

# WORK ENVIRONMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY PERSONNEL IN UNIVERSITIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

BY

<sup>1</sup>Solanke, P. A., <sup>2</sup>Akinsanya, A. O. and <sup>1</sup>Kuye, O. O.

<sup>1</sup>Departments of Architecture, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, Ogun State,  
Nigeria.

Salawu Abiola Library, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Corresponding author: [peter.solanke@yahoo.com](mailto:peter.solanke@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

Job performance of library personnel is germane as it determines the success of university library services. However, previous researches have shown that university library personnel have low degree of job performance. This could emanate from a variety of reasons; including work environment. Satisfactory physical work environment like compatible office design can enhance job performance. Conversely, poorly designed work environment like poor office layout can cause lack of motivation, common office accidents and inattentiveness to duties; all these may inhibit optimal job performance if not curtailed. Therefore, this study explored the impact of work environment on job performance of library personnel in Federal university of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo university libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria. This study aims to examine the influence of work environment on job performance of library personnel in Federal university of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo university libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria. This study investigated the influence of work environment on job performance of library personnel through the review of literature from related empirical articles and the theory of work adjustment. The research revealed that well designed work environment can enhance personnel job performance and the reverse is the case with poor work environment. It was concluded that job performance of library personnel is low and that work environment has a relative influence on their job performance. This study is significant because there is a dearth of literature on the influence of work environment on job performance of personnel in university libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria. Conducive, compatible and well-designed work environment was therefore recommended among others to foster improved job performance, goal achievement and overall national development.

**Keywords:** *Job performance, Work environment, Library personnel, Office layout*

## INTRODUCTION

University libraries are the information hubs established by the universities to provide information to their community of users. Effective library use has been the focus of universities as this will assist in achieving their vision and mission. Universities desire that their services of effective teaching, learning and research materialise in order to place people in their communities in high positions in all walks of life, ascertain literacy, economic growth and overall societal freedom, peace and unity. This can only be attained via the dissemination of right information by the information processor which is the library.

The library is a reserved area of learning where information for diverse purposes such as educational, economic growth, recreational, health, family, peace and security are carefully chosen, acquired, processed, disseminated and preserved to get information needs of the users met. The library accommodates the library staff, the users, furniture and fittings, information materials such as books, journals, magazines etcetera. Among all that the library accommodates, the human aspect is the most germane: the library personnel and the users. The two are important because the former is to serve the latter. The library needs to promote the mandate of their institution's teaching, learning and research by choosing, procuring, handling, and circulating pertinent information inside and outside their environment (Unegbu, Babalola and Basahuwa, 2020). The university libraries could diligently and judiciously accomplish the above through their job performance.

Nwokike, Obinna and Unegbu (2019) claimed that job performance is a range of employee's activities that is considered to align with organisational goals and that can be examined and graded as his own accomplishment. These authors further described job performance as the rate at which an individual accomplishes his given responsibilities following the prescribed job description. From this, job performance can be described as the total functions of library personnel that are evaluated to conform to library goals and objectives. Library personnel are the librarians and the support staff like library officers, computer analysts and other workers in the library. They are the power behind the processing, availability and accessibility of current and relevant materials to the right users at the right time in the right proportion and format. Their job performance is reflected in their services such as reference services, document delivery services (DDS), inter library loan, selective dissemination of information (SDI), circulation services amongst others. These library personnel work with enormous cognition and expertise to achieve optimal performance and are therefore required to practice in a comfortable work environment in order to serve their users effectively and to maintain sustainability.

Satyvendra (2019) defined work environment as the location where people work to achieve organisational goals. He explained further that work environment comprises tools, systems, structures, and procedures that have effects on the job performance of employees which may be negative or positive. Work environment can also be defined as the place of work in which employees carry out their official day to day activities for the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. Work environment such as library environment contains the totality of the physical layout, design and interaction that exist in the space, lighting, colour, texture, nature of the equipment, furniture, fittings, wiring, the work characteristics and condition, library personnel and the users to whom library services are rendered. Architectural aspects include the physical layout, furnishings, and equipment, whereas visual physical components include colour, texture, and lighting. The interior environment is shaped by these two constituents with environmental factors (Sufar, Talib and Hambali, 2012). If the environment is convenient, comfortable and harmonious, library services will be done with ease and efficiency which will increase productivity and promote use. Desmoda (2016) disclosed that the physical work environment including office space, lighting, variety, air, music, noise level affected personnel efficiency.

On the other hand, if the environment is horrible and not habitable, work will be done haphazardly and the users too will reduce their patronage. This is because poorly designed office layout, low rate of employees' interaction, bad floor level of office, unnecessary noise, unsuitable lighting, incompatible furniture and poor ventilation can cause dissatisfaction and adversely affect employee performance if not thoughtfully and professionally attended to. Mustafa and Ali (2019) opined that poorly designed workplace can be the resultant effect of

deprived satisfaction, poor performance and high personnel turnover rate. Previous studies have revealed that job performance among library personnel is low. Akor (2014) claimed that librarians displayed low job performance. Somvir (2012) discovered that clients condemn the decrease in quick administrations conveyed by a few academic librarians who appear to be careless and barely handle work related issues effectively.

Low degree of job performance might be anticipated by the work environment of library personnel. This low degree of job performance of library personnel might deter the accomplishment of the purpose of establishing the library because an inadequately planned and designed work environment can cause demotivation, common office mishaps and negligence towards duties. This is why Duru and Shimawua (2017) reiterated that a poor work environment can have a negative impact on the health of library personnel, reducing emotions of excitement, passion, and success at work. All these may inhibit optimal job performance if not curtailed. The objective of this study is to examine the influence of work environment on job performance of library personnel in Federal university of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo university libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria.

## **Methods**

This study investigated the influence of work environment on job performance of library personnel through the review of literature from related empirical articles and the theory of work adjustment. For instance, the study of Okoye, *et al.* (2018) described job performance as actions and behaviours which improve the social environment for the enhancement of in-role which cumulates into increased efficiency. This corroborates the opinion of Matsuo (2019) who claimed that, job performance, being a concept that is influenced by many factors is achieved when a personnel can effectively accomplished his appointed work roles with minimum constraints. A decent physical work environment is one in which employees can work in a safe, healthy, and comfortable manner (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). Job performance deals with the overall functions and accomplishment of the goals expected from the employees and if an organisation such as the library desires optimal performance, library personnel must be accommodated in a well organised and compactible environment that will enable them to work, learn and achieve satisfaction without inconveniences or stress.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Theory of Work Adjustment**

Theory of work adjustment is sometimes referred to as the Person–Environment Correspondence Theory. It was developed by René Dawis, George England and Lloyd Lofquist from the University of Minnesota in 1964. Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) describes workers relationship to his or her work environment. It regards work as a collaborative and reciprocal process between a worker and his work environment where each worker is committed to work requirements that suit his work environment and which can lead to the attainment of individual financial, social, and psychological needs.

The TWA framework includes two models: (a) a prediction model that indicates the match between a person and its environment, and (b) an interaction model that expresses the current interaction practice between a person and his environment. However, both the person and the environment are germane in comprehending the TWA framework, commonly, most research use an individual differences method, in which qualities of the person are expressively measured in relation to his work environment. The theory of work adjustment is relevant in this study because the satisfaction of both the library personnel and their work environment

depends on the rate at which their requirements are met. If the rate of meeting work environment needs increases, the library personnel satisfaction, proficiency and commitment will also increase and this can enhance motivation towards optimal job performance with the likelihood of lack of employees' turnover.

## **Results**

From the reviewed literature and the experience of the researchers it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between work environment and job performance of library personnel and that work environment has corresponding influence on job performance of library personnel. Literature has revealed low level of job performance in some university libraries (Akor, 2014) and since the university libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria are similar to them, it can be deduced that their job performance is low. As regards the relationship and influence of work environment on job performance, the study of Kukiqi (2017) revealed that the physical work environment has a significant influence on employee satisfaction. He declared further that lighting; temperature and the presence of conditioning plants generate comfort and job satisfaction for the personnel. This agrees with the study of Hansen, *et al.* (2017) that ascertained that the physical work environment, whether positive or negative, has the tendency of affecting personnel productivity.

In another study, Amusa, *et al.* (2014) lamented that almost all human activities and professions are characterised with frustrations including library and information services. The authors used a survey research method to examine the incidence of occupational frustration variables amongst 253 librarians in thirteen public universities in South-West Nigeria. The study confirmed the incidence of occupational frustration variables in this order: inability to reach the peak of their career, infrastructural challenges and poor working environment, stress, poor motivation, absence of participating management, lack of further education prospects, poor staffing and lack of open communication. In responding to the effects of these challenges; low productivity ranked higher and others follow in this order: absenteeism, inability to work fully, lateness, emotional instability, low interest and lack of concentration on assigned duties. This substantiates the investigation of Eberendu, *et al.* (2018) who guaranteed that aspects of work environment like furniture, plan, ventilation, commotion, light, manager, support, work area, correspondence, fire security measures influence personnel efficiency.

## **Discussion**

Work environment has a corresponding influence on the job performance of library personnel. Considering the theory of work adjustment and the empirical studies reviewed in the study, the provision of well-designed work environment can enhance effectiveness of library personnel while the inability of the library leaders to provide required and serene work environment can cause dissatisfaction, office mishap and nonchalance among library personnel. This is why Akinyele (2007) proclaimed that conducive work environment stimulates the cheerfulness, diligence and commitment of employees towards higher workplace effectiveness. Another study also revealed that conducive physical working environment can lessen absenteeism, and enhance job performance (Chandrasekar, 2011; Hammed and Amjad, 2009) and if the environment is not conducive then absenteeism and other bad attitude may be displayed by the library personnel. This eventually leads to poor job performance. It is now the onus of the library leaders to ascertain the provision of conducive work environment so that the personnel can heighten their efforts and generate high cognition towards work in order to achieve optimal job performance.

## CONCLUSION

Work environment is an important construct in human resource management. Ascertaining a comfortable, safe and compactible physical work environment such as designing office environment with appropriate office layout, furniture and equipment, temperature, ventilation, lighting, air quality, pleasurable ventilation and prevention of avoidable noise can energise personnel abilities and potentials towards improved job performance whereas poorly designed physical factors as mentioned above can lead to lack of motivation, ill health, common office accidents, and inattentiveness to duties. All these issues must be attended to and corrected as they can impede productivity and thereby deter optimal job performance of library personnel especially in Federal university of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo universities libraries in Ogun state, Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Library managers should organise library environment based on compactible relationship between library personnel and their users, the equipment and the physical office environment to enhance good health, safety and optimal job performance.
2. Physical library environment should be designed with appropriate office layout, furniture and equipment, temperature, ventilation, lighting, air quality, pleasurable ventilation and prevention of avoidable noise to boost personnel abilities and potentials towards improved job performance.

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