology on library service delivery demand that staff of public libraries where quite a large number of people seek information for their information needs should regularly upgrade their knowledge on new development through training and continuous education.

The ultimate importance of training cannot be overemphasized because it is a means of upgrading knowledge and effectively increasing personal satisfaction and productivity within

public libraries. In the light of the findings of this work, the following recommendations are made:

It was realised that position in the GLA was closely related to number of years that an employee has worked. This implies that GLA groomed its staff and promoted from within, hence, the In-service training programme for junior staff is very important since it provides a foundation for this level of staff.

- It is therefore recommended that the training programme should be re-instituted to cater for the basic needs of the Library Assistants. This can be achieved by creating a Governing Board and Management Team for GLA.
- The GLA should also restructure its training department, allocate budgetary support and provide resource persons to cater for the training needs of its staff.
- The study showed that the majority of the staff had basic computer knowledge however, a deeper knowledge in computers having to do with databases and internet usage will make the staff more efficient to better acquire, store and disseminate information to the general public. It is therefore recommended that, all staff be given detailed computer training to enable them be abreast with the modern times to better serve their clients. It is also suggested that public libraries should acquire information technology and communication infrastructure. The use of computers is on the ascendancy in Ghana. There is increase in the use of e-mail, CD-ROM and internet.
- Public library staff requires greater knowledge and ability to apply modern management strategies and techniques. It is therefore recommended that the GLA should include financial and database management in the future review of the syllabus of the In-service training.

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