

Work Environment, Staff Development, Personal Variables and Job Performance of Library Personnel in Public Universities in the South-South, NigeriaEkanem B. E. Eyo, Ph.D, CLN^[1], Professor K. I. N. Nwalo, CLN^[2]^[2]Department of Library & Information Science,
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Abstract. Job performance of library personnel is essential for achievement of library goals and objectives in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. Previous studies have concentrated on job motivation, ICT skills and use by library personnel with little attention paid to work environment, staff development and personal variables. The study was carried out to investigate work environment, staff development, personal variables (PV – Educational Qualifications, Job Positions, Work Experience and Job Tenure) as predictors of job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. The survey design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of 762 library personnel, notably librarians, para-professionals and library assistants working in the 13 public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. A total enumeration was adopted as the sampling technique to cover 762 library personnel involved in the study. The instrument used to collect data for analysis was questionnaire. The research instrument was validated, to consider its suitability for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed significant relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance ($F_{(6,659)} = 29.262$; $\text{Adj. } R^2 = 0.203$) accounting for 20.3% of the variance in job performance. The paper concluded that the level of job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria is determined by conducive and appealing work environment, staff development practices for library personnel as well as possession of personal variables. Furthermore, significant relationships exist among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that library management should take cognisance of factors such as work environment, staff development and personal variables to improve and sustain the level of job performance of library personnel, regularly develop library personnel on-the-job, particularly, through job rotation of library personnel to expose them, improve their job skills and increase their work experience to get jobs quickly done in any section of the library, federal and state governments as well as public university authorities in Nigeria should improve their funding and budgetary allocations to libraries and upgrade infrastructural facilities necessary for improvement and sustainability of work environment.

Key Words: Job performance, Library personnel, Public universities in the South-south, Nigeria, Personal variables, Staff development, Work environment

Introduction

Globally, no university exists without a library. Every university exists with a standard library as central points around which academic activities revolve. Public university libraries, therefore, exist as integral parts and among the most essential units of those universities that established them. More importantly, the success of public university libraries in performing expected roles rest not only on information resources, facilities and equipment but also on the quality of personnel as manifested in their job performance. It therefore shows that library

personnel play important roles in various departments and units of university libraries facilitating the attainment of library goals and objectives. Library activities in public university libraries by their very nature are performed by a team of library personnel (librarians, para-professionals and library assistants). Library activities, in line with Campbell (1990) believe, are not single action, rather, they are complex activities.

Undoubtedly, library tasks undertaken by library personnel in public universities are crucial to libraries. It is vital not only to library's growth and development, but also for the growth and development of library personnel as well. Library tasks perform by library personnel could also be part of yard stick for accrediting a university during accreditation. Moreover, the viability and credibility of parent institutions are strengthened by tasks perform by library personnel in universities because, when services of university libraries are assessed or evaluated, especially during accreditation, library personnel are equally indirectly assessed and evaluated. However, performance of library personnel is determined by the conduciveness of work environment, staff development practices for personnel and possession of personal variables (educational qualifications, work experience, among others), indicating equipping the library personnel to perform jobs with ultimate aim to achieve quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity and so deserve serious attention.

Work environment of library personnel refers to the conducive nature as well as the architectural design and aesthetics of the workplace in which library personnel operate their jobs, such as the building with adequate lightings, ventilations, adequate workspaces, air quality, air conditioners, fans, comfort, good conveniences with running water, adequate furniture with spaces for ICT facilities/equipment, outlets for ICT facilities, clean environment, among others expected to make library personnel feel comfortable and happy to do their jobs for better outputs. This influences how libraries strive. Furthermore, the work environment of library personnel could involve the social interactions at the workplace, including collaboration and relationships with colleagues, subordinates, supervisors and managers. The interactions could also involve library users. This study concentrates on work environment such as the physical work environment (lightings, ventilations, workspaces, technological facilities) and social work environment (collaboration) among library personnel. Work environment, therefore, involves everything that forms part of library personnel involvement with the work itself.

Another factor that can determine job performance of library personnel in public universities is staff development. Staff development entails education, training and retraining for personnel to acquire job knowledge, job skills, abilities, experience, increase efficiency and improve competencies on the job to contribute to the attainment of organisational goals. Nevertheless, staff training is undertaken merely after the professional certification had been achieved, with intent to sustain competencies, acquire new job skills and meet professional standards of practice. It is a way of engaging in education pursuits with the goal to keep job knowledge and skills up-to-date to practice one's profession. These also improve job prospects of library personnel and help them to achieve certain career objectives making them ready for changes in the profession. It, therefore, adds values to job performance that already exist.

Obviously, library personnel are expected to transform themselves through staff development practices and retraining to be able to meet up with the expectations of the changing roles. There is need for 21st Century personnel to possess skills that make them useful in this age of technology. Staff development must therefore conform to organisations needs so as to fill gaps that always exist in what personnel know, do not know and what they are expected to know. There is no doubt that trained and developed library personnel will be more effective and efficient in library services delivery than those who never had such training experience. A well-grounded and competent personnel is dependable and very useful

to any library. Not having appropriate staff development to acquire the traditional as well as ICT knowledge and skills are hindrances to job performance.

Every library employers and personnel are expected to take staff development very serious especially in this ICT Age for attainment of set goals and objectives. Moreover, well developed and competent library personnel, for example, can be assigned greater responsibilities. They can take over leadership when older personnel retire, they can replace retired colleagues or those promoted to higher positions of greater height or reduce their roles in the organisation, thereby supporting organisation growth and expansion. Library personnel can also fill vacant positions or cover job roles when colleagues are absent on annual leave or sick leave. They can organise training programmes in the department helping library management to save costs of employing experts or consultants from outside to train staff on the job. Therefore, without staff development, library personnel cannot meet demands of its users.

In the same vein, personal variables are another factors that can determine job performance of library personnel in public universities. Personal variables of library personnel are their individual-based and quantifiable personal characteristics that include information such as age, educational qualifications, work experience, positions or ranks, marital status, job tenure, gender (sex), among others. Personal variables by definition are independent variables because they cannot be manipulated. Personal variables are essential in the workplace as they determine the quality of job outputs expected by employers as well as the quality of library personnel to be employed to work in university libraries. They also add value to performance of library personnel. Library personnel who possess good personal variables will be able to give and perform good jobs. They can transmit these characteristics to unskilled and unknowledgeable personnel and unskilled beginners.

More importantly, in organisations such as libraries, emphasis is placed on educational qualifications and work experience as criteria for and during employments of library personnel. Personal variables, such as educational qualifications, work experience, job tenure enhance effective and efficient service delivery to users. Job tenure results from the length of time that library personnel are exposed on the job to learn different jobs that require new skills and different responsibilities. Job tenure, for example, can be job rotation of library personnel. These help personnel to be relevant during deployment to any department and units for job roles. Personal variables help library personnel to get things quickly done than those who do not possess these characteristics. These therefore, have positive influence on the quantity and quality of job outputs of library personnel in universities.

Personal variables do not only help library personnel to perform assigned roles, they also provide libraries with more flexible and capable workforce, enabling library personnel to have better insights into how their organisations work and what strings to pull to get jobs done, reducing work stoppages and backlogs of work when a staff is out on an extended sick leave, annual leave or study leave. They can also fill vacancies and solve problems from employees who had tools but not experience. They can engage in practical as well as theoretical work. Library personnel who possess personal variables can impact on staff improving library services. The organisation can also benefits from personal variables, mostly, educational qualifications, work experience and job tenure, by not having to recruit and train new employees thereby saving money and also maintaining high level of job outputs because they do not lose time.

This therefore means that without educational qualifications, job positions, work experience and job tenure in university libraries in Nigeria, performance of library personnel will be hindered. Thus performing assigned roles below expectation. It is the researchers' suggestion that literature on personal variables and job performance of library personnel in universities in Nigeria are scarce. Therefore, more work should be done in these areas. In the

context of this study, personal variables tested against job performance of library personnel are educational qualifications, job positions, work experience and job tenure.

Considering the importance of library tasks undertaken by library personnel to attain set goals and objectives of public universities in the South-south, Nigeria, yet, these personnel perform their jobs in unfavourable physical and social work environments (poor illumination, ventilations, unstable power supply, inadequate workspaces and facilities), without effective staff development practices for the personnel and adequate attention given to personal variables. These, probably, contribute to difficulties in performing their jobs to expectation and low level of performance. Studies also support the fact that the level of performance in most public university libraries today is low due to job dissatisfaction of personnel (Ajala, 2012; Babalola, 2013; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). These have been a cause for concern. There is the need to investigate some factors that influence tasks perform in public universities especially in the South-south, Nigeria. Consequently, this study investigated work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers observation and preliminary investigations of some public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria revealed that adequate attention has not been given to libraries and library personnel by library management, probably, contributing to the low level of performance as well as difficulties in performing jobs to expectation. Furthermore, interactions with personnel also showed that they perform their jobs in unfavourable physical and social work environments, (poor illumination, ventilations, inadequate workspaces and technological facilities), without staff development practices to expose the personnel to acquire job skills, abilities, increase efficiencies and improve their competencies to achieve library set goals. In the same vein, adequate attention has not been given to personal variables of personnel. This is a problem when one considers the strong need for staff development in an increasingly computerised library services environment in universities in Nigeria.

If management of public university libraries do not mind whether or not adequate work environment, staff development and personal variables are put in place to enable library personnel perform their jobs, these could hinder effective performance contributing to low level of performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that the study was carried out to investigate work environment, staff development and personal variables as factors that determine job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to:

- i. ascertain relationships that exist among work environment, staff development, personal variables (educational qualifications, job positions, work experience and job tenure) and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There are no significant relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Jobs perform by library personnel in public universities are essential for the attainment of library set goals. Job performance is important attribute frequently measured by all types of organisations. It can also be determined and influenced by many factors in the work environment. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) stated that lots of aspects such as: motivation, work environment and leadership influence employees' performance in organisations. Jones (2019) listed traits like knowledge, experience, skills, abilities, awareness, values, motives and needs individuals bring with them to the job. Woods (2021) factors include: personal issues, job suitability, motivation to succeed, working conditions, job training, and performance feedback. Other factors, according to Periyasamy (2020), include: job satisfaction, training and development, employee engagement, goals and expectations, tools and equipment, morale and Company culture, clarifying goals, providing the right tools, listening to employees and gratitude.

In this era of information and communication technologies (ICTs) applications in university libraries, work environment positively determines opportunities to improve and increase the level of performance in carrying out library services. However, performance of library personnel in public universities is determined by the combination of work environment, staff development and personal variables. Work environments of library personnel are major determinants of job performance in university libraries. Work environment of public university libraries and other types of libraries, according to Ogbonna and Okenyi (2014), is one of the important existing phenomenon in the organisation. Udo, Bisong and Offili (2011) asserted that comfortable work environments enable workers to attain high performance. Al-Omari and Okasheh, (2017) stated that the physical library setting maximises performance among employees. Chandrasekar (2011) and Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) affirmed that having the right environmental factors both physical and psychosocial environmental lead to increase in performance.

Furthermore, the social work environment of library personnel, according to a study by Oludeyi (2015), revealed a significant contribution of interpersonal relationship among colleagues to job commitment. This, therefore, shows that there is a relationship between social work environment and performance of library personnel. However, Irons (2006) established that a significant relationship exists between comfortable work environments and job performance. A study of Juhel Company in Emene, Enugu State, Nigeria by Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) identified a relationship between employees' work environments and their performance which was seen as the totality of factors that affect, influence, or determine the operations or performance of library services. All these stimulate creativity and high performance of library personnel.

Nevertheless, studies had established significant relationships between staff development and performance of personnel. Ogunsola (2005) and Aba and Idoko (2016) emphasised on librarians' re-education of themselves as information managers, to sift information, filter invalid information that abounds in many websites, facilitate human-machine interaction, so as to hold their share in the race. In essence, library personnel of the 21st Century, according to Haliso (2007), need ICT skills which complement traditional skills to perform library tasks. Ajidahun (2007), Cobblah and van der Walt (2017), Mamy, Shabbir and Hasan (2020), Saputri, Lorensa, Asriani and Zainurossalamia Za (2020) found that strong relationship exists between employees' training and development and their performance. The results of Mamy, et al. (2020) study indicate that training and development have effect on the performance of employee. Saputri, et al. (2020) study revealed that training and development significantly influence employee performance simultaneously.

The findings of Cobblah and van der Walt (2017) study indicate that a positive correlation exists between the number of times staff benefited from training and development

programmes and their work output in terms of provision of library and information services. Furthermore, staff training programmes contributed to improvement of the knowledge, skills, abilities and experience of library staff and therefore made them efficient and effective in the delivery of library and information services. However, it is the researchers' opinion that training and development have positive and significant effect on employee performance and improve higher quality human resources. Therefore, the more the personnel are developed, the more efficient their level of performance would be. The personnel performance can adversely be hindered without continuous improvement on the job. It is apparent that the development of library personnel is indispensable tool of transforming them and library services to an enviable standard of meeting increasing level of users' demands in university libraries in Nigeria.

In the same vein, personal variables of library personnel also predict better performance and significantly have stronger relationships with performance of personnel. Certainly, for good performance, some professions require personnel with high cognitive ability to fill job vacancies. In the library profession, the Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria recognised the possession of educational qualifications (certificate, diploma, bachelor, master, postgraduate diploma and doctorate degrees in library and information science) before library personnel can work in libraries (Ifidon & Ifidon, 2007). Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014) and Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) among other authors believed that, education facilitates performance in most jobs. A study carried out by Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) revealed that a significant relationship exists between educational qualifications and performance of employees. Ng and Feldman (2009) found that education was positively related to tasks performance. This supports the fact that any staff development practices must conform to organisations needs.

On the other hand, work experience of employees has a strong relationship with employees' performance. This corroborated Oyewole (2013) findings showing that work experience was positively related to personnel performance. According to Ugwu and Ugwu (2017), work experience was found to correlate with tasks performance. A validation study carried out by Sneed, Vivian and D'Costa (2015) examined the relationship between work experience and job performance of dietary managers, their findings showed that quality of work experience scores may be predictive of performance and have implications for employees' selection, performance appraisal, etcetera. This is also in consonance with Schmitt, Cortina, Ingerick, and Wiechmann (2001) Theory of Performance, that experience is another characteristic of can do that individual brings to a job situation which certainly contributes to her competence. Consequently, there are relationships among all these factors, work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was the survey design of correlational type. The study population consists of seven hundred and sixty-two (762) library personnel (librarians, para-professionals and library assistants) working in the thirteen (13) public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. There are 6 federal as well as 7 state public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. A total enumeration was adopted as sampling technique. Instrument used to collect data for analysis was a questionnaire. The research instrument was validated. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by involving librarians at Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan who were not included in the population of the study. A pre-test was conducted to ascertain the content validity. The research instrument was considered reliable and suitable for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Multiple regression at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings

The findings of the study are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Questionnaire administration and response rate

S/N	Name of institution	No. of questionnaire administered	No. of useful questionnaire returned	Response rate (%)
1	Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa State	47	46	97.9
2	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta State	38	30	78.9
3	University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State	126	116	92.0
4	University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State	80	75	93.8
5	University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Rivers States	55	46	83.6
6	University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwalbom State	121	93	76.9
7	Akwalbom State University, Ikot-Akpaden, Mkpato Enin LGA, Akwalbom State	25	23	92.0
8	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State	54	50	92.6
9	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Cross River State	33	33	100
10	Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State	56	50	89.3
11	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	17	16	94.1
12	Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State	78	65	83.3
13	Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	32	23	71.9
	Total	762	666	87.4

Note: N = 666 (87.4%)

Table 1 showed that seven hundred and sixty-two (762) copies of questionnaire were administered to library personnel working in 13 public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. Out of these, six hundred and sixty-six (666) copies were validly completed and retrieved for analysis, which accounted for 87.4% response rate.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho 1: There are no significant relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance was tested using Multiple Regression $p < 0.05$. The result of the null hypothesis tested is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Regression Model of relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std error of the estimate	
1	0.459	0.210	0.203	11.016	
ANOVA					
Source of variance	Square of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	21308.384	6	3551.414	29.262	.000
Residual	79979.325	659	121.365		
Total	101287.709	665			

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$

The result in Table 2 on relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance showed that significant relationships exist among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance ($F_{(6,659)} = 29.262$; $R = 0.459$, $R^2 = 0.210$, $Adj. R^2 = 0.203$; $p < 0.05$) of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. Overall, the model accounted for 20.3% of the variance in job performance by work environment, staff development and personal variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the result, relationships among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance were significant. Furthermore, the combination of work environment, staff development and personal variables significantly influence performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are quite revealing. Based on the findings, factors in the work environment such as work environment, staff development and personal variables have been significantly found to determine and influence performance of library personnel in the South-south, Nigeria. Work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance are interconnected and cannot be treated in isolation. This implied that, if the work environment is conducive, library personnel are well developed to acquire the necessary job knowledge, job skills as well as possess personal variables they would perform their jobs better. The findings corroborated the study of many researchers that many factors in the work environment improve and influence employees' performance (Al-Omori & Okasheh, 2017; Jones, 2019; Periyasamy, 2020; Woods, 2021).

Staff development significantly relate to and influence job performance of library personnel. Lack of appropriate staff development practices for library personnel to improve on traditional as well as ICT skills are hindrances to personnel performance. Ajidahun (2007); Cobblah and van der Walt (2017), Mamy, et al. (2020), Saputri, et al. (2020) found that strong relationship exists between employees' training and development and job performance. Mamy, et al. (2020) study indicate that training and development have effect on the performance of employee. Saputri, et al. (2020) study revealed that training and development significantly influence employee performance simultaneously. Training and development play important role to improve personnel performance and higher quality human resources. It therefore showed that, without continuous improvement of personnel on the job, this can adversely hinder performance of library personnel in public university libraries in Nigeria.

Furthermore, personal variables significantly have a strong relationship with employee performance enhancing better performance and enabling quality services delivery to achieve library goals in universities. This is in line with a validation study carried out by Sneed, Vivian and D'Costa (2015) examining the relationship between work experience and job

performance of dietary managers. Their finding showed that quality of work experience scores may be predictive of performance and have implications for employee selection, performance appraisal, etcetera. Ng and Feldman (2009) study found that education positively relates to tasks performance. Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) study revealed a significant relationship between educational qualifications and performance of employees. Oyewole (2013) findings claimed that work experience was positively related to performance. In the same vein, Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) stated that work experience was found to correlate with tasks performance.

However, it can be concluded that significant relationships exist among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Jobs perform by library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria are essential in the attainment of library goals and objectives. Based on the results of the study, the study concludes that the level of performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria is determined by many factors such as conducive and appealing work environment, staff development opportunities for the library personnel and possession of personal variables.

Furthermore, the study also established that significant relationships exist among work environment, staff development, personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. This, therefore implied that, when these factors are taken together, they significantly determine and influence the performance of library personnel. If these are ignored by management of public university libraries, these could negatively hinder the performance of library personnel. But, if management of public university libraries take cognisance of these factors, these would improve and enhance performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. Library management should take cognisance of factors, such as work environment, staff development and personal variables to improve and sustain the level of performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.
2. Library management should pay adequate attention to personal variables when recruiting and deploying personnel to various departments and units for job roles for improve performance.
3. Library management should regularly develop library personnel. Giving priority and serious attention to on-the-job training, particularly, job rotation of library personnel to expose them and increase their competencies and work experience to get jobs quickly done in any section of the library. Lack of regular staff development may lower performance.
4. It is, therefore, imperative that federal and state governments as well as public university authorities in Nigeria should improve their funding and budgetary allocations to libraries and upgrade infrastructural facilities necessary for improvement and sustainability of work environment, regular staff development and employment of personnel with quality personal variables for enhance performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. This will motivate them to learn more and also work harder in a changed work environment.

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