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Librarians' Attendance to Conference and Workshops as Correlates of Job Performance in the University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

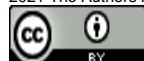
This study examined the librarians' attendance to conferences and workshops as a correlate of job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions guided this study while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational survey method was adopted in the study. The population of the study was 108 librarians. Two sets of questionnaire titled: librarians attendance to conferences and workshops questionnaire (LACWQ) and job performance questionnaire (JPQ) were the instruments used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method to measure librarian attendance to conferences and workshops resulted to the coefficient of 0.697, 0.741 respectively while instrument for job performance resulted to 0.669. The data collected for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) method to answer research questions while t-test analysis was used to test the null hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive but weak relationships between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries, and a non significant relationships between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that library managers should spend resources in sponsoring librarians on conferences that have direct bearing on the particular job librarians perform so that librarians may not end up been develop wrongly.

Keywords

Conference, Workshops, Job Performance, University Libraries

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Introduction

Libraries are keys to every developmental economy. It is the foundation of societal growth. The library develops its environment based on its peculiar and unique services to the readers. The libraries in the universities are called university library. University libraries seem to be the largest academic libraries both in functions, scope, staffing, users served, and the depth of the services rendered. The university library collection consists of books and non-book materials.

Indeed Successful discharge of these services depends almost entirely on the availability of certified librarian. According to the Act establishing librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (Degree No. 12 of 1995) ‘certified librarians are librarians who have the requisite Qualification approved by the body of practice librarianship in Nigeria’. They could also be seen as librarians who possess a minimum qualification of Bachelor of library and information science or non library and information science plus a post graduate diploma, masters and doctoral degree in library and information science. A librarian is a specialist in the management of a library and has the full responsibility to render library services to all the users. Therefore, a librarian is a professionally trained person responsible for the care of library collections and their contents including the selection, processing, and organization of materials and delivery of information, instruction, and loan services to meet the needs of its users. Therefore, a good developed librarian tends to acquire high skills, knowledge and competence for improved productivity and services. There is no gain saying the fact that individual’s skills and techniques acquired through training and development programs are significant determinant of such librarian’s job performance (Abdulkareem, 2011).

Job performance refers to how people perform their job. It is the extent to which the day-to-day work is being carried out. Amusa,(2013) provides a generic definition of job performance as how one carries out the task, duties and responsibility associated with a particular job. The author went further to say that job performance can also be referred to as achievement in terms of goals set. It is also considered as an output of a librarian on the job, measurable in terms of quality and quantity of job performance done. To provide effective and efficient services and to enhance job performance for the benefit of the library clientele, certain developmental programmes such as attendance to conferences and workshops are necessary programmes to attend for effective performance.

Ahuja (2009) defined conference as a face to face or on-line developmental tools used for bringing groups of people together to communicate ideas, policies or procedures through a good presentation and sharing information in a collaborating manner, raising points of debates or discussing issues as an organized plan in which the members seek to develop knowledge

and understanding by obtaining a considerable amount of oral participation. Eckhaus, (2018) added that conferences address varieties of topics in many areas. These conferences are an excellent opportunity to enrich professional knowledge and at the same time to form connection with people from the same field of knowledge and for researchers to present and discuss their work, either at an individual level, group level or organized by a professional body for example, the International Federation of Library Association (IFLA), America Library Association (ALA), and Nigeria Library Association (NLA) Annual Conference / Annual General Meeting is a typical academic conference.

Anderson (2010) defined conference as a large official meeting that usually lasts for a few days and at which people with the same work or interest come together to discuss their views. During conferences, issues bordering on skill acquisition, welfare and survival of the group in a particular work environment are table for discussion with the aim of proffering lasting solutions, and practicable ways of talking the perceived challenges. Participants in conferences are always equipped with new skills or knowledge to be better performers in their work places. They are always organized outside the work domains of participants and are grouped as off the job training methods (Engeton, 2017), Hornby (2013) defined workshop as a period of discussion and practical work on a particular subject in which a group of people share their knowledge and experience. Workshop is an off-the job training method, and as such they are always held in areas outside the work places of participants (Engeton, 2017). Specialists in a chosen or specified field are always drawn to teach participants skills that will make them to be relevant in their work places and in their professional. Workshops share similarities with conferences and seminars, but are more practically oriented. Workshops as a training method infuses practical skills on participants and allow them to perform tasks that were hitherto very difficult for them to perform. Workshops always have practical sessions in between theoretical period designed to assess and evaluate outcome and impact of the workshop on participants.

According to Eke(2011) the difference between a workshop and a conference is the number of attendees involved. A large meeting will usually be called conference, while a smaller is termed to be a workshop. According to Ledden (2013) workshops offer experiences similar to those provided in the workbook by providing answer to certain questions. Some workshops focus on current job performance and development plans while others deals with the broader life and career plans and values. Similarly, Bernadin (2010) explained that most workshops use experimental exercise in a structural, participative group format to educate individuals on how to prepare and follow through on their career strategy for better job performance Workshops help to ensure steady supply of qualified manpower to man different areas of an organization. It equips trainees with the skills required to work very

effectively, thus showing significant relationship between attendance to workshop and employee performance (Engaton, 2017).

Statement of Problem

Stakeholders in information systems and library services have used several approaches as well as professional development programs to advance librarian work performance in the university libraries in south-south, Nigeria. In spite of the series of librarian professional development programs such as conferences and workshops in the university libraries in Nigeria, there are still reported cases of varied levels of performances of librarians even after exposure to such development programs. Consequently, there are many interpretations and sometimes guess work on whether librarian job performance is related to their exposure to professional development programs in their various university libraries in South-South Nigeria. To the best of the researcher's knowledge no study has explored the relative contributions of conferences and workshops, to the job performance of librarians in the university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that this research is designed to determine how librarian conferences and workshops attendances correlate with their job performance in university libraries in south-south, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

- the relationship between librarians attendance to conferences and jobperformance in university Libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.
- the relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.

Research questions

To achieve the above objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- What relationship exists between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria?
- What relationship exists between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study.

- There will be no significant relationship between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.
- There will be no significant relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Attendance to Conferences by librarians as correlate of job performance

According to Eke (2011), one of the objectives of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) is to safeguard and promote the professional interest of librarians which the association has upheld by organizing annual general conference for all Nigeria librarians. This annual event serves as a road-map to acquaint members of new developments in their profession and also add value to what is existing. At annual conferences, various activities such as collaboration with fellow researchers, learning to present papers, networking among colleagues, exchange of ideas in group meetings, learning to make presentations and mentorship are all issues aimed at ensuring professional training and enhancing job performance.

Conferences according to Ifidon (2007) is a means of professional development whether local, national or international, encourage library and librarian professional development, improve relations among librarians, open new horizons in the profession, and helps to recognize the interdependence of knowledge and information. Library and information professionals attend conferences in order to improve on their basic education, gain new concepts and get specializations that are relevant to the needs of the work place.

According to Aidah (2013), conference is training and development method involves presentations by more than one person to an audience. According to the author, the conferences are cost effective as a group of employees are always trained on a particular topic at the same time in large audiences. Explicit made by participants through research and other academic activities are always presented during conferences and seminars, and are criticized by experts in the profession the criticisms are aimed at making the presenter to be stronger and more knowledgeable in the field, thus predisposing them to enhanced job performance. Conferences have proved to be reliable training methods as they become popular among professional groups and associations, thus showing that positive outcomes are always recorded during such professional gatherings.

According to Aidah (2013), it is not easy to ensure that all trainees follow at the same pace during the training sessions and attention may then be shifted to the trainees that seem to understand faster than others. Despite the criticisms that trails conferences and seminars, participants always come back re-skilled and full of new knowledge. Attending conferences whether face to face or E-conferencing according to Anderson, (2010) thus fulfils part of the library responsibility of staff training and development through broadening the attitudes and permitting their exposure to new ideas and development through both formal and informal discussions with other professional colleagues. Carr (2016) reporting on this asserted that when librarians attend conferences, not only will they hear experts speak on the latest issues, but they will also meet with colleagues from other organizations and build career networks. This networking promotes the exchange of information and promotes growth of both individual employees and the organization as a whole and may also improve their professional background and enhance the value of their services to the library. Participation in conferences are usually seen as major contribution to professional development. These developmental processes are used when attitude change is the goal (Damsa, and Ludvigsen, 2016).

Attendance to Workshops by librarians as Correlate of Job-Performance

Eke (2011) defined workshop as a period of discussion and practical work on a particular subject in which a group of people share their knowledge and experience. Workshop is an off-the job training method, and as such they are always held in areas outside the work places of participants (Engeton, 2017). Specialists in a chosen or specified field are always drawn to

teach participants skills that will make them to be relevant in their work places and in their professional (Engeton,2017). Engeton further states that workshops share similarities with conferences and seminars, but are more practically oriented. As such, they are more costly as organizers contend with issues such as procurement of workshops materials, choice of venue of the workshops, hiring of instructors or resource persons and taking other logistics, while participants contend with accommodation and transportation problems. Workshops as a training method infuse practical skills on participants and allow them to perform tasks that were hitherto very difficult for them to perform. Workshops always have practical sessions in between theoretical period designed to assess and evaluate outcome and impact of the workshop on participants.

According to Engeton (2017) the purpose of scheduling workshops at a place other than the job-area is to ensure a peaceful domain to the employees where they can focus on learning without distraction. Another purpose according to Ugwuanyi (2011) is often to broaden career perspectives in the organization while Wening (2016) added that career workshop can help participant learn how to make career decisions, set career goals, create career options, seek career- planning information and the same time build confidence, self-esteem and expertise needed by librarians to effectively manage library resources, equip users with necessary information on library use and assume the place of an information specialist for an enhanced job performance. According to Eke (2011) the difference between a workshop and a conference is the number of attendees involved. A large meeting will usually be called conference, while a smaller is termed to be a workshop. According to Ledden (2013) workshops offer experiences similar to those provided in the workbook by providing answer to certain questions. Some workshops focus on current job performance and development plans while others deals with the broader life and career plans and values. Similarly, Bernadin (2010) explained that most workshops use experimental exercise in a structural, participative group format to educate individuals on how to prepare and follow through on their career strategy for better job performance. Bernadin further emphasizes that workshops are usually conducted off-site and offered as a confidential programme to help individuals access their strengths and weaknesses, values and interests, identify career opportunities, set personal career goals and develop a strategy and action plan that increase job productivity or performance. Workshops help to ensure steady supply of qualified manpower to man different areas of an organization. It equips trainees with the skills required to work very effectively, thus showing significant relationship between attendance to workshop and employee performance (Engaton, 2017).

Methodology

This study examined the librarians' attendance to conferences and workshops as a correlate of job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions guided this study while two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational survey method was adopted in the study. The population of the study was 108 librarians. Two sets of questionnaire titled librarian attendance to conferences and workshops questionnaire (LACWQ) and job performance questionnaire (JPQ) were the instruments used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method to measure librarian attendance to conferences and workshops resulted to the coefficient of 0.697, 0.741 respectively while instrument for job performance resulted to 0.669. The data collected for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment

Correlation (r) method to answer research questions while t-test analysis was used to test the null hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What relationship exists between librarians' attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria?

The result relating to this research question is presented on Table 1

Table 1: Summary of the relationship between librarians' attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria

N	Correlation coefficient (r)	Remark
92	0.067	Weak relationship

The result from Table 1 shows the summary of the relationship between librarians' attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. It result shows a positive but weak relationship between librarians' attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria ($r=0.067$, $n=92$).

Research question 2: What relationship exists between librarians' attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria?

The result relating to this research question is presented on Table 2

Table 2: Summary of the relationship between librarians' attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria

N	Correlation coefficient (r)	Remark
92	0.155	Weak relationship

The result from Table 2 shows the summary of the relationship between librarians' attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. It result shows a positive but weak relationship between librarians' attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria ($r=0.155$, $n=92$).

Hypothesis Testing:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.

The result relating to this hypothesis is presented on Table 3:

Table 3: Summary of t-test for the significance of the relationship between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria

Correlation coefficient (r)	N	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	p-value	Decision
0.082	92	90	0.05	0.817	1.980	.524	Not significant

The result from Table 3 shows the summary of t-test for the significance of the relationship between librarians' attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. The calculated t-value is 0.817 whereas the t-critical is 1.980, the probability value is .524. The t-calculated is less than the t-critical and the p-value is greater than .05, then we can conclude that there is no significant relationship between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. This implies that the null hypothesis one is retained at .05 level of significance ($0.817 < 1.980$ or $p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.

The result relating to this hypothesis is presented on Table 4:

Table 4: Summary of t-test for the significance of the relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria

Correlation coefficient (r)	N	df	α	t-cal	t-crit	p-value	Decision
0.155	92	90	0.05	1.908	1.980	.141	Not significant

The result from Table 4 shows the summary of t-test for the significance of the relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. The calculated t-value is 1.908 whereas the t-critical is 1.980, the probability value is .141. The t-calculated is less than the t-critical and the p-value is greater than .05, then we can conclude that there is no significant relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. This implies that the null hypothesis two is retained at .05 level of significance ($1.908 < 1.980$ or $p > 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

Librarians' Attendance to Conference and Job Performance

The result of data analysis in respect of research question one shows the relationship that exists between attendance of conference and librarian job performance in university libraries in the south-south, Nigeria ($r=0.067$, $n=92$). the finding of the study revealed a positive but very weak relationship between librarians attendance to conferences and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. This result means that even though there is a positive relationship between librarian attendance to conference and job performance, it is very weak. This findings is in agreement with the findings of Saka and Haruna(2013) who found that a positive correlation exists between librarian conference and job performance of staff in the branch libraries. Also, Adetun and Gbemi (2016) which found that lack of information about conferences is 83.72% high, and that librarians preferred attending conferences outside their organization

Finally, contrary to the above findings, the result of null hypothesis one revealed no significant relationship between librarians attendance of conferences

and job performance in university libraries in the South-South Nigeria. Thus the null hypothesis was accepted. This finding agreed with Khana (2009) who points that in spite of the perceived benefits of conferences, it lack sponsorship, lack of interest and lack of awareness are problems facing conference attendance among workers. This may imply that librarians who attend conferences may not have enough benefits for them reflect on their job performance as envisaged. This may be because the conferences librarians attend have no direct bearing on the nature of job librarians perform.

Librarians' Attendance to Workshops and Job Performance

The data analysis results in research question two shows there is a positive but weak relationship between librarians attendance to workshops and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria ($r=0.155$, $n=92$). This result supports the finding of Ekpenyong, Akpan and Imo (2016) that there is a positive and small relationship between the frequency of attendance to workshops and librarians job performance which implies a high job performance by the librarians. Similarly, Jerome (2010) found that there is a positive relationship between librarians' attendance to workshops and job performance. However, this may be deduced from study that workshops attendance by librarians is not a matter of choice but a must if they want to remain relevant and up-to date in their profession and job performance. However, analysis carried out on the hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant relationship between librarians attendance to workshop and job performance in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria. This null hypothesis was accepted. This findings disagree with the findings of Grip (2019) that showed that librarians workshops attendance increase the manager's job performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The major aspect of this study was to determine librarians' professional development as a correlate of job performance in university libraries .Professional development is a concept that is propelled by certain factors that interacts among the key professional development programmes indicators such as: conferences, workshops, in-service training, internal job rotation, mentoring and courses on computer skills. They all significantly correlate with job performance of librarians in university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria.

Library managers should therefore spend resources in sponsoring librarians on conferences that have direct bearing on the particular job librarians perform. Librarians may not end up been develop wrongly.

The Library managers should before sending librarians to attend any workshop, the theme of the workshop should be the one that will help librarians get more mentally and practically prepared to confront problems that may come from performing their responsibilities. This will encourage them to properly adapt to any form of changes in the work or profession.

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