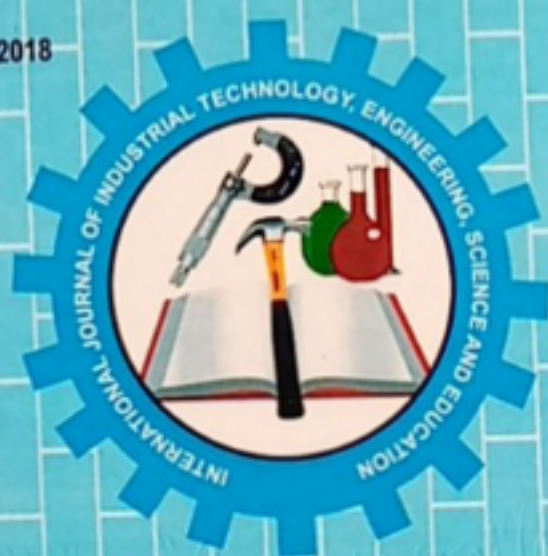


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Communication Patterns as Factors of Job Performance of Staff in Academic Libraries in Niger State

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Abstract

This study investigated communication patterns as factors of job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State. The study aimed at determining the communication patterns as factors of job performance of staff in academic libraries, in Niger State. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Survey research design was used with the target population of 355 staff in the 14 institutions of higher learning. Total population was used for the study because the population is small and manageable. The communication patterns on job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State questionnaire was designed, validated and administered on the entire staff in the academic libraries. Response rate showed that 260 copies of the questionnaire were filled and returned in usable form. Descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation) to answer research questions while respectively PPMC was used to test the two Null hypotheses. Result of the study showed that the librarians provided avenues for in-service training like workshops, conferences, and seminars to staff. The librarians were accommodating, easy to deal with and easy to be contacted. The librarians were democratic, they consult with their subordinates to get their opinions before taking major decisions. The study recommends that head librarians should delegate responsibilities and provide avenues for trainings through workshops, conferences and seminars in libraries where these are not practiced. Adequate fund should be allocated to academic libraries in Niger State enable them procure library materials and tools for effective job performance. The academic libraries in Niger State should encourage free flow of communication both; vertical and horizontal as it enables subordinates to perform duties efficiently.

Keyword: Communication pattern, Job performance, Academic libraries, Niger State.

Introduction

Communication has a vital component, whether pros or cons are an inseparable piece of life and also it has an important role on all activities aimed at gaining organizational objectives. Attention has been given to the study of organizational communication because of its significance to organizational effectiveness. For instance, it has been found that effective communication improves job satisfaction, and which in turn improves productivity, (Ada, Alver, and Fatma, 2008). Research has also shown that communication improves employee job performance, while poor communication results in low employee commitment to the organization (Goris, 2007) The existence, stability and productivity of an academic library depend on effective communication. This therefore means that productivity or otherwise in any academic library is a function of the degree of communication.

The concept of communication, according to Adeosun cited in Saka and Madu (2011) is the process of information exchange between two or more individuals in an attempt by one or more of them to change the behaviour of the other Guided by

this definition, one can say that communication is one of the motivational factors since individuals will make attempt to change the behavior of others to ensure productivity. The elements of communication process include the source, the message, channel, receiver, effects and feedback. Communication is the process whereby one conveys ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings, sentiments, beliefs, or impressions to others. It is a means by which one sends and receives information. It should be noted however, that communication could be vertical or horizontal. Vertical communication could either be downward or upward communication, while horizontal communication is also known as interpersonal communication. Downward communication is the transferring or sending of message or information from the superior officer (s), or top management to the middle and lower cadre of workers, i.e. from executive chairman to senior and junior workers in an organization. Upward communication is the reverse of downward communication. The interpersonal communication is the exchange of message or information among the workers in organization of equal status or in the same profession.

Communication is sharing our feelings, ideas and opinions with others. These can be intellectual, personal, spoken or written in nature. We live in groups and man is invariably a social animal. There is a need for every library to function effectively and efficiently. This is why organizational communication is an indispensable requirement for the good health and success of any organization. Quality Communication can be directly related to employees' job satisfaction, motivation and performance. Communication factors are commonly identified as important causes of and contributors to failures or success.

Bikson and Gutek Cited in Verma *et al* (2013) concluded that poor communication leads failures in a library. "Communication is fundamental to library work". Further, with the fast pace of changes in the libraries. There is the need for effective communication between superiors, subordinates and users. Communication is one of the important variables, held responsible for the rise and fall, success and failure, progress and regression of any organization. Hence, an ideal communication climate is a must in an organization.

Job performance is the discharge of task, duties and responsibilities associated with a particular job. It is also considered as an output of a staff on the job, measurable in terms of quality and quantity of job performed or done. Oduwole cited in Amusa *et al* (2013) gave the following performance indicators: effectiveness, efficiency, profits, value, innovation, creativity, work relationships, job skill, decision-making, communication. Shadare and Hammed (2009), while also commenting on job performance, proposed the following parameters to measure performance: quantity and quality, speed and accuracy, creativity and innovation, risk taking and skills for future development. On the other hand, job performance is regarded as how well an employee is able to dispatch his/her duties to the specified organization. Setting and clearly communicating performance standards and expectations, observing and providing feedback, and conducting appraisals enable you to achieve the best results through managing employee performance.

Austin and Borman (2005), as cited in Saka and Salman (2013), regarded job performance "as that aspect of work behaviour domain that is of relevance to job and the organization's objectives". Job performance varies from organization to organization. For example, jobs performed in bank include: receiving and payment of cash to customers, balancing of accounts, management of bank records, etc. Jobs performed in library include

cataloging and classification of materials, provision of reference services, charging and discharging of library materials to users, etc.

Despite the numerous services provided by academic libraries in Niger State, several staff in academic libraries in Niger State are performing below expectations in regards to service delivery. Could this be as a result of poor communication patterns? This article therefore seek to investigate communication patterns as factors influencing job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State.

Statement of the Research Problem

The use of appropriate communication patterns helps to motivate, encourage and make employees perform expected duties to the best of their abilities. Under this situation, library staff obey orders and carry out their duties according to expectations. Consequently, the objectives for which the academic libraries were established could be achieved effectively. The communication patterns adopted by the head libraries could therefore contribute significantly to the smooth running of academic libraries and attainment of institutional objectives.

A preliminary investigation carried out by this researcher showed that most of the staff of academic libraries in Niger State were not performing their duties according to expectations. For example, newly acquired materials were not processed for immediate consultation by users; catalogue cards were improperly filed and books not properly arranged on shelves in such a way that they could be easily accessed and utilised. Poor communication affects staff performance especially when a new method of performing duties is introduced, and workers are not adequately informed of the new trend it will affect their job performance. When an organization introduced a new ideas that will improve organizational performance, staff need to be informed of the new development to enable them perform effectively.

From the above analysis, the question is what could be responsible for this low or poor performance on the part of the library staff. Could it be that they are not adequately or properly supervised by the head librarians? Or could it be as a result of the communication patterns adopted by the heads of academic libraries? The answers to these questions constitute an information gap. In order to fill the gap, this study therefore, examined the communication patterns as factors of job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to determine communication patterns as factors of job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State. Specifically, the study was designed to:

1. Identify the nature of communication patterns adopted by the head librarians in academic libraries in Niger State.
2. Identify the effects of communication patterns on the job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State
3. Identify the problems militating against effective job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the nature of communication patterns adopted by the head librarians in academic libraries in Niger State?
2. What are the effects of communication pattern on the job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State?
3. What are the problems militating against effective job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State?

Hypothesis

Ho. There is no significant relationship between communication pattern and job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State.

Literature Review

According to Widhiastuti (2012) everyone is always in communication, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status or ethnic background, because human beings have the ability to communicate with each other in their way and also communication tools. With communication, someone can interact and socialize. libraries needs communication to streamline their tasks. Communication in the library as formal communication is the sending process and receiving all the library's messages through formal and informal group in the library.

Although the basic process of communication is similar in many different contexts, one unique feature of organizations has a profound impact on the communication process – namely, its structure (Greenberg & Baron, 2011). Organizations often are structured in ways that dictate the communication patterns that exist. Given this phenomenon, we may ask: How is the communication process affected by the structure of

an organization? Effective communication also entails an understanding of the nuances of organizational operations as well as the organizational culture (Summers, Humphrey and Ferris, 2012).

Downward Communication; Traditional views of the communication process in library organizations have been dominated by downward communication flows. Such flows transmit information from higher to lower levels of the library organization. Head librarians from central office administrators to building-level administrators, communicate downward to group members through speeches, messages in library bulletins, and library procedure handbooks etc.

Job performance, according to Friedlander cited in Adenike (2011) is that behaviour which a particular organization condones and probably rewards. Oduwol cited in oyewole (2013) equally provides a generic definition of job performance as how one carries out the task, duties and responsibilities associated with a particular job. The author shed more light by stating that job performance can also be referred to as achievements in terms of goals set. It is also considered as an output of a staff on the job, measurable in terms of quality and quantity of job performed or done. This implies that there is a level of job performance that is expected by every organization from its employees. This also includes academic libraries that are more or less established to provide services primarily to the academic community where they are located. Library personnel's routine jobs involve selecting, acquiring, organizing, disseminating among others. The quality of library services is hinged on the level of personnel job performance and has been the concern of all stakeholders.

One may also want to agree with this line of argument because job performance could be due to good monitoring and supervision and not necessarily as a result of job satisfaction. Putman (2010) views job satisfaction and performance from a two-dimensional model. In the model, job satisfaction is seen as a combination of three elements: task satisfaction, employment satisfaction and market satisfaction. Task satisfaction comes from performing the task required of the job. Employment satisfaction consists of elements such as personnel policies, benefits, career opportunities, work environment, style of management among others. Market satisfaction is comprised of forces external to the organization that affect the individual's job. In looking for a new way to look at job performance

versus job satisfaction of personnel in workplaces the author started with a very basic view by comparing the satisfaction and performance of a specific task. The result of the study showed that task satisfaction is strongly influenced by a person's aptitude. Task satisfaction is said to exude any outside influences on the individual's total satisfaction. On the other hand Lopez cited in Garcez (2006) and Oyewole (2013) claims that self-esteem moderate's job satisfaction-job performance relationship. This by implication means that there could be a direct relationship between the two variables under review.

Research Methodology

Survey research design was used with the adoption of entire population of 355, constituting heads of academic libraries, librarians and library officers in the 14 tertiary institutions in Niger State. There was no need for sampling as the population is manageable (Ibrahim, 2013)

Four points rating scale and structure questionnaire was used. The instrument tagged Communication Patterns as Factors of Job Performance of Staff in Academic Libraries (CPFJPSAL) was used in data collection. The questionnaire was subjected to validity after which reliability was ensured by administering 20 copies of questionnaires. The reliability coefficient was obtained showing that the instrument was reliable and can be used for data collection 0.71.

Results and Discussions

Out of 355 copies of questionnaire administered, 260 copies were filled and found usable, which constitute 73% response rate.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of communication pattern adopted by the head librarians in academic libraries in Niger State?
2. What are the effects of communication pattern on job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State?

Table 1: Responses on the Effects of Communication Patterns on Job Performance of staff in Academic Libraries in Niger State

STATEMENTS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Remark
Ideas communicated from the top management level enable subordinates to perform job better	52 (20.0)	198 (76.2)	4 (1.5)	6 (2.3)	3.14	0.538	Agree
Free flow of communication from the librarian enables subordinates to perform professional duties better	106 (40.8)	149 (57.3)	3 (1.2)	2 (0.8)	3.5	1.853	Agree
I do my job well because the librarians communicates professional matters to me.	80 (30.8)	112 (43.1)	47 (18.1)	21 (8.1)	2.97	0.902	Agree
Ideas communicated from the librarian to the subordinate through internet allow for quick job performance.	15 (5.6)	58 (22.3)	175 (67.3)	12 (4.6)	2.29	0.645	Disagree
The librarian sent important messages on job rotation to lower cadre of staff regularly and this improves performance.	69 (25.9)	168 (63.2)	23 (8.6)	6 (2.3)	3.18	0.569	Agree
Latest information on library services are communicated down to lower cadre of staff thereby improving job performance.	71 (27.3)	127 (48.8)	57 (21.9)	5 (1.9)	3.02	0.746	Agree
The librarian communicates to the lower cadre through the intermediate staff, and increases job performance.	35 (13.5)	125 (48.1)	77 (29.6)	23 (8.8)	2.66	0.82	Agree

Note: The figures in parentheses are the percentages of the respondents

The Table 1 presents the responses of the academic librarians on the effects of communication patterns on job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State. From the table, the mean responses of 3.14, 3.50, 2.97, 3.18, 3.02 and 2.66 respectively with combined percentages of 96.2, 98.1, 73.9, 89.1, 86.1 and 61.6 for strongly agreed and agreed for the same set of statements indicated that majority of the respondents agreed with the

statements. However, the mean response of 2.29 and combined percentages of 71.9 for disagreed and strongly disagreed indicated that quite a large number of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Research Question 3. What are the problems militating against effective job performance of staff in the academic libraries in Niger State?

Table 2: Responses of staff in academic libraries in Niger State on the Problems affecting Job Performance of staff in Academic Libraries in Niger State

STATEMENTS	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Remark
Poor funding for procurement of library materials	162 (62.3)	96 (36.9)	1 (0.4)	1 (0.4)	3.61	0.519	Agree
Head librarian not consulting other staff on major issues confronting the library	54 (20.8)	206 (79.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.21	0.406	Agree
Lack of free flow of communication from the head librarian and his subordinates	57 (21.9)	196 (75.4)	6 (2.3)	1 (0.4)	3.19	0.472	Agree
Head librarian not delegating responsibilities to library staff	94 (36.2)	161 (61.9)	5 (1.9)	0 (0)	3.34	0.514	Agree
Inadequate knowledge/skills affect job performance of staff in the library	67 (25.8)	186 (71.5)	6 (2.3)	1 (0.4)	3.23	0.496	Agree
Autocratic leadership style could affect staff job performance in academic library	38 (14.6)	119 (45.8)	78 (30.0)	25 (9.6)	2.65	0.845	Agree

Note: The figures in parentheses are the percentages of the respondents

The Table 2 Presents responses of the library staff on the possible problems militating against job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State. Poor funding with a means score of 3.61 was a major problem affecting job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State. The lowest mean score of 2.25 was discovered from autocratic leadership style. From the table the mean responses

of 3.61, 3.21, 3.19, 3.34, 3.23 and 2.65 respectively with combined percentages of 99.2, 100, 97.3, 98.1, 97.3 and 60.4 for strongly agreed and agreed for the same set of statements indicated that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements.

Hypothesis

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between communication pattern and job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State.

Responses of respondents on relationship between Communication Pattern on Job Performance of staff in Academic Libraries in Niger State

Variables	No. of Samples	Mean	STD	Correlation	Sign. Level (p)
Communication patterns	260	20.7500	3.1713		
Job performance	260	12.0577	0.9589	0.205**	0.001

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The table above shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of the responses of respondents on the relationship between communication patterns on job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State. From the table, it can be seen that there is significant relationship between communication patterns (mean = 20.7500) and job performance (mean = 12.0577) at 0.05 level of significance (Correlation = 0.205; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis two that said there is no relationship between communications patterns of Head librarian and job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State is rejected. Hence there was significant relationship between communication patterns of Head librarians and job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State.

Discussion of Results

The findings of the effect of communication patterns on the job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State revealed that free flow of communication from the librarians enabled subordinates to perform professional duties better. If there is free flow of communication be it vertical and horizontal communication in the library, the staff will be duly informed on the developments as it affects the operations of the libraries, thereby increasing their performance and meeting the goals of the libraries. If there is communication breakdown, it will also affect the staff and their job negatively. The staff are supposed to be informed appropriately as it affects changes in their duties. When there is effective communication in an organization, it brings about mutual relationship. This is similar to the findings of Asamu (2014) who studied the impact of communication on workers' performance in selected organizations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The results of his findings revealed that effective communication creates mutual understanding between management and workers which helped in building genuine relationship among both parties in the organizations.

The findings on the inhibiting factors to job performance of staff in academic libraries in Niger State revealed poor funding for procurement of library materials. Poor funding of the libraries by either the government, state/federal or the parent organizations which has resulted in the lack of materials, tools and equipment which can help librarians to carry out their professional duties effectively and efficiently. The lack of these tools and equipment has an adverse effect on the day to day running of the libraries. This is in agreement with Itunu, Omeluzor, Imam and Amadi (2013) who studied training of library assistants in academic library: A study of Babcock University Library,

Ileishan, Nigeria. Their findings revealed that inadequate funding is one of the problems militating against training in academic libraries. Abba and Dawha (2009) in their study of personnel training needs also identified inadequate funds as one of the problems militating against training of librarians.

From the result of the findings, librarians in academic libraries in Niger State adopting democratic leadership styles, there is effective, efficient and an improved job performance it can be deduced that for any organization or institution to strive, there should be room for staff development by in-service training, workshops and seminars which could go a long way to improve the service delivery and efficiency of the staff. The level of job performance does not only increase but would be efficient and effective.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The head librarians in academic libraries in Niger State should encourage free flow of communication both vertically and horizontally as it enable subordinates to perform duties better.
2. Adequate fund should be allocated to academic libraries in Niger State for them to be able to procure library materials and tools for effective job performance

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