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CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AND POOR PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH, SOUTH NIGERIA

Eruvwe Ufuoma, *Ph.D*
Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun, Nigeria

Unwana Isaac Udoh, *Ph.D*
Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

Dika Sunday Ikhimeakhu, *Ph.D*
Sheda Science and Technology Complex, Sheda, Kwali, Abuja

Abstract
This study investigates the causes absenteeism and poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries South-South Nigeria. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. A total of one hundred and eight (108) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the librarians in the federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria, only ninety-five (95) were filled and returned, which was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics mean and percentage mean score of 2.5 and above and percentage score of 50% were considered as acceptable by respondents. Its major findings revealed the causes of absenteeism in libraries to lack of motivation on the job, ill health and injury, lack of interest on the job, incapacity and job related stress. The study further shows the reasons for poor performance of librarians as poor morale among colleagues, negative impact on library services, underdevelopment of the library and poor university ranking. The study also proffer solutions to curb frequent absenteeism and poor performance of librarians such as written attendance policy, motivation of staff, set clear attendance policy, rewards and recognition to librarians who work very hard. The study recommends that a written attendance policy should be well spelt out, disciplinary actions should be taken to avert future occurrence and also counseling and motivation of librarians should be carried out regularly on the importance of their jobs.

Keywords: Absenteeism, poor performance, librarians, libraries

Introduction

University libraries play an important role in the intellectual development of students as well as the total development of the university. The Library, which has been around for more than two millennia and predates even the earliest institutions, is the most resilient and adaptable institution for learning (Bundy, 2004). Okeke (2009) defined the university library as a library or set of libraries founded, maintained, and managed by a university to serve the needs of students, academics, and other university community members. While according to Adeyemi (2010) university library is the whole stock of books and other resource materials in any university; a collection of a wide variety of learning and teaching materials were housed in a place, indexed to serve readers and students. The librarians that work in these libraries are expected to resume work on time in order to enhance and improved on their job performance. Hence, one of the major bottlenecks to poor performance in the university libraries could be as a result of absenteeism of librarians at work.

Absenteeism is the act of consistently missing work or missing work without a valid excuse. In other terms, absenteeism is the practice of often missing work, typically without a valid excuse. Absenteeism, according to Swarnalatha and Sureshkrishna (2013), is the failure to arrive at work. She also said that workers who are often or habitually absent from work pose a threat to the university library and transform it into a dysfunctional workplace. Senel and Senel (2012) adopted a more cautious stance and defined absenteeism as an employee's failure to show up for scheduled work. According to Ozimek (2020), the productivity and efficiency of libraries would suffer greatly if librarians' absenteeism and subpar work performance are permitted to continue. For many years, university libraries have struggled with the costly issue of absenteeism, which results in delays in the delivery of subpar services and subpar job performance.

Poor performance is the failure to do the duties of the role or meet the standard required. In order words, poor performance is non-compliance with workplace policies, rules or procedures. Taofeng (2012) claims that inadequate performance processes fall under the general category of incapacity. Moreover, poor job performance is the inability of librarians to meet and uphold the employer's expectations for output quantity and quality. In conclusion, Ozimek (2020) argues that work inefficiency and absenteeism are creating habits that have a detrimental impact on a university library's production and effectiveness. Because of this, it is essential that this title address the issue of librarian absenteeism and poor performance at federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Heads of university libraries are responsible for determining if the justifications given by librarians for being absent from work are true. Absenteeism often refers to unscheduled absences. Absenteeism has been seen as a sign of subpar performance on an individual level as well as a violation of an unspoken agreement between librarians and library directors. Absenteeism, regardless of the reason, is defined as any failure to arrive for or stay at work as scheduled. This might eventually result in subpar performance. According to legal definitions, poor performance is when an employee's actions or output could be subpar compared to what is expected. Nevertheless, dealing with poor performance is fraught with legal pitfalls. This may help to explain why some employers frequently equate subpar performance with carelessness, ineptitude, or misbehavior

It has been observed by the researcher that there are literature on the causes of absenteeism and poor performance of workers. But there is no study on the causes of absenteeism and poor performance of librarians with a particular reference to federal university libraries in South South, Nigeria. This study is therefore carried to exploit the causes of absenteeism as well as the reasons of poor performance of librarians in the university libraries under study in order to fill the gap in knowledge.

Objective of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the causes of absenteeism **and** poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. Find out the causes of absenteeism among librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria
2. Examine the reason for poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria
3. Proffer solution to frequent absenteeism of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria

Research Question

1. What are the causes of absenteeism among librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria?
2. What are the reasons for poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria?
3. What solution should be proffer to curb frequent absenteeism of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria?

Review of Related Literature

Without the assistance of a strong library, academic institutions would probably struggle to meet the academic, intellectual, and other interests and information demands of students. University libraries play a crucial role in helping tertiary institutions accomplish their aims. This is due to the fact that effective libraries and information services have been identified as a necessary component for research, effective instruction, and learning (Banting et al, 2008). University libraries support a wide range of information seekers and are crucial contributors to knowledge development as, claimed Agyen-Gyasi, Lamptey, and Frempong (2010). University libraries are those that are connected to universities for the purpose of research and learning according to Ubogu and Okiy (2011). According to Ugwuanyi, Okwor, and Ezeji (2011), libraries are capable of serving as a learning environment at a university due to the variety of information resources they offer. So, they promote the idea that a good university library should offer a multifunctional atmosphere inside the library since this would give a platform for people to accomplish their goals. For the university library to actualize its mandate, librarians should be on ground always to render effective services to library users. Librarians who absent themselves from work without a genuine reason could hinder their job performance which will as well have negative impact on library services.

Absenteeism is the act of an employee failing to show up in person at work when it is expected of them by society. Although it varies from one instance to another, absenteeism is a common issue that impacts all companies, including university libraries. An absence, according to Johns (2002), is any time an employee is not at work during regular business hours or receives sick time. Nevertheless, absenteeism in Mason and Griffin's (2003) use of the term refers to a failure to appear or to continue working, depending on how the work program is carried out for whatever reason.

One of the most frequent and historic workplace events that might occur has been the subject of investigation of absenteeism. The management of many companies seeks to reduce the consequences of absenteeism on organization productivity and revenues, and research on this behavior supports their efforts (Gosselin, Lemyre & Corneil, 2013). If immediate action is not taken, it will negatively affect librarians' ability to execute their jobs. Poor performance harms the university library's reputation as well as that of the personnel, especially those who put in extra effort to ensure that the library's objectives are realized. Bad performance is when an employee falls short of the expected performance level. Taofeng (2012) said in a Labour Relations article titled Guidance on Managing

Poor Performance that bad performance has a detrimental influence on workplace effectiveness and productivity, and in extreme circumstances, may raise the risk of work accidents.

Sangwen (2007) asserted that in the public service commission toolkit for the management of poor performance and grievance trends in the public service, the PSC has observed that poor performance is a problem in the public service. Boluade (2004) opined that in a situation where poor performance is noticed from employees' performance is below expectation, it would be assumed that the management is unable to recruit qualified staff, provide working materials, and handle staff properly and so on. Court (2012) looked at how well university libraries in Varanasi were run by librarians in terms of absenteeism and time factor. Due to absenteeism, the majority of library professionals at Varanasi's university libraries do their jobs at an average level.

From an economic perspective, absenteeism results in the loss of potential production as well as an increase in government spending on unnecessary interventions, such as overtime fees and other benefits for workers who may be compelled to make up work. Absenteeism lowers people's morale, which results in low organizational production (Wilcox 2008). Dealing with the voluntary absence of key staff in libraries is extremely important since doing so can have both direct and indirect negative effects on the library. In Tanzania, widespread worker absenteeism is frequently recognized as a serious barrier to effective and long-lasting economic growth. A research carried out by Uwezo (2015) reports that attendance rate of teachers for the surveyed primary and secondary schools diminished from 82% to 75% respectively. The study also found that one in five teachers were not in attendance when their school was reviewed. When employees miss work, the organization incurs direct cost of lost wages and decreased productivity.

Moreover, absenteeism is a problem in libraries all across the world. There are several justifications used by librarians to avoid going to work. By putting new practices into place, libraries are attempting to address the issue. Absenteeism costs businesses millions, if not billions, of dollars every year. In a related development, Tiwari (2014) claimed that high absenteeism results in a significant cost to the company since work schedules are disrupted and delayed and management must pay overtime payments to achieve delivery dates. Additionally, Nel et al. (2001) explain the degrees of motivation as follows: the minimal level - doing less than is necessary; the anticipated level - doing precisely what is required; and the maximum level - doing more than is required. This links performance to absenteeism. A person may be absent from work if they are

operating at the first level or the third level, as shown above. When motivation is not adequately controlled, workers may act in ways that are inappropriate. When improperly implemented or maintained, the performance management system may be a significant contributor to a high absence rate. In addition, Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk, and Schenk (2003) include boredom as one of the reasons for absenteeism. A company with a lot of specialization could have employees who only execute a few activities for which they have been trained, and some of them might get quite bored with the repetitive labor. Such unhappiness could result in subpar performance and quitting ones job.

Research Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey research design with a questionnaire as the data gathering tool. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which yielded mean score of 2.5 and above, which the researcher deemed acceptable. The instrument for data collections was the questionnaire which is in line with the research questions. A total of 108 questionnaires were administered and 98 retrieved.

Table 1
Research Question 1

What are the causes of absenteeism among librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Lack of motivation on the job	36	34	18	10	2.7	Accepted
2	Ill health and injury	34	32	12	20	2.8	Accepted
3	Lack of interest on the job	42	32	11	13	3.0	Accepted
4	Incapacity	34	39	15	10	2.9	Accepted
5	Work related stress	47	33	12	6	3.2	Accepted

The table 1 revealed five (5) identified items on the causes of absenteeism among librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria. They are: Lack of motivation on the job (2.7), Ill health and injury (2.8), Lack of interest on the job (3.0) Incapacity (2.9) and Work related stress (3.2) respectively. From the discussion above, one can infer that librarians use a variety of reasons to excuse their absence from work.

Table 2
Research Question 2
What are the reasons for poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Poor morale among colleagues.	42	33	16	7	3.1	Accepted
2	Negative impact on library services	43	33	11	11	3.1	Accepted
3	Underdevelopment of the library	33	36	13	16	2.8	Accepted
4	Poor university ranking	32	33	21	12	2.8	Accepted
5	Negative effects on library users	41	21	12	24	2.8	Accepted

The table 2 shows that five (5) identified items on the reasons for poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria. They are: Poor morale among colleagues (3.1), Negative impact on library services (3.1), Underdevelopment of the library (2.8) Poor University ranking (2.8) and Negative effects on library users (2.8) respectively. From the discussion above, one can infer the various reasons for poor performance of librarians in the university libraries under study.

Research Question 3
What solution should be proffer to curb frequent absenteeism of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-X	Decision
1	Write Attendance Policy	38	33	22	5	3.0	Accepted
2	Set clear attendance expectations	36	35	21	6	3.0	Accepted
3	Reward good attendance to librarians	36	32	22	8	2.9	Accepted
4	Provide employee Support	34	33	21	10	2.9	Accepted
5	The ability to intervene early	33	31	13	21	2.9	Accepted

The table 3 shows that five (5) identified items on the solution proffer to curb frequent absenteeism and poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria They are: writing of attendance policy(3.0), set clear attendance expectations(3.0), rewards good attendance to librarians (2.9) provide employee support (2.9) and the ability to intervene earlier (2.9) respectively. From the discussion above, it can be deduced from the study that the solutions proffer by the various respondents would to a large extent curb the causes of absenteeism in the university libraries under study.

Conclusion

The study investigates causes of absenteeism and poor performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South, South Nigeria. The causes of recent absenteeism in libraries are alarming hence it has hindered the job performance drastically. A possible solution that may be used to combat the menace in the library is to encourage and motivate librarians to feel more secure in their job. This can be done by instituting mandatory work contacts and explaining to each individual on board what the workplaces policy entails.

From the result above, the causes of absenteeism of librarians which includes lack of motivation on the job, ill health and injury, lack of interest on the job, incapacity and work related stress could be averted if the library management set up a committee to look at each of the causes of absenteeism critically and proffer solutions to them. This was supported by Tiwari (2014) who claimed that high absenteeism results in a significant cost to the company since work schedules are disrupted and delayed and management must pay overtime payments to achieve delivery dates. The reasons for poor performance of librarians can also be liberated if the library management treats each of the reasons with all seriousness, this is associated with Boluade (2004) who opined that in a situation where poor performance is noticed from employees' performance is below expectation, it would be assumed that the management is unable to recruit qualified staff, provide working materials, and handle staff properly and so on. The solution to curb frequent absenteeism of librarians in the libraries should strictly adhere to by the library management with a written attendance policy, set clear expectations, reward good attendance to librarians and so on.

Recommendations

The study recommends thus:

1. A well written attendance policy should be strictly adhere to by librarians
2. A clear attendance expectations should be well stated
3. A disciplinary actions should be taken to avert future occurrence

4. Counseling and motivation of librarians should be carried regularly on the importance of their jobs.

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