Information Impact

Organizational Climate Factors in Job Creativity of University Librarians in Anambra State

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Abstract

Libraries are important centers in education and for resource sharing, so, also librarians' important personnel in tertiary institutions. In Nigeria, librarians may not be said to have fulfilled those expected roles to the satisfaction of stakeholders. Many factors could be directly and indirectly responsible; however, the current study focused on librarians' creativity and innovation and the role of organizational climate in the creative process of librarians. Being a survey study, the study utilized correlation design using descriptive statistics and Pearson R statistics to establish the perception of librarians about their organizational climate and the relationship between this perception on their creativity and innovation. The participants were 89 librarians sampled purposively from University librarians in Anambra State. The questionnaires used for data collection was simplifiedadaptation of Coveney (2008) and Organizational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) by Litwin and Stringer (1968). The result was indicative that the perception of organizational climate is low among University librarians in Anambra State but the librarians were relatively high on creativity and innovation. Secondly, there was a significant positive correlation between librarians' perception of organizational climate and creativity and innovation at $r(2, 89) = .68$, $p > .05$ implying that favourable climate to employees helps creative process to thrive. It is recommended that stakeholder should increase their support to University librarians in order to motivate them to perform at the highest level bringing their creativity into the equation.

Keywords

Creativity, innovation, organizational climate, resource sharing, university libraries

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Introduction

Universities are citadels of learning and are adjudged institutions critical of national development. Apart from her teaching and knowledge impacting functions on learners with diverse background, universities provide and house resource and information unit commonly referred to as University library. The University library with the guidance of the librarians provide extended knowledge and teaching to users including the general public especially on teaching texts and empirical researches covering all aspects of human life. This function is paramount to continued enlightenment of students and the general public. Its proper utility and efficiency may well be dependent on the how the University librarians play their roles.

University Librarians are the pivots around which all major and important university library functions revolve (Cruz et al., 2020). This implies that the approach university librarians adopt in directing, guiding and controlling the staff under them is consequential to the pace of progress in their libraries (Sa'ari et al., 2016). That is, if the University librarians control, direct, guide properly; greater effectiveness in the use of the libraries is most likely to be actualized. How efficient and effective University librarians carry out their jobs may be well dependent on their creativity and whether the organizational climate they experience motivate and support them. Akpan-Atata, Oji, and Tom (2014) posit that more than ever before, academic libraries are tasked to be more creative in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century learning environment. This is all the more imperative today as most academic libraries in Nigeria are experiencing low user patronage (Ajayi & Ogunyemi 2011). The ability of these libraries to meet their user communities' needs/expectations depends on the librarians who, as professionals, are charged with the responsibility to come up with new ideas that will birth new products/services. Development and implementation of innovative/creative products/services will go a long way in ensuring that their institutions succeed in meeting their objectives as well as guarantee the future of the academic libraries. This is in view of the fact that librarians as knowledge workers are core to the competitiveness of institutions (Bamgbose & Ladipo, 2017) because of their involvement in the creation, distribution and application of knowledge. There is the need therefore that the organizational climate of these academic libraries is such that supports/encourages innovation/creativity among librarians (Unegbu & Yemisi, 2020).

In view of the above, Dul et al. (2011) observed that while it is true that personal characteristics do play a role in innovation/creativity, there is a relationship between innovation/creativity and organizational climate. In the same vein, Cruz (2020) averred that improving the organizational climate for innovation/creativity can effectively promote problem solving in a company and thereby increase the company's productivity and competitiveness. But, Onuoha et al. (2015) reported that lack of conducive work environment and lack of management interest are among the challenges of promoting innovation/creativity among library and information science professionals (librarians) in Nigeria is contributory to ineffective use of libraries in institutions of higher learning. Given this circumstance, there is need to ascertain organizational climatic factors which are proximal to the creativity of librarians in order to improve library users' experience and the effectiveness of libraries as resource centers and knowledge bank.

Research Questions

In line with the importance of the importance of creativity in the management of libraries, answers will be provided to the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of librarians on their organizational climatein Universities in Anambra State?
2. What is the level of innovation/creativity of librarians in Universities in Anambra State?
3. What is the relationship between organizational climate and creativity and innovation amonglibrarians in Universities in Anambra State ?

Literature **Review**

Climate described in the context of work setting is the work environment and, employees' perceptions of the formal and informal policies, practices and procedures in their organization and how these policies, practices and procedures relate or affect their formal work or aspects of job tasks (Schneider, 2008). Characteristically, organizational climate differs distinctively from psychological climate; when employees within a unit or organization agree on their perceptions of the work context, unit-level or organizational climate is said to exist (Jones & James, 2004; Joyce & Slocum, 2004) whereas psychological climate is individual employee's perception of the same construct. There are three major factors which influence the nature of organizational climate; they are:

i. Organizational structure (referring to perceptions of the extent of organizational constraints, rules, regulations, red tape)

ii. Individual responsibility (referring to the feelings of autonomy of being one's own boss,

iii. Rewards (referring to feelings related to being confident of adequate and appropriate rewards)

Organizational climate is a concept "perceived" by employees. Importantly, it is dependent on a value judgment which can vary greatly from person to person. Organizational climate affects productivity, motivation and employee behavior (Shanker, 2017). Organizations in the 21st century are facing more challenges than ever before. These challenges are not unique to any specific organization, industry or their employees; they affect all organizations regardless of their structure, size or goals. Organizational climate in particular is constantly challenged by changes impacting organizations today (Nair, 2006). To survive and outdo their competitors, organizations are constantly seeking to improve their performance. Authors such as Brown and Leigh (1996) think that organizational climate is becoming more important than ever before because organizations need to ensure that those individuals who add value to the bottom line will want to stay in the organization and will want to continue pouring their effort into their work to the benefit of the organization.For instance, Akor (2014) contended that autocratic leadership style negatively affects job performance of academic among librarians in Benue State. According to Watkin and Hubbard (2003), high-performing organizations have climates with particular measurable characteristics, which have shown how organizational climate can directly account for up to 30% of the variance in key performance measures. This is supported by research that examined the relationship between the way in which employees describe their work environments and the relative performance success of these environments (Wiley & Brooks, 2000). Watkin and Hubbard (2003) contend that climate does make a difference to organizations' performance because 'it indicates how energizing the work environment is for employees'. There is, however, clearly more to an organization's performance than an 'energized employee' or the presence of certain organizational and leadership characteristics: Productivity also depends on the morale which governs discretionary effort such as the willingness to go the extra mile.

Researchers have been interested in understanding how employees' perceptions of the work environment influence their outcome such as: performance

(Amusa et al., 2013), satisfaction (Ademodi & Akintomide, 2015), and morale (Amune, 2015). These studies found that environmental and work factors influence worker productivity and morale. Shanker et al. (2017) contended that an organizational climate that allows a high degree of autonomy and nurtures relationships among peers, supervisors and subordinates results in more satisfied workers. Organizations that are able to create environments that employees perceive as benign and in which they are able to achieve their full potential are seen as a key source of competitive advantage (Cruz et al., 2020). Organizational climate can therefore be regarded as a key variable in successful organizations including Universities and their library management.

Innovation/creativity is imperative for the survival of anyorganization including academic libraries. As the arm of the academic institution that is traditionally charged with the responsibility of selecting, acquiring, organizing and disseminating information resources in varying formats, there is a very serious expectation on the academic library to continuously evolve or re-invent itself to meet the needs of the twenty-first century learning environment .Duderstadt cited in Zhang (2004) succinctly outlinessome factors that are impacting on higher educationto include – financial imperatives, continual growth orneeds for the services provided by colleges and universities,and rapid development of information technology,including computers, telecommunications and networksin the spectrum. Egan (2005) further listed advancingtechnology; a changing environment; changing organizationalstructures or strategies; overcoming competitorsthat improve their products, processes and services; evolvingcustomer desires; and evolving societies. McConnell (2002) noted the effect of some of thesechanges, especially technology, on library service provision.

The author contends that the alarming and rapidpace of change in technologies has brought about a continuingexpansion of knowledge in more sophisticatedformats, resulting in the need for new reference andresearch tools. Ruben (2004) opined that these changescall for academic libraries to devise ways to increaseease of effectiveness, efficiency, access, coordination, and responsiveness in all aspects of our work-academic, curricular, ancillary, and support. To succeed in this, Varlejs (2008) postulated that it is expected that librarians should be flexible and creative enough to keep up with the social, economic, political, educational and technological changes as they affect the profession and their institutions. All this is

against the backdrop that the success of any academic library is measured by the extent to which its resources and servicesmeet the needs of the academic community.While it is true that academic libraries in developingcountries may not be experiencing these changes as rapidly or to the same degree as those in the developed countries, there is no doubt that academic libraries in developing countries are not immune to these challenges and/or expectations. It then means that it is not enough for the libraries in developing countries to be content t oown information resources; rather, they must find innovative/creative ways to ensure not only that the resources irrespective of format reach the users, but also that innovative/creative products/services that can further advance the mission of the academic community from the perspective of the library are originated and implemented.

Creativity or innovation is the process of translating an idea or inventioninto a good or service that creates value (Tokarz, 2019). Also, creativity is simply the ability to make new things orthink of new ideas (Abubakar &Attahir, 2018). Inovasi (2015) observes that creativity is often used interchangeablywith innovation but it is a construct that emphasis new ways of performing tasks and actualizing organization goals although they slightly differ in meaning; while innovation refers to ideageneration, creativity is idea implementation. In agreement, Martins and Terblanche cited in Jantz (2017) say innovation is the implementation ofnew idea to bring about a new service or product (creativity). What is instructive here is that innovation acts asthe fuel that ignites creativity. Therefore, innovation and creativity begin with a perception or gut feeling that thereis a gap in either knowledge or application. It entailsthinking outside the box and freeing the mind to gobeyond the normal/usual with a view to making or comingup with something that meets a need(s) or finding asolution(s) to an already existing problem. In essence,every organization needs innovative/creative minds thatcan deploy themselves to ensuring that new ideas thatcan be useful in addressing already existing problem(s)or which can bring about a perspective that leads to thecreation of something new and useful are generated andimplemented. To reinforce this submission, Mwandosya and Mbise (2020) averred thatthe importance of new ideas cannot be overstated, since ideas and their manifestations as practices and productsare at the core of social change.Thus, having an organizational climate that is supportiveof innovation/creativity is therefore important for all academic libraries. Jantz (2017) contended that workers are the source of original and potentially useful ideas and solutions for a firm's renewal of products, services and

products. Nonetheless, organizational members work within given work environments with a peculiar organizational climate which largely influences their attitudes and behaviours.

Although the concept of organizational climate has no commonly agreed definition, Stringer (2002) views organizational climate as employees' attitudes towards their organization which has a great impact towards their working ways and contributions. Abubakar and Attahir (2018) referred to organizational climate as an intervening variable that affects individual and organizational performancedue to its modifying effects on organizationaland psychological processes. Kissi et al. (2010) positthat employees draw conclusions about what is importantto management mostly from what they observe thanfrom what is said and go on to act in ways they perceive to be important to the organization. It means therefore that managements in organizations send out signals through their organizational rules, procedures and practices and the perception of these signals by the workers represent the organizational climate. Organizational members' perception of the climate invariably influences the way they react to/or do things around the work environment because the climate influences employee motivation.

In their study, Solmaz and Indra (2013) found thatorganizational climate has a significant influence onemployees' creative behaviour. According to the results, among the different dimensions of organizational climate,providing resources was the best predictor of innovation/creativity. Shirazi et al (2014) in their study also found a relationship between organizationalclimate and innovation/creativity. The researchers concluded that a creative organization requires a creative manager who seeks modern insights and creates a culture that motivates staff to be creative. Focusing on the academic library, it implies that librarians' creativity will thrive in an organizational climate with characteristics that support or encourage innovation/creativity. This is because the more positive the organizational climate is, the more staff are motivated to be innovative/creative. In the same vein, where there is a perception of the organizational climate as negative, organizational members experience emotions that ultimately inhibit innovation/creativity.

The implication of this is that management of academic libraries have a responsibility to nurture the pattern of behaviour which they want and which will drive staff members to work in the direction that will bring about the desired organizational result(s) through providing a positive organizational climate. This point is noteworthy because the marked difference between successful and

unsuccessful organizations is the fact that the former have climate and management processes which encourage employee innovation/creativity through a supporting work environment (Ismail 2005). They do this by providing the practicaltools and solutions which employers require to functionoptimally (Dul, et al., 2011).

A number of studies have associated some organizational factors with innovation/creativity. Logan (2012) reports that a meta-analysis conducted in 2007 identifiedkey factors that drive innovation. The strongest factors included interpersonal interaction, intellectual stimulation and challenge. Sundgren et al. (2005) found organizational culture, resource factors and climate of the organization as factors that support creative performance of individuals. Churchill et al., cited in Imran et al (2010), found that perception of the work situation, characteristics of the organization and the nature ofemployees' relationship with co-workers support innovation/creativity. On their part, Cummings and Oldham (1997) mentioned non-controlling and supportive supervisors,goal setting, rewards and freedom to take initiativein one's work. Tokarz (2019) identified some strategies that organizations seeking to promote innovation/creativity can adopt: challenge, freedom, resources, work group features, supervisory encouragement and organizational support. In the view of Tokarz (2019), the factors that are supportive of innovation/creativity are organizational encouragement, supervisory support, autonomy or freedom, and challenging job.

A number of studies have attempted to determinethe factors that pose a challenge to innovation/creativityand ways of supporting it. Looking at the reviewedliterature, it is obvious that very little has been donewith regards to research on librarians' innovation/creativityin Nigerian libraries especially among librarians in Anambra State, thus justifying this study.This study will add to the literature on librarians' innovation/creativity in Nigeria and the findings will beuseful to library managements, librarians and the professionalfield.

Method

The study was a survey and it utilized descriptive and correlation designs in carrying out the inquiry in University libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. The researcher conducted a survey among 89 (38 males and 51 females) librarians in University libraries of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka(NAU), Chukwuemeka Odemegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, Madonna Univeristy Okija and Paul University Awka. The participants were aged 24-53 years with a mean of 37 and standard deviation of 4.35 The librarians cadre begins from assistant librarians at

thebottom of the hierarchy and ends with the position ofuniversity librarian at the top. Two of the researchers involved in the study are professional librarians working in one of the libraries used in this study. The questionnaire used for data collection (details can be seen in the appendix) was a simplified adaptation of Coveney (2008) and Organizational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) by Litwin and Stringer (1968). The fairly high response was achieved. Data collected were analysed with the mean score and presented in tables for clarity. Mean scores were derived from the computation of the individual responses in relation to the weight of the options. A mean score of 2.50 was accepted as the cut-off mean because it is the midpoint score given that the responses were rated on a four-point scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The total of the rating scale is 10, which when divided by 4 gives 2.50 (Anunobi and Udem 2015). Thus, a mean of 3.50 and above was considered very high for creativity, a mean of 3.00–3.49 was considered high, a mean of 2.50–2.99 was considered moderate, while a mean below 2.50 was considered low. The use of these real limits of numbers were used to indicate very high, high, moderate and low in relation to perception of the organizational climate dimension on creativity/ innovation. Mean scores were got from the computation of the individual responses in relation to the weights of the options.

Results

Table 1: Table showing correlation, mean and standard deviation

Construct	R	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Organizational Climate	.68*	77.8	5.6240	89
Creativity/Innovation	.68*	21.5	1.3253	89

Table 1 shows the correlation coefficient between librarians' perception of organizational climate and creativity and innovation depicted as R, participants' mean scores and standard deviation. From the table, it is indicative that the perception of organizational climate is low according to norm of the scale an indicative that the university climate is not supportive to issues regarding library at a mean of score of M = 77.8, SD = 5.62 although librarians creativity/innovation is

high at a mean score of 21.5, SD = 1.33. The relationship between organizational climate and librarians' creativity and innovation was positive and significant at r(2, 89) = .68, p > .05.

Discussion

The result is indicative that whereas librarians' perception of organizational climate is poor indicative that their working environment including policies and procedures are not supportive; however, their creativity and innovation is high from the mean score. This is indicative of the fact that despite the challenges facing library development and management in Universities, the librarians working in these institutional libraries have remained focused and optimistic which may be driving their creative behaviour as means to promote resource sharing and knowledge facilitation. The study further tested the relationship between librarians' perception of organization climate and their creativity and innovation; the finding was indicative that librarians in University libraries in Anambra State perceive their organizational climate to poor and unsupportive. The finding implies that some of the identified factors which are associated with climate of organizations as contended by Abubakar and Attahir (2018) are yet to be taken care of such as funding, motivation/reward, training of staff, socially interactive environment for thriving and psychological capital such as encouragement and recognition are not adequately in place and hence, workers have low perception regarding their organizational climate. The finding is consistent with literature for instance Amune (2015) found that relative merits of employee commitment followed a favourable organizational climate so also did Shanker et al. (2017) who found that innovative behaviour wagered the relationship between organizational climate and organizational performance.

Conclusion

Universities in Anambra State are still lagging behind in enthroning climate that motivate and support librarians to develop their creativity and innovation for the interest of education. This may be as a result of funding challenges which may affect training and retraining of librarians and provision of basis working equipments and ICT facilities. The study concludes that there is need for Universities authorities to take advantage of the creative instincts of the workers especially the librarians to enhance the development of resource sharing and knowledge creation and transmission using the university library as a supportive anchorage unit.

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