

JOB PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN SELECTED FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The research investigated the job performance on academic librarians working in federal university libraries in the North-West region of Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design and focused on a total population of 221 academic librarians across 3 federal university libraries in the North-West region of Nigeria. In order to ensure comprehensive coverage and eliminate potential bias, the researcher chose to use a total enumeration or census method without employing any sampling technique. This decision was based on the manageable size of the population and the researcher's intention to achieve generalizability of the findings. Data was collected using a questionnaire as the research instrument, with a total of 221 questionnaires distributed and 176 (88.8%) returned by the respondents and utilized for data analysis. The questionnaire's validity and reliability were ensured through validation and a reliability test, resulting in Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.83 to 0.95 for the constructs. The collected data underwent analysis using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated a high level of job performance among academic librarians in the selected federal university libraries in the North-West region of Nigeria, with an Average Weighted Mean of 3.30 on a 4-point scale. Job performance was assessed through three indicators: declarative knowledge, motivation, and procedural knowledge. Based on the results, the study concluded that job performance contributes to the functioning of academic librarians in federal universities situated in the North-West region of Nigeria. Consequently, it was recommended that library management in public university libraries in the North-West region of Nigeria should take proactive measures to sustain and support the high level of job performance exhibited by academic librarians.

Keywords: Academic Librarians, Job performance, Librarians, University Library

Introduction

The primary aim of all organizations is to fulfil certain goals and accomplish the mission and vision established by that organization. The fulfilment of these goals lies in the contributions of the human resources in the organization, who are the employees. Employees in an organization play a significant role in accomplishing the goals and objectives through their level of job performance (Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara, 2021). These authors further stated that no organization can succeed without the input of its employees. Hence, every institution needs an effective and efficient employee to accomplish organizational goals and objectives and this can be achieved through the performance of the employees on the job. It has become common knowledge that the importance of employees in an organization cannot be over emphasised in that, they are the ones who drive the productivity of the organization. They are central to the performance of an organization and no organization will have the capacity to move forward without taking a recognising look at their input.

The concept of job performance describes how an employee meets set organizational goals through his or her abilities. This is because job performance is a major consideration in an organization. The concept of job performance further explains how an employee accomplishes different tasks assigned to him by their organization (Chinemerem, Uloma & Evans, 2021). This means it consists of work-related behaviours that can be considered at individual and organizational levels. This is because job performance plays an important role in the attainment of the success of both the employer and the employee in the organisation. Harikaran (2015) notes that job performance is the net effect of a person's effort as modified by his or her abilities and role perceptions. This implies that job performance is the discharge of statutory duties based on workers' fields of specialization which is geared towards the attainment of the institutional goals and objectives. The work effort that employees contribute on the job also refers to the amount of energy used in performing the task.

In institutions of higher learning, libraries have contributed a great deal towards the growth of their parent institutions through research, community service and providing resources for teaching (Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara 2021). These contributions in education are also directed toward the development of the country. Apart from the direct contribution of supporting the teaching and the community service agenda of an institution, libraries provide countless services ranging from reference services, and user services to students and staff

who are the largest beneficiaries of the services in an academic institution as well as the general community. Libraries are essential contributors to knowledge generation and serve a wide spectrum of knowledge seekers. Libraries support the curriculum and research initiative of their parent institutions. Libraries, also provide a number of services that are directed towards making the users satisfied.

Librarians provide a lot of services to the academic community which reflects the kind of job they carry out. They perform jobs that are technical in nature such as cataloguing and classification, acquisition and use services such as referencing and response to users queries. They also conduct educational services and selective dissemination of information to both students, teachers and general users of the library (Jerry & Ifeka, 2020). Librarians, preserve intellectual content by maintaining information in different formats. Other services that the librarian provides range from granting access to materials for physically impaired users to training them on how to use the digital materials in the library through soft skills. Librarians try to meet the social and educational needs of users in their respective communities and drive community literacy campaigns through information literacy programs. Therefore, for any library to provide effective and efficient services, the level of job performance of the employees who are librarians must be high.

The performance of librarians can be viewed in terms of competencies and skills librarians should possess and demonstrate in discharging their duties. Librarian's competencies and skills will include practical skills, cognitive abilities and other general skills. The competencies and ability required are directed toward the job performed by the librarian. Therefore, the library as an organisation places emphasis on job performance in order to encourage effectiveness and efficiency to fulfil obligations and tasks in the library. Many organizations including libraries anticipate meeting their stated objectives through effective performance on the job (Victoria, 2020). According to Nwokike (2018), the expectations of librarians' job performance are predicated on their work-related behaviours.

There are several indicators used to measure the job performance in the literature. For instance, Na'angap (2012) stated that job performance of librarians is measured by knowledge, skills, motivation and ability to carry out the specific job role assigned to a librarian. Campbell (1990) provided some indicators such as procedural knowledge, declarative knowledge and motivation. These indicators serve as direct determinants of librarians' job performance when applied to the library environment. Eyina, Moko, and Onuodu (2019) explain that procedural knowledge is a knowledge that illustrates how to accomplish a task. This type of knowledge can be obtained through rules in which instructions are given. The

knowledge tends to clarify how a particular activity or job task can be accomplished. In procedural knowledge, emphasis is placed on how to solve a given problem based on laid down procedures. It is established also, that procedural knowledge is derived from an instructional manual or through interviewing an expert on how to accomplish a task. It is the knowledge that explains how to perform an action within the framework of clear procedures. Procedural knowledge is also referred to as imperative knowledge (Campbell, 1990). Procedural knowledge is the knowledge that demonstrates how to achieve a task. This type of knowledge is gained through rules in which instructions are performed step-by-step. Procedural knowledge is knowledge that is composed of how to do things and guides both physical activities and cognitive skills. In the library environment, procedural knowledge is gained by learning through the experience of other librarians or senior colleagues and guides them on how to carry out various library functions. These imply that Librarians should have knowledge of facts, principles and procedures of their job.

Declarative knowledge is called open knowledge, the scholar underscores that declarative knowledge starts with declarative actions which then paves the way for procedural processes. It explains how things are, their attributes and their relationships. Declarative knowledge is knowledge that is real. It is also a knowledge that is easily expressed. Declarative knowledge involves knowing about the real fact of something which means that it is conscious; it can often be verbalized. Declarative knowledge is useful for knowledge communication and reasoning. The declarative knowledge enables librarians to be proficient in the various tasks to be performed in the library (Anderson 1995).

Motivation is the final indicator of job performance and it is the expression of intensity, persistence, quality and direction of ongoing behaviour which enables individuals carry out a particular task. Motivation is a human psychological attribute that contributes to the work input and output of individuals in an organization (Okeoghene, 2019). The motivation of individuals in an organization according to Ramzan, Sajjad and Ghazanfar (2013), is a significant predictor of job performance. Motivation decreases employee's intention to quit their job. In the context of the library, motivation enables librarians to carry out their job with a great degree of enthusiasm. It is an established fact that no organisation can achieve its objectives without workers' who are well motivated. Hence, motivation enables librarians to carry out their job. It prompts librarians to acquire adequate knowledge that will guide them in performing their job. Librarians' motivation to perform can come from the relationship with their co-workers and leadership. In this regard, librarians' job performance will be measured using these indicators Procedural knowledge, Declarative and Motivation. These indicators can serve as direct determinants of the librarian's job

performance when applied to the library environment. This is because the librarian must have the necessary skills and be motivated in order to perform his or her job (Okeoghene, 2019).

Many university libraries try to meet their stated objectives through effective performance on the job (Okolocha, Akam & Uchegara 2021). The extent to which the university library achieves its objectives depends on the job performance of librarians. Studies have shown that the performance of librarians on the job especially those in federal university system has so far been poor. Ekene, Agbo and Onyekweodiri, (2016); Ikon and Itau, (2016) empirically reported that librarians in public university libraries are yet to meet the expectations of their stakeholders which amounts to the fact that they are not performing well. Librarians in public libraries are supposed to be proactive by being effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties both technically and otherwise. However, observation by this researcher in federal university libraries in the North-West Nigeria shows that the level of job performance seems to be poor. The poor performance of the librarian is shown from the fact that users complain that librarians are not always at their duty post. Users feel that librarians do not respond adequately to their complaints. Consequently, they abstain from using the library.

In the context of the library, job performance is conceptualized by Yaya, Opeke and Onuoha (2016) to mean the level of positive attitude that a librarian displays when performing his/her duties in the library. According to the scholars, the concept also means the rate at which an employee's needs are met in relation to the job performed. In the University library, it is important that both librarians and subordinate employees who directly provide information services to users are satisfied with their jobs. This is because when librarians feel that their needs are met by the management of University libraries, their level of performance will greatly improve. This study however will follow the assumptions expressed by Herzberg (1960). Herzberg labelled the factors that produce job performance as motivators. His analysis indicates that these factors are directly related to job content, reflecting a need for personal fulfilment. Motivators include achievement, recognition of work itself, responsible advancement and personal growth. On the other hand, factors that lead to job frustration are labelled as hygiene. Based on this dichotomy, one can assume that only motivators produce job performance whereas, hygiene merely prevents job frustration (Njoku, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Librarians are regarded as integral and essential components of the library institution due to their pivotal role in providing necessary services. The seamless

continuation of research activities in universities heavily relies on well-functioning libraries and librarians. As pointed out by Ekere (2016) and Okolacha, Akam & Uchehara (2020), university libraries have the responsibility to cater to the entire spectrum of knowledge offered by the university. Consequently, librarians play a vital role in acquiring, categorizing, preserving, and organizing library materials. They also introduce access control methods and provide personalized services that help users interpret content effectively.

However, despite the pivotal role played by libraries and librarians, scholars such as Onyekweodiri (2016), Ikon and Itua (2018), Owubiko (2014) as cited in Okoye (2019) have indicated that the job performance of librarians is lacking. Researcher observed that libraries in the North-West Nigeria region are not performing up to expectations. This is evident from user complaints about irregular librarian presence and responsiveness. Users perceive that librarians are not adequately addressing their concerns, leading to reduced usage of the library by students and lecturers.

In light of these circumstances, understanding the underlying factors contributing to this low job performance is crucial in order to rectify the issue. Consequently, the study aims to thoroughly investigate the impact of job performance among academic librarians in selected federal university libraries located in the North-West region of Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of job performance of academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-West Nigeria. The specific objective is to:

1. determine the level of job performance of academic librarians in selected federal university libraries in North-West, Nigeria.

Methodology

A survey research design was chosen for this study because the methodology was quantitative in nature. The focal population comprises 221 academic librarians hailing from selected federal university libraries in the North-West region of Nigeria. This population encapsulates the entire academic librarian workforce of three federal universities situated in the North-West, namely Ahmadu Bello University Library in Zaria, Bayero University in Kano, and Federal University Dutsinma in Katsina State. The selection of these three federal universities was driven by their prominence in the North-West region, making them representative of the academic landscape. By choosing these institutions, we ensure that the collected data captures a diverse range of experiences and

practices. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the academic librarian population in the chosen federal university libraries, a total enumeration approach was judiciously employed. This method involves the inclusion of every single academic librarian within the selected universities, as it aligns with the research objective of thoroughness and provides an accurate depiction of the entire population. The data collection process hinged on a designed questionnaire, selected as the research instrument. This questionnaire was carefully crafted to solicit insights into various aspects of the academic librarians' experiences and practices. Upon data collection, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 was enlisted for the data analysis process. This robust software was chosen due to its effectiveness in handling and analyzing quantitative data. In the analysis phase, descriptive statistics played a pivotal role. Tools such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were employed to present the collected data in an organized and interpretable manner. These statistics were especially beneficial in addressing the research questions, offering clear insights into the prevailing trends and patterns within the librarian population.

Results and Discussion

This section reports the findings on the level of job performance of academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-West Nigeria.

Research Question One: What is the level of job performance of academic librarians in federal university libraries in North-West Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of job performance of librarians in public university libraries

Statements	Very High level (4)	High level (3)	Low level (2)	Very Low level (1)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Please tick (✓) the option that best describes your level of job performance in the library.						
Declarative knowledge					3.35	0.40
I work better when I have an interest in the task	109(45.6%)	116(48.6%)	14(5.8%)		3.40	0.60
I understand my responsibilities in the library	106(44.7%)	119(50.2%)	09(3.9%)	03(1.2%)	3.39	0.62
You are good at organizing information in the library	96(40.2%)	132(55.6%)	10(4.2%)		3.36	0.56
Their control over the functionality of your unit	88(36.8%)	119(49.9%)	31(12.9%)	01(0.4%)	3.32	0.62

in the library						
I carry out my job task in the library	93(39.0%)	129(54.4%)	13(5.4%)	03(1.2%)	3.31	0.63
Motivation					3.29	0.48
I use automated library tools for a specific purpose	97(40.9%)	129(54.4%)	11(4.7%)		3.36	0.57
I try to use strategies that have worked in the past to solve library work challenges	94(39.5%)	118(49.5%)	25(10.6%)	01(0.4%)	3.28	0.67
I know how to use online public access catalogue	74(31.3%)	149(62.5%)	15(6.2%)		3.25	0.56
I work best when you know something about the library task	54(22.7%)	168(70.7%)	14(5.8%)	02(0.8%)	3.15	0.54
Procedural knowledge					3.26	0.37
I desire to serve the library's user community	125(52.6%)	103(43.2%)	10(4.2%)		3.48	0.58
I carry out tasks assigned in the library	113(47.5%)	108(45.5%)	16(6.6%)	01(0.4%)	3.40	0.63
I take pride in providing online reference services	100(42.1%)	120(50.5%)	15(6.2%)	03(1.2%)	3.34	0.65
Am happy with your work environment	85(35.9%)	119(50.2%)	27(11.2%)	06(2.7%)	3.19	0.74
am interested to attend library conferences	73(30.5%)	107(44.8%)	48(20.1%)	11(4.6%)	3.01	0.83
Librarians' performance (Average Weighted Mean = 3.30)						

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2022

Decision Rule: 1.0-1.49 = Very Low Level; 1.50-2.49 = Low Level; 2.50-3.49 = High Level; 3.50-4.0 = Very High Level. Criteria mean of 2.5 is calculated as follows: $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$.

The result on Table 1 showed that, the level of academic librarians' job performance in selected federal university libraries in North-West, Nigeria was high (Average Weighted Mean = 3.30), on a scale of 4. Job performance was

measured by three indicators (declarative knowledge, motivation and procedural knowledge). Additional details from the analysis depict that declarative knowledge ($\bar{x}=3.35$), motivation ($\bar{x}=3.29$) and procedural knowledge ($\bar{x}=3.26$) indicates high levels. The implication of this analysis is that the federal university libraries in North-West, Nigeria performed highly in all areas of job indicators, most especially in the area of declarative knowledge. The high level of job performance of the library employees could be based on the reason that the federal university libraries recorded high scores in areas such as showing interest in the task (3.58), display good information organization skills (3.36), utilize automated library tools for work (3.36), display strong desire to serve the library's user community (3.48) and carry out tasks assigned in the library (3.40). In essence, the implication of these findings is that the academic librarians in the selected federal university libraries of the North-West Nigeria region have demonstrated commendable job performance across multiple facets of their roles. The observed high performance can be attributed to their effective utilization of skills, tools, and a strong dedication to their responsibilities, ultimately contributing to the efficient and effective operation of the libraries in this region.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined job performance among academic librarians operating within selected federal university libraries situated in North-West Nigeria. In this section, the researcher present the outcomes derived from the investigation and provide a comprehensive discussion of these findings in comparison with prior research in the field. The primary research inquiries were crafted with the purpose of uncovering the effect of job performance among academic librarians deployed in selected federal university libraries located in the North-West region of Nigeria. Through a systematic examination of this subject, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of librarians' effectiveness and its implications within the unique context of federal university libraries in North-West Nigeria. The findings revealed that the level of job performance of librarians in selected federal university libraries in North-West, Nigeria was high on a scale of 4. This findings supports Yaya (2019) who stated that good job performance mirrors the ability to contribute through their works leading to the behavioral achievement that is in accordance with the goals of the company (university). In support of this finding, Japheth (2021) concluded that organizations or institutions need highly performing people to meet their goals, deliver the products and services they specialized in, and achieve their competitive advantage. This finding also corroborates Ishandar et al. (2019) who found out that employees' performance is determined by job stress, motivation and communication factors. Also in agreement with this finding, Linda (2020) revealed that majority of the librarians perform their jobs to a high extent; the

relationship between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is high, positive and significant; the relationship between the democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians was also high, positive and significant. However, this present finding disagreed with Ndenje-Sichalwe (2011) who revealed that, the level of librarian services was rated as low, librarians were not sufficiently prepared and the nonappearance of particular spending plans apportioned to library.

Conclusion

This research was undertaken with the primary objective of assessing the job performance level of academic librarians within the North-West region of Nigeria. The study was driven by the need to comprehensively understand the extent to which academic librarians effectively fulfill their roles. Through systematic analysis, the research successfully determined diverse indicators that gauge the job performance of academic librarians in this specific geographical context. The investigation yielded a significant finding: the job performance level of academic librarians within the selected public university libraries in North-West Nigeria was identified as notably high, scoring favorably on a 4-point scale. This outcome accentuates the pivotal role that these librarians play in the academic ecosystem and underscores their efficacy in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The implications of this finding are paramount. The robust level of job performance witnessed among academic librarians in these public university libraries highlights the importance of sustaining the indicators that contribute to this success. Specifically, indicators such as Declarative Knowledge, Motivation, and Procedural Knowledge should be embraced and continuously integrated into the operational framework of these libraries. Doing so will undoubtedly ensure the enduring effectiveness of librarians in their roles. In conclusion, the research's findings serve as a call to action for multiple stakeholders to collectively uphold the standards of job performance exhibited by academic librarians. By doing so, a robust and thriving academic environment can be fostered, ultimately benefitting not only the librarians themselves but the entire academic community.

Recommendations

The results of this study reverberate across various stakeholders within the academic landscape. Academic librarians, university management, LIS schools, the National Universities Commission (NUC), and even governmental bodies bear a shared responsibility in the wake of these findings. To address the challenges and leverage the positive outcomes identified, the following recommendation is put forth:

- 1- Given the evidence pointing towards a high level of job performance among librarians in federal university libraries within the North-West region of Nigeria, it is paramount to sustain and reinforce these areas of excellence. By continuously nurturing and prioritizing Declarative Knowledge, Motivation, and Procedural Knowledge, the job performance of library personnel can be consistently maintained.

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