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INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH SOUTH, NIGERIA

Elue Chukwuma Charles
University of Delta Agbor, Nigeria

Caroline Akunne Odikpo
The Library, Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-Uku

Jacinta Isioma Ogonwa
The Library, Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-Uku

Abstract
The study investigates the influence of communication skills on job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The area of studies is the federal university libraries in South-South region. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study consists of 112 librarians in all the federal universities libraries in South- South Nigeria. A total of 112 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 98 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved using descriptive statistics mean and percentage mean score of 2.5 and above and percentage score of 50% were considered as acceptable. The study revealed the following communication skills used by librarians in the university libraries under study. They are: verbal communication, written communication, oral communication, visual communication, non-verbal communication and listening skills. The study further affirmed that organization commitment, rapid growth, job satisfaction, and increase efficiency as they influences job performance. The study recommends that sponsoring librarians on seminars, developing subordinates for effective communication skills, additional academic qualifications on English language and literary studies, would assist to spur librarians and other supporting staff to build on their communication skills in order to enhance job performance. This seems to be the first study of its kind to explore the the influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians in South South, Nigeria. Hence, it will contribute to knowledge.
Keywords: Communication skills, job performance, university libraries, librarians

Introduction

University libraries are the treasure house of knowledge to cater for the needs of scholars, scientists, technocrats, researchers, students and others who are in the mainstream of higher education. Nkamnebe, Udem and Nkamnebe (2014) defined university libraries as libraries established within the university to support teaching, learning, and research that goes on in the university community. For this to be actualized the librarians has to be on ground. A librarian is a professional trained in library and information science. Bush and Jones, (2017) defined a librarian as an information specialist who passes first degree, masters, Ph.D qualifications in librarianship with a certified certificate in Librarians Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). Librarians are responsible for a vast amount of information, from the classic management of books and periodicals to more modern responsibilities involving audio and video recordings, as well as digital resources. For the librarian to delegate duties to her subordinates such as the para professional staff there has to be flow of effective communication skills from the librarians to para professional staff in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the library.

Communication skills are regarded as the fundamental skill of explaining the employees various aspects of the organization. Communication skills will help librarians to impart instructions, ideas, and viewpoints to the employees in terms of implementation of job duties, convey them information in terms of organizational goals, provide solutions to their problems and issues, make provision of help and support to them in the implementation of job duties and put into operation the managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading, directing, coordinating and controlling in an effective manner. The communication skills are regarded as the lifeline, which a librarian needs to be put into operation in a polite and decent manner. Also, librarians need to make provision of equal rights and opportunities and not discriminate against subordinates and professional colleagues in terms of any of the factors, i.e. caste, creed, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, and socio-economic background. When these factors are taken into consideration, the communication process will take place in an effective manner. Communication takes place in a verbal, written, non-verbal, visual, and listening form. Library management needs to implore these skills for maximum job performance in the university system.

Performance is the ability to perform a particular task in a specific method that can be evaluated as excellent, average or low in scale. The word performance is usually used to explain various aspects such as performance of organization, performance of employees, and performance of individual. Specifically, job

performances are those behaviors and actions that support and enrich the social environment for enhancement of in-role, which bring about effective and high productivity. Abdel-Razek (2019), put it that job performance is the effort made by an employee within an organization in order to achieve particular pre-determined results through the use of available resources.

Therefore, for rapid development, the librarians and subordinates has to work together to ensure that effective communication flows among all categories of library staff. By so doing, quality job performance will be achieved. In view of the foregoing, this study is designed to investigate the influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians in South South, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Communication is an unavoidable central part of the human life which is the process of transferring information from a sender to a receiver, and from the receiver back to the sender. An effective communicator is likely to be an effective problem solver both in their chosen profession, and personal life. Where communication is effective, relationships will run smoothly, and this will in turn enhance job performance. Job performance is a very considerable factor influencing profitability of any organization. Performance is important for individuals, as achieving tasks can be a source of satisfaction. It has been observed that literature exists in influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians, but no work has been done on the influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians with a particular reference to South South, Nigeria. It is as a result of this problem that prompted the researcher to embark on this study to unravel the influence of communication skills as it affects job performance in South-South, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to investigate the influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians in South South, Nigeria. The specific objectives were:

1. To identify the communication skill that influences librarians job performance in university libraries in South South Nigeria
2. To find out the influences of communication skills on librarians job performance in university libraries in South South Nigeria

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the communication skills that influence librarian's job performance in university libraries in South South Nigeria?

2. What are the influence of communication skills on librarians job performance in university libraries in South South Nigeria

Literature Review

Communication skills are an inevitable aspect of organizational functioning. The functions and importance of communication for organizations have been examined by researchers in various ways. A communication skill is the exchange of information or messages in two directions between the communicator and the communicant, either directly or indirectly, either by using or not using the media (Busro, 2018). Simply put, communication is the transfer of information from one person to another, but the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver (Brown in Brahmaiah and Demudu (2019). In other word, Mbowe (2020) defined communication as a process that includes writing, reporting, correspondence, and understanding the mechanics of writing and speaking.

Today, good communication skills at the workplace are one of the most important aspects of an organization. Librarians cannot have a good performance without good communication. The role of communication in employee performance cannot be over emphasized. One of the best ways to ensure effective communication is to provide opportunities for employees to develop their communication skills, which in turns will enhances job performance. According to Dalimunthe (2019), job performance is the result of the achievement of the work in quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with responsibility given to him. The performance can be summed up as the ability or success that has been accomplished by a person in his work during a within a period, according to a predetermined size.

In order for any libraries to gain competitive advantage, librarians must strive to increase efficiency, quality, and receptiveness to subordinates and users. Good communication is essential for gaining a competitive advantage. (Gareth 2000). Tumbare (2009) did a research on an internal communication assessment of the Lilongwe City Assembly. The study assessed the organizational communication of the Assembly. Explicitly, the effect of internal communication at the Lilongwe City was measured. The methodological approach measured their current and ideal amounts of information within the organization. These are receiving information from others, sending information to others, action on information sent, channels of communication, communication relationships, communication and work satisfaction, timeliness of information received from key sources and sources of information. Findings from a sample of 186 respondents of the Assembly indicated a great need to receive information and to

interact with Assembly management more frequently than what is happening currently.

Furthermore, the communication between subordinates and coworkers seems to enhance job performance. Kibe (2014) investigated the effects of communication strategies on organizational performance. A descriptive research design was used in this study. 132 questionnaires were distributed to employees. The findings of this research showed the importance of both the theoretical level and practical level. It concluded that for any organizational performance to be effective, an open communication environment should be encouraged. Once members of the organization feel free to share feedback, ideas and even criticism at every level it increases performance. Also, Neves and Eisenberger (2012) reviewed that management communication was positively associated with a temporal change in POS, mediates the relationship between management communications and implications of practice. Specifically, it revealed that management communication affects performance mainly because it signals that the organization cares about the well-being and values the contributions of its employees.

Accordingly, communication skills has been widely accepted by scholars and librarians as the life hood of the library because communication is needed for exchanging information, exchanging opinions, making plans and proposals, reaching agreement, executing decisions, sending and fulfilling orders and conducting sales (Blalock, 2018). When communication stops, organized activity ceases to exist, and this in turn affects job performance. Communication skills can influence the perceptions and opinions about persons, communities, organizations, governments, and even society. One of the outcomes of administrative communication is related to the flow of information, regulations, policies, and procedures (Harold, 2010). Communication skills are essential to any kind of organization and information plays a crucial role in effective communication. Theories on organizational communication has evolved from the concept as a tool of management designed to facilitate task completion and as such was to operate as one of many organizational variables (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006). As a tool of management, communication is the central means by which individual activity is coordinated to devise, disseminate, and pursue organizational goals (Gardner, Paulsen, Gallois, Callan, and Monaghan, 2011). According to Banihashemi (2011), communication skills as a medium, a means to performance ends, or as constitutive, as the end in itself. Finally, according to Stephen (2011), communication skills are a critical factor in directing and mobilizing the workforce towards the accomplishment of the organizational goals

or objectives for effective performance.

In addition, in a Delphi research, Feret and Marcinek (2017) attempted to identify the skills required for librarians to satisfy future needs. The results showed that the necessary skills and characteristics for academic librarians included skills such as communication skills, managerial skills, information technology skills, etc. The study shows that communication skills were of greater importance and could spur job performance. Also, in a study at Liverpool John Moores University, Ashcroft (2018) study on the status of communication skills and job performance of information professionals. The study revealed that communication, negotiation, and collaboration skills were important skills for information professionals in the electronic information environment. Gerolimos and Konsta (2018) examined 200 job advertisements during 2006-2007 to identify the needed skills for modern librarians. They found 38 skills and qualifications for modern librarians, while the item of communication skills was reported in more than 60 percent of the advertisements; therefore, the researchers concluded that communication skills were necessary for modern librarians which could enhance job performance. Choi and Rasmussen (2019) investigated the qualifications and skills required for professionals in academic libraries by analyzing the job advertisements in College and Research Libraries News during 1999-2007. After their analysis, it was found that communication and interpersonal skills were essential skills for the librarian's performance.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The area of the study is the six federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.The population of the study consists of 112 recruited librarians in all the federal universities libraries in South- South Nigeria. A total of 112 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 98 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved using descriptive statistics mean and percentage mean score of 2.5 and above and percentage score of 50% were considered as acceptable by the respondents.

Types of communication skill that influences librarians job performance
Table 1

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-x	Decision
1	•Verbal Communication.	49	40	5	4	3.3	Accepted
2	Written Communication	54	36	1	7	3.3	Accepted
3	•Oral Communication.	64	23	5	4	3.4	Accepted
4	•Visual Communication.	57	31	7	3	3.4	Accepted
5	Non-Verbal Communication	55	25	10	8	3.2	Accepted
6	•Active Listening.	65	23	7	3	3.5	Accepted

The data presented in table 1 revealed that six (6) identified items on: the types of communication skills that influence librarian's job performance in university libraries in South South Nigeria. They are:verbal communication skill (3.3), written communication skill (3.3), oral communication skill (3.4), visual communication skill (3.4), non-verbal communication skill (3.2) and active listening (3.5) respectively. This implies that these communication skills influences job performance among librarians in university libraries in South South Nigeriawas justified.

Influence of communication skills on librarians job performance of librarians in university libraries in South South Nigeria
Table 2

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-x	Decision
1	Organization commitment	43	41	8	6	3.1	Accepted
2	Rapid growth	34	43	11	10	3.0	Accepted
3	Job satisfaction	54	31	8	4	3.3	Accepted
4	Increase efficiency	43	29	14	11	3.0	Accepted

The data presented in table 1 revealed that six (6) identified items on how communication skills influence librarians job performance of librarians in university libraries in South South Nigeria. They are:Organization commitment

(3.1), rapid growth (3.0), job satisfaction (3.3), and increase efficiency (3.0) respectively. This simply implies that communication skills influences librarian's job performance of librarians in university libraries in South South Nigeria.

Findings

The study is on the influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians in South South, Nigeria. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study revealed the types of communication skills that influence librarian's job performance in the university libraries. They include verbal communication, written communication, oral communication, visual communication, non-verbal communication, and active listening communication skills. One can therefore infer that if these skills are consistency practice, it will enhance a drastic job performance in the university libraries under review. Also, the study also shows that influence of communication skills on librarian's job performance in university libraries in South South Nigeria. They are organization commitment, rapid growth, job satisfaction and increase efficiency. This seems to be the first study of its kind to explore the the influence of communication skills on job performance of university librarians in South South, Nigeria. Hence, it will contribute to knowledge.

Conclusion

A good communication skill is an essential tool in achieving performance and maintaining strong working relationships at all levels in the library. Communication is an integral part of the library process as the flow of communication up and down the library hierarchy has its effects on efficiency, decision making and morale of library. Thus, effective communication is regarded as the foundation of organizations today. Librarians who invest time and energy into delivering clear lines of communication will rapidly build trust among employees, leading to increases in job performance, output and morale in general. Meanwhile, librarians who communicate effectively with subordinates are always valuable assets to the library and it is a skill which can often set people apart from their competition when applying for jobs.

Recommendations

The study recommends thus:

1. Sponsoring librarians on seminars will enhances their communication skills
2. Librarians should assist in developing subordinates for effective communication skills
3. Librarians should be eloquent and build on their communication skills in

order to enhance job performance.

4. Additional qualifications in English language or literary studies will also enhance communication skills

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