

Full Length Research Paper

Work environments and job performance of librarians in the public Universities in South –west Nigeria

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This study investigates the work environments and job performance of librarians working in public universities in South-West, Nigeria with the aid of survey research approach. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from 189 Academic Librarians, out of which 153 (81%) copies of the questionnaire were duly completed and returned. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentage and Anova Analysis tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the work environment of librarians in terms of physical facilities, open communication, motivation etc are fairly favourable while personnel emolument was considered not to be favourable at all. This inadequacy is reflected in the job performance of the librarians as their performance only seems to be fair. The study also established that there is significant correlation between work environment and job performance of the librarians. To alleviate the incidence of poor work environment and under performance in libraries, the study recommended improvement in the levels of physical facilities, personnel emolument, open communication as wells as adequate funding from government, donor agencies and philanthropists.

Key words: Nigerian universities, South-West Nigeria, work environment, academic librarians, job performance

INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries in Nigerian universities have been making significant contribution to the mandates of their parent institution. These mandates are teaching, research and community services geared towards social, political and economic development of the country. Academic libraries provide bibliographic, and user services to the staff, students and immediate communities of their respective institution. These services are significant and crucial to the achievements of their institution's academic, intellectual and other interest of staff and students. This position was supported by Adeniran (2010) when he asserts that "academic libraries are essential contributors to knowledge generation and serve a wide spectrum of knowledge seekers". Also Aina (2004) observed that services provided by an academic library in a university reflect the quality of teaching and

research in such a university.

The extent to which academic libraries can provide bibliographic supports to universities therefore are factors of the personnel available and the work environments of the libraries. Personnel in libraries are the activators of functions and services there in, as they possess skills in collection development, technical processing of information sources, user education and services. Infact, Personnel in a typical Nigerian academic library are in three categories: professional librarians, who are academics, library officers, who are middle level managers; and others who are library support staff and technical staff. Library personnel especially the academic librarians work for at least eight hours daily at their offices. Hence, it is important to provide for them a conducive and stress free environment which Paul (2002) affirmed enhances

employee productivity.

The work environment of any organization or institution generally comprises three sub-environments. These are technical, human and organizational environments. Technical environment comprises tools, equipment, infrastructure and other technical elements; the human environment comprises peers, and colleagues with whom employees relate, team and work group, interactions, the leadership and management, while organizational environment, on the other hand, includes systems, procedures, practices, values and philosophies (Opperman, 2002). Work environment of an organization can also be categorized into internal and external work environment. The totality of these environments has influence on the job performance of librarians.

Job performance, according to Johari and Yahya (2009), has become one of the significant indicators in managing organizational performance. They opined that a growing emphasis has been given on employee's job performance as a source of competitive advantage to promote responsiveness in enhancing overall organizational effectiveness.

Going by the above, we can infer that skilled and efficient personnel as well as conducive work environment are crucial to the successful accomplishment of the roles and functions of academic librarians in universities. Consequently, the main focus of this study is to investigate the relationship between work environment and librarians' job performance.

Statement of the problem

From observation in some academic libraries in the South-West Nigeria, especially those that the researcher had worked, there exists poor job performance among the librarians. As such, librarians in these institutions demonstrate lack of dedication and commitment to duties, while placement of emphasis on publication at the instance of professional duties and services also leads to poor user services. These negative dispositions of the librarians may not be unconnected with their work environments and other occupational stress they may be experiencing. Thus, this study attempted to investigate the conduciveness or otherwise of the working environments of librarians in the selected universities, alongside the influence their working environments have over their job performance.

Objectives of the study

Specific objectives of the study are to:

Find out the librarians' views on their work environment
Determine the librarians' views on their job performance
Determine whether any relationship exists between work

environment and job performance of librarians.

Research questions

The following research questions are answered in the study

How favourable do librarians consider their work environment?

What does the job performance of the librarians look like?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between work environment and job performance of librarians

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work environment could be seen as the physical, social, psychological and technological conditions that are found in the work places that impart the job performance of librarians. This impact could be directly or indirectly, and environment could be internal or external. Environmental factors include social interaction, power supply, physical facilities, lighting level, motivation, etc (Babalola, 2012). The work place or environment can impede or enhance the productivity of librarians whose jobs require comfortable, conducive, and congenial environments. Kampert (2008) averred that employers who pay attention to all the details that affect the welfare of their workers, including their work environment are likely to retain the best people, save cost, and improve the productivity of their workers. Also, Sakir and Fajonyomi (2007) identified clean environment as part of the incentive packages that can be given to workers.

Ndagana (2007) also noted the indispensability of a fine ecology to the output of workers. He believes that the work place is one of the major focuses of evaluation of self. As a result, the working environment is likely to dampened employee's moral, and as a consequence, contributes less to the total organizational output. Iyoro (2005), on his part, noted that investigations have demonstrated that, when workers are given necessary motivation they require, they display maximum willingness in the discharge of their duties.

Edwards and Fisher (2002), while commenting on library environment, stated that there should be a balance between naturally ventilated libraries with fresh air and sunshine. The library's internal and external environment should also be aesthetically inviting. Also, Kisiedu (2010) recommended that libraries should be attractive in its physical beauty and general ambience as this could attract more users.

Job performance in the view of Oduwale (2004) is how

Table 1. Breakdown of the study population.

	Name of Institution	No of Academic Librarians
	Federal Universities	
1	Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta	25
2	Federal University, Oye-Ekiti	06
3	Federal University of Technology, Akure	12
4	Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife	24
5	University of Ibadan	30
6	University of Lagos	21
	State Universities	
7	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko	06
8	Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti	11
9	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso	14
10	Lagos State University, Ojoo	16
11	Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	14
12	Osun State University Osogbo	10
	Total	189

one carries out the task, duties and responsibilities associated with a particular job. Commenting further, job performance according to him is considered as an output of a staff on the job, measurable in terms of quality and quantity of job performed or done. Hakala (2008), on his part, gave the following performance indicators: effectiveness, efficiency, profits, value, innovation, creativity, work relationships, job skill, decision-making, communication etc. Shadare and Hammed (2009), while also commenting on job performance, proposed the following parameters to measure performance: quantity and quality, speed and accuracy, creativity and innovation, risk taking and skills for future development etc.

Leighton and Weber (1999), in their book on 'Planning Academic and Research Library Building', emphasized that academic library is more than a book repository. This is because it provides study places in an environment that is conducive to serious thought and learning. They commented on the library environment that can facilitate the attainment of the roles of academic libraries. These environmental factors according to them are reasonable personal comfort that can be achieved through conditions that enable the occupants to be unaware of such matters as air quality, drafts, lighting, glare, visual and auditory distractions, and furniture configuration while Lombardo and Condic (2001), on the other hand, emphasized that library needs to be a comfortable place for staff and students.

METHODOLOGY

The method found appropriate for this study is the descriptive survey design which represents an attempt to provide an accurate description or picture of a particular situation or phenomenon at one

or more points in time. Population of this study is made up of 189 Academic Librarians working in South-West, Nigerian University Libraries, Federal and State owned (Table 1). It should be noted that, the South-West Nigeria is made up of six states. Hence, libraries attached to both Federal and State universities in each of the state are picked for the study.

Total enumeration technique was found suitable for this study with the aid of questionnaire which was administered to all academic librarians in the affected libraries. In all, there are 189 librarians, but only 153 representing 81% of the total population returned their effectively filled questionnaire. The questionnaire as used in this study is constructed in such a way that quantitative data are relatively easy to collect. It is essentially divided into three (3) sections which include: demographic information, work environment and job performance with a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 using Cronbach Alpha method.

Data analysis

The environmental indicators focused on in table 2 are physical facilities, open communication, motivation, participatory management, that is participation in decision making, and staff development and personnel emolument. Each of the environmental indicators was responded to by the respondents with the analysis of their responses revealing that the librarians' work environment in terms of physical facilities is fairly favourable; 118 (77.1%) respondents; 127 (83%) respondents also believe that open communication is fairly favourable with very few of them 9 (5.9%) believing it is unfavourable; larger percentage of the population 103 (67%) adjudge their motivation level as fairly favourable with 15 (9.9%) of the respondents claiming it is favourable. As regard the issue of participatory management, 82 (53.6%) of the librarians claimed it is fairly favourable, while 63 (41.1%) believed it is unfavourable; staff development was equally seen by the majority 75 (49%) as fairly favourable, while 46 (30%) claimed it is favourable; personnel emolument was largely seen as unfavourable by 87 (56.9%) of the respondents with 56 (36%) believing it is fairly favourable.

It could be observed from all the responses that respondents mainly rated all the indicators as fairly favourable meaning that

Table 2: Respondents views on their work environment.

<u>Environmental indicators</u>	<u>Favourable</u>	<u>Fairly favourable</u>	<u>Unfavourable</u>
Physical facilities	3(1.9%)	118(77.1%)	32(20.9%)
Open communication	17(11.1%)	127 (83%)	9 (5.9%)
Motivation	15(9.9%)	103 (67%)	35(22.9%)
Participatory Management	8(5.2%)	82(53.6%)	63 (41.1%)
Staff development	46 (30%)	75 (49%)	32(21%)
Personnel emolument	11(7.1%)	56(36%)	87(56.9%)

Table 3. Respondents' views on their job performance.

<u>Performance indicators</u>	<u>Well performed</u>	<u>Fairly well performed</u>	<u>Not well performed</u>
Professional practice	47 (30.8%)	92 (60.1%)	14 (9.1%)
Contribution to the overall development of the library	47 (30.8%)	106(69.2%)	-
Ability to work with co-workers	129(84.3%)	22(14.3%)	02(1.3%)
Punctuality at work	117(76.4%)	36(23.6%)	-
Ability to attend promptly to request from clients	42(27.4%)	83(54.2%)	28(18.3%)
Communication skills	134 (87.6%)	19(12.4%)	-
Meeting minimum requirements for promotion i.e research publication	31(20.2%)	80(52.2%)	42(27.5%)

Table 4. Summary table of One –way Anova analysis between work environment and job performance of librarians.

<u>Variance</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>Mean square</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between group	350.59	2	175.30	6.28	P<0.05
Within group	4186.5	150	27.91		
Total	4537.09	152			

ideal situation is yet to be operational at South-West, Nigeria University Libraries work environment.

From Table 3, it was noted that librarians in South-West, Nigerian Universities are not too comfortable with their professional practice as 92 (60.1%) of them claimed it is fairly well performed. Majority of the respondents also believed not to have contributed much to the growth of the library while they possess the skills to efficiently working with co-workers. This was indicated by 106 (69.2%) and 129 (84.3%) respectively. The respondents' ability to attend promptly to users request is not too encouraging as larger percentage of the respondents 83 (54.2%) claimed it is fairly well performed. However, this is an area where one would have expect them to put in more zeal to achieve greater goals since that is one of the librarians's activities that promote or mar the image of the library. In the area of communication skills, the respondents' performance is encouraging with 134 (87.6%) claiming to be well performed. It was also discovered that the librarians were not performing excellently as regard meeting minimum requirements for promotion that is research and publications while 80 (52.2%) believed this is fairly well done, 42 (27.5%) claimed it is not well performed with just 31 (20.2%) admitting that it is well performed. This may not be unconnected with the fact that librarians offered services that required their attention round the clock which later hampered their ability to carry out meaningful research activities.

Table 4 shows F-value (2, 150) of 6.28 at 0.05. Since the calculated F is greater than the tabulated F, the null hypothesis is

rejected. It therefore shows that there is significant relationship between work environment and job performance of librarians working in South-West, Nigeria university libraries.

$$F(2, 150) = 6.28, p < 0.05$$

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Favourable work environment correlates with high productivity of personnel in any organization. The findings of this study revealed that the work environment of the librarians in South-West, Nigeria is fairly favourable. Other indicators of work environments in this study, physical facilities, open communication, motivation, participatory management and staff development are all fairly favourable according to the respondents with the exception of personnel emolument which 87 (56.9%) considered unfavourable. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Lemu (2007) in his study on "Stress Management among Academic Librarians in Nigeria", where he identified absence of participatory management, open communication and inadequate staffing as causes of stress and poor job performance among librarians.

Furthermore, the librarians' job performance is consi-

dered fair with variables such as professional practice, contribution to the overall development of the library, ability to attend promptly to clients request as well as, meeting minimum requirements for promotion. This is not encouraging as lack of adequate publications denied librarians the opportunity to progress in their chosen carrier. However, ability to work with co-workers, punctuality at work and communication skills are well performed.

Lastly, it was discovered that there is significant relationship between the work environment and job performance of librarians. This is confirmed by the result of hypothesis tested in this study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Work environment of the librarians engaged in public Universities in South-West Nigeria comprises all the internal and external factors that influence their job performance. These factors are available physical facilities, Motivation, Open Communication, participatory management, staff development, and personnel emoluments. These factors are fairly favourable to the librarians and affect their job performance as they fairly perform their duties well. This indicates a positive correlation between work environment and job performance.

Consequent upon this conclusion, the following recommendations are proffered:

Work environment of the librarians should be improved in order to make them more favourable. Specifically, physical facilities should be improved upon in terms of provision of more space, more equipment to work with, and aesthetics. Librarians should be given opportunity to participate in the management or appointed into membership of committees. Communication within the libraries should be open in order to allow the librarians to make their views known without fear of victimization; motivation impetus and staff development programmes should be improved, and the libraries management should look into the issue of salary inadequacy.

Level of job performance of the librarians should be improved upon. This can be achieved through encouragement by the management and provision of adequate facilities that could aid job performance. These facilities are conducive working environment, cordial interaction between the management and the librarians, recognition and reward of good performance, and participatory management.

Funding and budgetary provisions for the library should be improved upon. Although this study did not investigate level of funding of the focused libraries, it is obvious that there are funding problems in them. Relatively adequate funding will bring about good and conducive work environments (physical facilities, motivation, participatory management etc.

Since work environments of the librarians are significantly related to their job performance, the libraries and

the universities management should seek the support of alumni associations, corporate organisations, and philanthropists to improve the libraries work environments since libraries do not generate revenues to meet their needs/demands, as such they must be supported by all and sundry.

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