

A STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR INFLUENCING JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate how workplace environment influence the job performance of librarians in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The study formulated two objectives and some responding research questions as well as two null hypothesis. It adopted a descriptive survey design and target population of 173 professional library staff from the six federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The study adopted the entire population of librarians. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. One hundred and seventy-three (173) copies of the questionnaires were distributed and one hundred and sixty-six (166) questionnaires were returned; representing a return rate of 95.5%. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency tables and mean scores. The decision rule for research questions was based on whether the mean score value was lower than or equal to and above the criterion mean value of 2.50 for either rejection or acceptance. The findings of the study revealed that the respondents agreed that conducive working environment influence the job performance of librarians and also agreed, workplace environment has a correlation index r level of 0.642 as it affects job performance of librarians. Therefore, the null hypotheses have been rejected indicating that working environment positively affects job performance of librarians in Federal Universities Libraries in North Central Nigeria. The study recommended that there should be conducive working environment. The study also revealed that there are many problems which negatively affect the job performance of librarians which should be looked into and should be solved once and for all by the management of Federal Universities. This is to allow librarians who are willing to give their best in terms of job performance to do so for the general development of Federal University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

Keywords: *Librarians, University libraries, Work environment and Job performance*

Introduction

Tertiary institutions represent the educational level following the completion of a school providing a secondary education. Tertiary institutions include universities as well as other institutions of higher learning. A University is an institution where students study for degrees and where academic research is done (Iwu, 2011). Work environment could be seen as the physical, social, psychological and technological conditions that are found in the work places that impart on the job performance of librarians. This impact could be directly or indirectly, and environment could be internal or external. Environmental factors include social interaction, power supply, physical facilities, lighting level, motivation, etc (Babalola, 2012). The work place environment can impede or enhance the productivity of librarians whose jobs require comfortable, conducive, and congenial environments. The environment is man's immediate surrounding which he manipulates for his existence. Wrongful manipulation introduces hazards that makes the environment unsafe and impede employee's performance. The workplace entails an environment in which the employee performs his work (Ajala, 2013). While an effective workplace is an environment where results can be achieved as expected by management (Mike, 2010). Physical environment affect how employees in an organization interact, perform tasks, and are led. Physical environment as an aspect of the workplace environment has directly affected the human sense and subtly changed interpersonal interactions and thus employees' commitment (Ajala, 2012). This is so because the characteristics of a room or a place of meeting for a group have consequences regarding employee's commitment and satisfaction level. The workplace environment is the most critical factor in keeping an employee committed in today's business world to his duties.

A widely accepted assumption is that better workplace environment motivates employees and produces better results. Gyekye (2015) indicates that environmental conditions affect employee safety perceptions which impact upon employee commitment. An improved working environment may result in a reduction in the number of complaints and absenteeism and an increase in productivity. The indoor environment has the biggest effect on employee performance in relation to job stress and job dissatisfaction. In the twenty-first century, institutions are taking a more strategic approach to environmental management by making them more conducive in order to enhance their performance through improving the performance level of the employees.

Statement of the Problem

Both the internal and surrounding environment of library building where librarians carry out their tasks forms an integral aspect of library management. For academic libraries to achieve maximum performance in terms of providing adequate and current information resources to staff and students, library management is expected to give adequate attention to workplace environment. A situation whereby library staff are not given conducive environment to work, they would not be able to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. The need for the conducive working environment of librarians is paramount and also a way of motivation and better job performance. Conducive working environment of librarians contribute to the realization of library strategic objectives. Good working environment will enhance their career development. Preliminary investigations carried out by the researchers in some of these institutions seem to suggest that librarians perform their duties below expectation. One wonders what factors are responsible for this poor job performance on the part of librarians. It is on the backdrop that the researcher intends to find out a study of environmental factor influencing the job performance of librarians in federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the influences of work environment on librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges affecting workplace environment of librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria?

Literature Review

Many scholars have attempted conceptualizing the workplace environment. It can be defined in its simplest form as the settings, situations, conditions and circumstances under which people work. It is further elaborated by Oyintola, Abiodun and Ajani (2013), as a very broad category that encompasses the physical setting (e.g., heat, noise, equipment etc.), characteristics of the job itself (e.g. workload, task complexity), broader organizational features (e.g. culture, history) and even aspects of the extra organizational setting. It means that workplace environment is the sum of the interrelationship that exists among the employees and the employers and the environment in which the employees work which includes the physical/technical, the human and the organizational environment.

Yusuf and Metiboba, (2012), defined workplace environment as the composition of three major sub-environments which include the physical/technical environment, the human environment and the organizational environment. According to them physical workplace environment refers to tools, equipment, technological infrastructure and other physical or technical elements of the workplace. The human environment includes the peers, others with whom employees relate, team and work groups, interactional issues, the leadership and management. The human environment can be interpreted as the network of formal and informal interaction among colleagues; teams as well as boss-subordinate relationship that exist within the framework of organizations. Such interaction (especially the informal interaction), presumably, provides avenue for dissemination of information and knowledge as well as cross-fertilization of ideas among employees. The third type of workplace environment is organizational environment.

According to Palvalin (2017) A physical work environment can cause a person to fit or misfit in the environment of the workplace. A physical work environment can also be known as an ergonomic workplace. He emphasizes that physical workplace environment is the environment where human beings are fit with their job. This physical work environment might include the light, ventilation and also temperature. Amir (2010), asserts

that, a physical workplace is an area in an organization that is being arranged so that the goal of the company could be achieved. The two main elements in the physical workplace environment are the office layout plan and the office comfort. Oyintola, Abiodun and Ajani (2013) opine that the modern work physical environment is characterized by technology; computers and machines as well as general furniture and furnishings. To achieve high levels of employee performance, organizations must ensure that the physical environment is conducive to organizational needs facilitating interaction and privacy, formality and informality, functionality and cross-disciplinarily. Consequently, the physical environment is a tool that can be leveraged both to improve business results and employee well-being (Paul, 2010).

According to Amir (2010), the workplace is an arranged area which is provided by the company in order to achieve its goal. An arranged area can be described as the layout of a work space which suits the nature of the job or task that is to be performed. It can have an office layout with cubicles, desks, chairs and cabinets or just a work table with a wall fitted with all types of hand tools which suits a workshop. The right type of working environment is needed in order to attract users to feel comfortable and this would enable them to work effectively. Ajala (2012), claims that an environment is the immediate surroundings of a user which is manipulated for their existence or use. Hence, a workplace gives an environment to the employee to perform a given task.

Workplace environment consciously involves the process of ensuring quality of life, improving the degree of satisfaction derived from the work itself, providing opportunities for growth, creating safe and healthy workplaces, increasing creative and critical use of work system initiatives leading to workers effectiveness (Salau, 2017). Kohun (2012) defined work environments as the forces that are currently and continually influencing performance, motivation and employment relationship. Work environment comprises a total network of inter-relationship existing among the stakeholders and the environment in which they operate. Hope et al., (2017) posited that work environments impact not only the commitment, satisfaction, aptitude, and performance but also have long-term effect on employees' health and employment continuity. Interestingly, work environment focuses on working hours, working space, equipment and facilities which are components of physical work environment (Salau, 2017) compensation packages, training, job security, job enrichment, organizational culture and change, staffing functions aliening with work system, promotion, among others (Kohun, 2012). All of these serve as basis for attaining maximum productivity. Workplace environment significantly contribute to increased staff performance (Hafiza et al., 2011). Over the last decades, physical work environment and work system have become complex due to the changes in several factors such as the social environment, information technology and work processes (Hashim and Mahmood, 2011). Hope et al., (2017). Workplace environment could be seen as the physical, social, psychological and technological conditions that are found in the work places that impart the job performance of librarians. This impact could be directly or indirectly, and environment could be internal or external. Environmental factors include social interaction, power supply, physical facilities, lighting level, motivation, etc. (Babalola, 2012). The work place or environment can impede or enhance the productivity of librarians whose jobs require comfortable, conducive, and congenial environments.

According to Agba, Ogaboh and Mboto (2013) job performance refers to task accomplished by individual employee; it is how well a worker accomplishes a given task in the library. Job performance is also measured by quality, transparent, fair and adequate standards of satisfaction. It is the total effect of workers output as defined by traits, training, staff development, role perception, abilities and other conditions of service. Staff performance is the fundamental element of any library and the most important factor for the success of the academic library and its performance. It is true that most of the libraries are dependent on its employees, but one or two employees cannot change the library's future. In the view of Sabir, Iqbal, Rehman, Shah and Yameen (2012) the organization's performance is the shared and combined effort of all of its employees. Performance is the key multi character factor intended to attain outcomes which has a major connection with planned objectives of the library.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study. A total of 174 librarians from 7 federal Universities in North Central Nigeria formed the target population of the study. However, since the population

is not large and it is manageable, the researchers used the whole population for the study. Bernard (2012) supported this idea by asserting that if a population of a study is less than two hundred (200), the entire population should be used for the study. Questionnaires was the instrument used for data collection. A total of 174 copies of questionnaire were drafted and distributed out which 166 were returned and found usable. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation (SD).

Results

Research Question One: What are the effects of workplace environment on librarians’ job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: The effects of workplace environment on librarians’ job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.

Key to the table: SA=strongly agreed, A=Agreed, D=Disagreed, SD=strongly disagreed

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
	Improve in my professional practice.	69	58	14	25	3.030
	Contribute to the overall development of the library	59	56	25	26	2.892
	Ability to work with co-workers.	70	50	30	16	3.048
	Punctuality at work.	66	63	24	13	3.096
	Ability to attend promptly to request from the clients.	64	62	14	26	2.988
6	Improvement in my communication skills.	64	61	24	17	3.036
7	Minimum requirement for promotion i.e. research.	64	56	24	22	2.976
8	Help librarians to reach their potentials.	67	61	23	15	3.090
Total Mean						3.019

Standard/decision Mean = 2.500

Concerning the effects of work environment on librarians’ job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. From Table 1 Item 1 which has a mean of 3.030 indicating that the respondents agreed that work environment has improved their professional practice. Furthermore item 2 have a mean of 2.892 indicating that the respondents agreed that work environment contribute to the overall development of the library. Also, item 3 has a mean of 3.048 showing that the respondents agreed that work environment has influence their ability to work with co-workers. Item 4 which has a mean of 3.096 indicating that librarians agreed that work environment has affect their punctuality at work. Subsequently, item 5 has a mean of 2.988 indicating that the respondents agreed that work environment has improved their ability to attend promptly to request from the clients. Similarly, item 6 which has a mean of 3.036 showing that librarians agreed that work environment has led to the improvement in their communication skills. Furthermore item 7 has a mean of 2.976 which indicated that librarians have agreed that work environment has helped in achieving minimum requirement for promotion i.e., research. Item 8 has a mean of 3.090 clearly indicating that the respondents agreed that work environment helped librarians to reach their potentials. The findings therefore agreed with the 4-point likert scale which state that mean score above 2.5 mark is positive (agreed).

Research Two: The challenges of workplace environment on librarians’ job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria

Key to the table: SA=strongly agreed, A=Agreed, D=Disagreed, SD=strongly disagreed

Table 2:

S/No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN
1	Low performance of employees	60	60	20	26	2.928

2	Absenteeism by employees	69	61	30	6	3.163
3	Labour turnover from employees	70	50	28	18	3.036
4	Sabotage (like pilfering, image laundering, bribery and corruption) by employees	72	48	26	20	3.036
5	Uncertainty about the future of career management by many staff	66	67	9	24	3.054
6	Lack of complete senior management commitment and support	65	55	23	23	2.976
7	Poor organizational climate	68	52	21	25	2.982
8	Inadequate funding to support career development programmes	88	42	20	16	3.217
9	Lack of awareness on career development programmes	50	50	50	16	2.807
10	Unwillingness by University librarians to train their staff for future development	70	40	26	30	2.904
11	Inadequate salary	100	30	30	6	3.349
12	Accumulated promotion	90	35	35	6	3.259
13	Low interest/concentration in the assigned duties	80	31	27	28	2.982
14	Emotional instability	75	25	30	36	2.837
Total Mean						3.037

Standard/decision Mean = 2.500

Table 2 depicts the challenges of workplace environment affecting librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. Item 1 which has a mean of 2.928 indicating that the respondents agreed that one of the challenge is low performance of employees. Item 2 has a mean of 3.163 indicating that the respondents agreed that among the challenge is absenteeism by employees. Item 3 which has a mean of 3.036 indicating that the respondents agreed that among the challenge also is labour turnover from employees. Item 4 has a mean of 3.036 showing that respondents agreed that challenge such as Sabotage (like pilfering, image laundering, bribery and corruption) by employees. Item 5 has a mean of 3.054 indicating agreement that among the challenge include uncertainty about the future of career management by many staff. Item 6 which has a mean of 2.976 indicating that the respondents agreed that challenge also includes lack of complete senior management commitment and support. Item 7 has a mean of 2.982 indicating that the respondents agreed that among the problem is poor organizational climate. Item 8 which has a mean of 3.217 clearly indicating that the respondents are in agreement that one of the major challenge is inadequate funding to support career development programmes. Item 9 has a mean of 2.807 indicating that the respondents agreed that lack of awareness on career development programmes is also a challenge. Item 10 which has a mean of 2.904 indicating that the respondents agreed that one of the challenge is unwillingness by university librarians to train their staff for future development. Item 11 has a mean of 3.349 indicating that the respondents agreed that inadequate salary is also a problem. Item 12 which has a mean of 3.259 indicating that the respondents agreed that among the challenge is accumulated promotion. Item 13 has a mean of 2.982 indicating that the respondents agreed that one of the challenge is low interest/concentration in the assigned duties. Item 14 which also has a mean of 2.837 showing that the respondents agreed that among the problem is emotional instability.

Discussion of the findings

The effects of workplace environment on librarians' job performance

The effect of work environment and the librarians' job performance is very high. Reason being that the cumulative mean agreement value of 3.019 is above the 2.5000 standard/decision mean. Specifically, Punctuality at work has the highest mean response of 3.096 with a total of 129 in agreement as against 37 disagreed. In the same vein, helping librarians to reach their potentials has the second highest mean of 3.090 with a total of 128 were in agreement as against the rest 38 that disagreed. In summary, the effects of work environment on librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria, is very high especially punctuality at work and helping librarians to reach their potentials. This outcome was confirmed from the assertions of Amusa, Iyoro and Olabisi (2013) which stated that there exists a relationship between workplace environment with job performance which shows F-value (2, 150) of 6.28 at 0.05. Since the calculated F is greater than the tabulated F, the null hypothesis therefore is rejected. It therefore shows that there is

significant relationship between work environment and job performance of librarians working in South-West, Nigeria university libraries. $F(2, 150) = 6.28, p < 0.05$. The findings of this study revealed that there exists a strong positive correlation between work environment and job performance.

The challenges of workplace environment on librarians' job performance

From the analysis of the results above, it is clear that there are serious challenges associated with workplace environment of librarians which is affecting their job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. This is because the cumulative mean agreement is 3.037 is greater than 2.5000 standard/decision mean. The testing of this hypothesis from table 2 on workplace environment and job performance also showed that significant relationship exists between the workplace environment and job performance of librarians in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria, at a correlation index r level of 0.642. The relationship between the work environment and job performance, is directly proportional, implying that the higher the level of workplace environment conduciveness in Universities, the higher the job performance of librarians in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria and vice versa. These findings corroborate that of Demet (2012), who conducted a survey study on the impact of workplace quality on employee's productivity. The result reveals that workplace environment affects employee performance but behavioral workplace environment has greater effect on employees' performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the study revealed that workplace environment influence librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The researcher also found out that there are many challenges affecting workplace environment which in turn affect librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. These challenges caused low performance of employees, absenteeism, labour turnover from employees, Sabotage (like pilfering, image laundering, bribery and corruption) by employees, lack of management commitment and support, poor organizational climate. From the analysis of the results above, it is clear that there are serious challenges of work place environment of librarians which is affecting their job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria negatively. This finding corroborates to that of Prasad, (2012) who had summarized problems of Human Resources in developing countries to be low levels of salary, deficiency of useful performance values, lack of ability to fire people, small number of incentives for excellent performance, employment measures that do not catch the attention of properly skilled people, promotion guidelines based more on seniority than on actual performance of employees.

Recommendations

Concerning the effects of workplace environment on librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. The following are the recommendations:

1. Provision of conducive workplace environment that can improved their professional practice,
2. Workplace environment that can contribute to the overall development of the librarians should be provided in various Universities in North Central Nigeria.
3. Workplace environment which influences librarians' ability to work with co-workers in University libraries should be provided in various Universities in North Central Nigeria.
4. Workplace environment which affects their punctuality positively at work should be enhanced and sustained in various Universities in North Central Nigeria.
5. workplace environment which provides them with the ability to attend promptly to request from the clients, led to the improvement in their communication skills and helped in achieving minimum requirement for promotion i.e., research and that work environment helped librarians to reach their potentials be encouraged in various Universities in North Central Nigeria.
6. Concerning the challenges of work environment of librarians' job performance in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria, the following recommendations are made by the researcher:

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