

Investigation into Factors Inhibiting Effective Job Performance of Academic Librarians at Selected University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

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Abstract

The article examined factors that inhibit effective job performance of academic librarians at selected universities in North Central Nigeria. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and task–technology fit theories were the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. The survey research design was used for the study. The study population consisted of 135 academic librarians and heads of library at seven university libraries. The total enumeration method was then adopted to select academic librarians. Sampling was purposive and enumerative as all members of the population were used for the study. A total of 128 copies of a questionnaire were administered across the seven university libraries. Out of this total, 103 copies were duly completed and returned for quantitative analysis, giving a response rate of 81 per cent. In addition, the census method was used. Copies of the survey questionnaire were used mainly to collect quantitative data from the academic librarians, and interviews were used to collect qualitative data from the university librarians (heads of library). The findings from the study revealed that 90 per cent of the respondents noted that there are hindrances to their job performance.

Keywords: academic librarians, job performance, university libraries

Introduction

Performance is concerned with the alignment of organisational objectives with the employees' agreed measures, skills, competency requirements, development plans and the delivery of results. Job performance is referred to as the behaviour an individual engages or produces in the workplace in line with an organisation's goal (Ikanyon and Ucho 2013). From the behaviourists' point of view, job performance is concerned with the productivity of an individual's work-related behaviours (Shooshtarian, Ameli, and

Aminilari 2013; Zamanet et al. cited in Ugwu 2018, 4). However, job performance can be measured through punctuality, work quality, performance, personal characteristics, the work environment, behaviour as well as job outcomes, and training effectiveness (Tseng and Huang 2011). Hence, it is believed that in any academic institution, a library is established as a critical component of institutional infrastructure that supports teaching and learning activities through the provision of necessary information resources to users for effective job performance. Mason (2010) views the mission of the academic library as that of building and maintaining a collection that will support the growth and job performance of both academic librarians and other library users.

According to Campbell (1990), job performance is a means to reach a goal or set of goals in a job or organisation but not the real consequences of the acts performed in the job. Employee job performance, therefore, encapsulates the behaviour individuals engage themselves in or produce in the workplace which are in line with and contribute to the organisation's goal (Ikyanyon and Ucho 2013). Similarly, job performance can mean the overall expected value from employees' behaviours carried out over the course of a set period (Motowidlo, Borman and Schmidt 1997). Despite the relevance of job performance as an outcome measure in empirical studies, it has been adequately investigated by researchers that self-rated and supervisor-rated measurement scales are best methods of determining individual job performance (Heilman, Block and Lucas 1992). Campbell (1990, 704) describes the structure and content of performance as "a virtual desert". Performance in a job is strictly behaviour and a separate entity from the outcome of a particular job which transmit to success and productivity. In elaboration, authors concur that when conceptualising performance, one has to differentiate between actions, that is, the behavioural aspect and the outcome aspect of performance (Campbell 1990; Campbell et al. 1993; Rose 1999). According to Campbell et al. (1993), performance must be distinguished from effectiveness and productivity or efficiency. Effectiveness refers to the evaluation of results of performance, whereas productivity refers to the ratio of effectiveness to the cost of attaining the outcome (Campbell et al. 1993).

In Nigeria, some studies on the job performance of librarians have focused on the work environment, job performance (Amusa, Iyaro, and Olabisi 2013), and job satisfaction of librarians at federal university libraries in South East Nigeria (Igbokwe 2011). Some of these studies also focused on personal factors and work locus of control as determinants of job performance of library personnel (Oyewole and Popoola 2015). Although the job performance of academic librarians is significant to the overall success of academic libraries in Nigeria, there are only a few studies that attempts to investigate factors inhibiting effective job performance of academic librarians at selected university libraries in North Central Nigeria. The present study intends to contribute to the body of literature in this area and also to professional practice and policymakers that may result in better job performance by academic librarians in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars have examined job performance among academic librarians at Nigerian university libraries. Low user satisfaction is prevalent among library users and this could be attributed to poor job performance among academic librarians (Madukoma and Opeke 2013). Studies such as those by Lamptey, Boateng and Antwi (2013), Madukoma and Opeke (2013), Frankor and Akussah (2012), and Adams, King and Hook (2010) have shown that academic librarians in Africa and particularly in Nigeria are lagging behind in terms of job performance compared to that in the developed countries. The reasons provided by such studies include the inability of the academic librarians in Nigeria to use the available information resources, inadequate funding, and poor electricity supply.

Studies by Madukoma and Opeke (2013) and Madukoma and Popoola (2012) on job performance of librarians employed only self-rated performance measurement scales to determine the job performance at selected university libraries. This contrasts with Heilman, Block and Lucas's (1992) study on job performance that used both self-rated and supervisor-rated scale measurements to determine librarians' job performance. On this basis, self-ratings were combined with supervisor ratings to ascertain the validity of the self-rating job performance instrument in this study. The use of supervisor ratings as a criterion is to assess the validity of self-ratings because supervisors are the most reliable source for rating performance.

Research Questions

- To what extent are university academic librarians in North Central Nigeria performing their job?
- What are the factors inhibiting effective job performance of academic librarians at university libraries in North Central Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that guide this study are Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs and task-technology fit. The choice of these theories was inspired by their richness and high descriptive features characterised by an identification of goals to measure performance. Motivation has been identified by scholars as a key factor that has a significant influence on human behaviour and actions (Saade, Nebede, and Mark 2009). The concepts of motivation, needs and employee performance gained extensive recognition as an area of augmented research owing to their importance to measuring economic development across countries (Kaita and David 2015, 2). Maslow (1954) argues that human needs are in hierarchy and that unfulfilled lower needs could dominate one's thinking and actions until being satisfied. The physiological needs (for example, hunger and thirst) come first, followed by security needs, social needs (affiliation), self-esteem needs (recognition), and, finally, self-actualisation needs. The

satisfaction of a need could facilitate optimal satisfaction of an individual towards performing effectively on a given task.

Self-actualisation and self-fulfilment have been the reasons for the choice of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, as they explain why certain individuals (including academic librarians) are productive and some less productive. It also shows the way in which academic librarians with a high need for job performance in research could work hard to improve their performance for successful professional development.

The second theory, the task–technology fit theory, assumes that information resources give value by being instrumental in some tasks. The proponents of the theory discuss the importance of technology characteristics, task characteristics, task–technology fit, performance impacts on and utilisation towards motivating an individual in using technology to perform job functions optimally. When this theory is applied to the use of e-resources to render library services it is evident that its use goes a long way in helping or shaping the job performance of academic librarians.

Literature Review

Job Performance

Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique's (2010) study reported that the lack of formal training and skills to use modern technology had an impact on job performance of library personnel in Pakistan. In terms of the preference of electronic resources over non-electronic resources, Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique's findings showed no significant differences to librarians' job performance. The results also revealed that the academic librarians liked to use both electronic and non-electronic information resources.

A study by Lamptey, Boateng and Antwi (2013) on public universities in Ghana focused on the motivation and job performance of librarians, the effect of motivation on performance, and the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contributed to low job performance. Similarly, Aiyetan and Oltuah (2006) examined the relationship between the motivation and performance of workers at Nigerian universities. The findings of Lamptey, Boateng and Antwi (2013) and Aiyetan and Oltuah (2006) established that the staff were not carrying out their work as expected, despite the fact that they were motivated.

Oyewole and Popoola (2015) examined personal factors and work locus of control as determinants of job performance of library personnel in Nigeria. The findings revealed that there was a significant correlation between independent variables (age, working experience in the library, position or rank, academic qualification, work locus of control, and monthly salary) and the job performance of the respondents. The need for library administrators and managers to venture into the recruitment of personnel with internal locus of control, considerations of academic qualification, age, years of working experience, job position or rank and monthly salary of library staff when planning were

recommended as a means of enhancing job performance. This resonates with Belias, Sdrolas and Koutiva's (2013) study which noted that demographic variables had a significant relationship with the job performance of employees. However, the finding contrasted with outcomes of similar research in Britain and the United States of America which established that demographic variables that come with age and working experience appear to count less for job performance (Munk 1999).

Madukoma and Popoola (2012) and Madukoma and Opeke (2013) examined the job performance of librarians based on a self-rated measure. These studies noted that the weakness of this approach was that the respondents (employees) may be biased in their assessments. This current study therefore, seeks to fill this gap by adopting Heilman, Block and Lucas's (1992) self-rated and supervisor-rated performance measure.

Amusa, Iyaro, and Olabisi (2013) conducted a study on work environments and job performance of librarians working in public university libraries in South West Nigeria. They reported that the work environment for librarians in terms of physical facilities, open communication, motivation and information resources in the libraries played a crucial role in determining their job performance. The study also established that there was a significant correlation between the work environment, information resources and job performance of academic librarians. Improved physical facilities, personal emolument and constant funding by the government were recommended as a means of improving performance within the system.

Factors Inhibiting Effective Job Performance

Khuong and Yen (2016, 1) identified five working factors that hindered effective job performance, namely, work overload, role ambiguity and role conflict, working relationship, career development, and working environment. These factors influenced librarians' job performance in six different industries in the Dong Xuyen Industrial Zone, Ba Ria – Vung Tau, Vietnam. From the findings of this study, these working factors had a significant and positive influence on job stress and, in contrast, job stress had a negative influence on librarian's job performance (Khuong and Yen 2016).

Ndakalu (2014) explained the use of and access to digital information resources at the University of Nairobi library. From the findings, it was revealed that the majority of the patrons used the digital information resources in the library to enhance their job performance. The study further showed that the majority of the respondents did not approach the librarians for digital information resources services. The absence of adequate information skills, poor information infrastructure and inadequate training were identified as the major challenges confronted when accessing and using digital information resources. The study recommended that, for effective use and accessibility of digital information resources in the library to enhance job performance, the management should formulate a strategic plan and policies, and ensure extensive training for staff and others library users.

Rahman, Khatun and Islam (2008) reviewed library education and job performance in Bangladesh and their findings showed that the majority of the libraries in Bangladesh do not have enough computers, and that there is inadequate classification and cataloguing tools. It also revealed that there were inadequate information resources, poor motivational factors, training, low salary scales and delays in promotion, which constitute hindrances to poor job performance of academic librarians.

In Pakistan, Mohammad (1992) listed the lack of opportunities for proper training, appropriate guidance, the availability of and access to information sources, financial assistance and sponsorship, encouragement, publication or dissemination of research findings, and personal interest and initiative as some of the problems hindering effective job performance of librarians. The study does not show a healthy picture of academic librarians' job performance as all libraries are not fully automated. Internet services for librarians are only provided in university libraries. The provision and the use of the internet are not available in both public and college libraries. In Nigeria, the foregoing problems are also a common phenomenon. The faulty system of the selection of staff, the lack of training, and the poor status of librarians are major hindrances to effective job performance of academic librarians (Igbokwe 2011).

Amusa, Iyaro, and Olabisi (2013) found that environmental factors of academic libraries in terms of physical facilities, motivation and open communication were favourable factors that could enhance academic librarians' job performance in public university libraries in Nigeria, whereas personal emolument was a hindrance to job performance. Further findings showed that there was a positive correlation between the work environment and performance of academic librarians. In order to ease the problem of underperformance of librarians, the study recommended that physical facilities, funding and better emolument be provided (Amusa, Iyaro, and Olabisi 2013). Similarly, Kisiedu's (2010) study in Ghana and Iyoro's (2005) study in Nigeria noted that when workers are given the necessary motivation and better physical facilities, they tend to display maximum willingness in the discharge of their duties which in turn enhances their job performance.

According to Igbokwe (2011, 32), many factors could hinder effective job performance in Nigeria, for example, personal factors such as poor attitude to work, lack of training, absenteeism, and underproductivity. Similarly, Chikaodili (2010, 45) listed the following as factors hindering librarians' job performance:

- managerial ability;
- lack of skills or technological know-how;
- lack of physiological drive; and
- attitude or technology employed.

The reviewed literature has indicated that there are barriers inhibiting academic librarians in their job performance. The limitations noted include a lack of information literacy (lack of ability to retrieve and use the right information), poor funding, and limited physical access to resources.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a survey approach because it is associated with the philosophical paradigm of post-positivism. The purpose of using this research design was to predict the level of job performance of academic librarians at the time of the study. The population of both academic librarians and the heads of library (university librarians) was obtained through the Nigerian Library Association Online Forum and personal contact with professional colleagues in sampled institutions. Questionnaires and interviews were the data collection instruments. The total enumeration method was then adopted to select professional librarians in the seven selected universities in Nigeria. The sample size included 128 academic librarians and 7 heads of library (university librarians), totalling 135 respondents. With the help of seven research assistants, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents for the study. This study used the census method, and surveyed the 128 academic librarians. In-depth interviews were also conducted with the 7 heads of library in order to have first-hand information about key issues related to the job performance of academic librarians. These participants were purposively selected because of their managerial experiences in the university library.

Presentation of Findings

In any research, the purpose of the data analysis and the presentation of the findings is to answer the empirical findings and to summarise the research questions. A total of 128 copies of the questionnaires were distributed and 103 were returned.

Research question 1: To what extent do academic librarians in your library perform their job in the following areas?

The first research question for this study sought to determine the extent to which university academic librarians in North Central Nigeria are performing their job. Table 1 shows that over 75 per cent of the respondents indicated excellent, good and average in all the questions in the table. Ranking the items based on the mean scores and standard deviation values shows that academic librarians perform the listed tasks in the following order of proficiency: cataloguing ($\bar{X} = 4.55$; $SD = 0.500$); circulation ($\bar{X} = 4.37$; $SD = 0.594$); reference ($\bar{X} = 4.22$; $SD = 0.656$); acquisition of materials ($\bar{X} = 4.18$; $SD = 0.872$); information literacy ($\bar{X} = 3.97$; $SD = 0.826$); journal publication ($\bar{X} = 3.93$; $SD = 0.875$); current awareness services ($\bar{X} = 3.86$; $SD = 0.833$); selective dissemination of information ($\bar{X} = 3.77$; $SD = 0.851$); exhibition and display ($\bar{X} = 3.48$; $SD = 1.083$); consortium service (interlibrary loan) ($\bar{X} = 3.20$; $SD = 1.214$); indexing ($\bar{X} = 3.20$; $SD = 1.194$); and abstracting ($\bar{X} = 3.14$; $SD = 1.140$). It can be deduced from the outcomes in Table 1 that most academic librarians perform

better in terms of cataloguing, circulation and reference, and least in consortium services, indexing and abstracting. The extent to which information resources improve individual performance in the library from a utilisation–behavioural perspective is confirmed by the task–technology fit theory (Goodhue and Thompson 1995).

Table 1: Job performance of academic librarians in North Central Nigeria

S/ N	Statement	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Mean	Std Dev
1	Cataloguing	57 (55.4%)	46 (44.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.55	0.500
2	Circulation	41 (39.9%)	61 (59.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	4.37	0.594
3	Reference	35 (34%)	57 (55.4%)	10 (9.8%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	4.22	0.656
4	Acquisition of materials	40 (39.3%)	47 (46.1%)	10 (9.9%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	4.18	0.872
5	Information literacy	25 (24.6%)	55 (54%)	18 (17.7%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	3.97	0.826
6	Journal publication	24 (23.8%)	55 (54.5%)	15 (14.9%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	3.93	0.875
7	Current awareness services	19 (18.7%)	59 (57.9%)	16 (15.7%)	7 (6.9%)	1 (1%)	3.86	0.833
8	Selective dissemination of information	15 (15%)	56 (56%)	23 (23%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	3.77	0.851
9	Exhibition and display	15 (14.9%)	43 (42.6%)	24 (23.8%)	13 (12.9%)	6 (6%)	3.48	1.083
10	Consortium service (interlibrary loan)	13 (13%)	32 (32%)	31 (31%)	10 (10%)	14 (14%)	3.20	1.214
11	Indexing	14 (13.8%)	30 (29.5%)	32 (31.4%)	14 (13.8%)	12 (11.8%)	3.20	1.194
12	Abstracting	9 (9%)	33 (32.7%)	35 (34.7%)	11 (10.9%)	13 (12.9%)	3.14	1.140

Heilman, Block and Lucas's (1992) self-rated and supervisor-rated performance scale was adopted to evaluate academic librarians' job performance. The result shows that 40 (40.5%) of the respondents adjudged themselves to be highly competent in performing their jobs, 41 (41.5%) said they are quite competent, and 18 (18.2%) indicated competent. The results also show that 36 (36%) of the respondents considered their perceived competence to be high in performing their jobs and 40 (40%) indicated quite competent. Only 22 (22%) and 2 (2%) adjudged themselves to be competent and fairly competent respectively.

A total of 35 (35%) of the respondents adjudged the quality of their work to be of very high quality, 48 (48%) said the quality of their work is high, and 17 (17%) indicated the

quality as moderate. Table 2 further shows that 30 (34.9%) of the respondents considered the quantity of their work to be of very high quantity, and 40 (46.6%) indicated a high quantity. Only 16 (18.7%) adjudged the quantity of their work to be of moderate quantity.

Table 2 shows that 31 (31%) of the respondents adjudged themselves to be most effective in getting their jobs done, 50 (50%) said they are quite effective, and 19 (19%) indicated effective. It can therefore be said that two sets of need (esteem and self-actualisation) relate to personal growth and development which improve performance as noted by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow 1954).

Table 2: Self-rated job performance of academic librarians

Q/N	Statement	Highly competent	Quite competent	Competent	Fairly competent	Not competent	Mean	Std Dev
III_a	How competently do you perform your job?	40 (40.5%)	41 (41.5%)	18 (18.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.22	0.736
III_b	How would you judge your overall perceived competence?	36 (36%)	40 (40%)	22 (22%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	4.10	0.810
Q/N	Statement	Very high quality	High quality	Moderate quality	Low quality	Very low quality	Mean	Std Dev
III_c	How would you judge the overall quality of your work?	35 (35%)	48 (48%)	17 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.18	0.702
III_d	How would you judge the overall quantity of your work?	30 (34.9%)	40 (46.6%)	16 (18.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.16	0.717
Q/N	Statement	Most effectively	Quite effectively	Effectively	Fairly effectively	Not effectively	Mean	Std Dev
III_e	In your estimation, how effectively do you get your work done?	31 (31%)	50 (50%)	19 (19%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.12	0.700

Research question 2: What are the factors inhibiting effective job performance among academic librarians in your university library?

The second research question sought to determine the obstacles to the use of information resources for effective job performance in North Central universities. Table 3 reveals the factors inhibiting effective job performance of academic librarians at universities in

North Central Nigeria in their order of severity. From the results in Table 3, obsolete equipment and a paucity of relevant databases were identified as the major obstacle hindering effective job performance of academic librarians. The implications of using obsolete equipment include output reduction, increase in stoppages, and poor performance. In line with this research question, the need for self-actualisation as espoused in Maslow's 1954 theory represents an important construct in enhancing academic librarians' job performance at universities in North Central Nigeria.

Table 3: Obstacles to the use of information resources for effective job performance

S/ N	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std Dev
1	The type of technology in an organisation influencing librarians' job performance. That is, obsolete equipment reduces output, increases stoppages, and poor performance	34 (34.4%)	61 (61.7%)	4 (4.1%)	0 (0%)	3.30	0.543
2	Poor internet connectivity	34 (35.1%)	56 (57.8%)	7 (7.3%)	0 (0%)	3.28	0.591
3	Low bandwidth of internet access is a major problem	38 (39.2%)	48 (49.5%)	8 (8.3%)	3 (3.1%)	3.25	0.736
4	Inadequate electricity supply	37 (37.8%)	49 (50%)	10 (10.3%)	2 (2.1%)	3.23	0.715
5	Motivation is a fundamental recipe for high level job performance of academic librarians. When management fails to motivate, the employee becomes a liability to the organisation which leads to poor performance	34 (34%)	56 (56%)	8 (8%)	2 (2%)	3.22	0.675
6	Manual process of library operation is a major constraint for information search	34 (34.7%)	51 (52.1%)	11 (11.3%)	2 (2.1%)	3.19	0.713
7	Slow download	24 (25%)	65 (67.8%)	7 (7.3%)	0 (0%)	3.18	0.543
8	Lack of current information resources has a negative effect on academic librarian's job performance	32 (32.7%)	53 (54.1%)	9 (9.2%)	4 (4.1%)	3.15	0.751

S/N	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std Dev
9	Unenthusiastic attitudes result in poor services and ineffective use of resources	28 (28.6%)	57 (58.2%)	12 (12.3%)	1 (1.1%)	3.14	0.658
10	Inadequate equipment is a major hindrance to academic librarians' job performance	28 (28.3%)	57 (57.6%)	14 (14.2%)	0 (0%)	3.14	0.639
11	Political influences: a higher perception of organisational politics results in decreased levels of job performance among academic librarians	25 (25.8%)	58 (59.8%)	13 (13.5%)	1 (1.1%)	3.10	0.653
12	Non-conducive working environment leads to ineffective use of information sources	27 (27.3%)	54 (54.6%)	17 (17.2%)	1 (1.1%)	3.08	0.695
13	Inadequate modern ICT equipment	23 (23.5%)	59 (60.3%)	15 (15.4%)	1 (1.1%)	3.06	0.655
14	Paucity of relevant databases from foreign countries	27 (27.9%)	52 (53.7%)	14 (14.5%)	4 (4.2%)	3.05	0.769
15	Improper shelving of information resources makes search difficult	27 (27.9%)	48 (49.5%)	18 (18.6%)	4 (4.2%)	3.01	0.797
16	Poor skills in the use of information resources hinder job performance	24 (24.8%)	52 (53.7%)	18 (18.6%)	3 (3.1%)	3.00	0.750
17	Limited computer system	24 (25%)	49 (51.1%)	20 (20.9%)	3 (3.2%)	2.98	0.767
18	Obsolete information resources affect academic librarians job performance	24 (24.5%)	47 (48%)	22 (22.5%)	5 (5.2%)	2.92	0.821
19	Unavailability of e-resources hindered academic librarians' performance	25 (26.1%)	44 (45.9%)	20 (20.9%)	7 (7.3%)	2.91	0.872
20	Inadequate staffing	24 (24%)	49 (49%)	20 (20%)	7 (7%)	2.90	0.847
21	Perceived low competence among academic librarians results in poor performance	17 (17.2%)	46 (46.5%)	32 (32.4%)	4 (4.1%)	2.77	0.780
22	Relevant resources are not always available	21 (21%)	41 (41%)	26 (26%)	12 (12%)	2.71	0.935

Overall, the findings showed that inadequate funding was the major constraint noted by all seven respondents (heads of library). It was also acknowledged that inadequate funding has a negative impact on their job performance.

Discussion of Findings

According to Perri and Bellamy (2012, 11), the essence of discussing research findings is to determine whether the data analysis supports the general conclusions drawn from the research, and provides answers to research questions and hypotheses.

The first research question sought to determine the extent to which academic librarians at universities in North Central Nigeria were performing their jobs. The research question was linked to the task–technology fit theory by (Goodhue and Thompson 1995). It was found that 73 (75%) of the respondents indicated that they were relatively up to the task at hand. It was also discovered that most of the academic librarians performed better in terms of cataloguing, circulation and reference services.

The finding is in agreement with the assertion of Hussain and Kumar (2013). The least available services were the consortium services, indexing and abstracting. This finding is in agreement with Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami, and Salami (2014), who reported a similar finding on abstracting and indexing services. A significant number of the respondents in the study by Nwachukwu, Abdulsalami and Salami (2014) indicated that information services in their libraries needed improvement. Gabriel (2012) found that there was efficiency in indexing and abstracting services in the dissemination of agricultural information resources at the Institute for Agricultural Research Library, Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria. The findings corroborate those by Hussain and Kumar (2013) in Karanata University Library, India, which revealed that services such as the reference service, current awareness, and bibliographic and online search engine strategy services were the mostly used. Hussain and Kumar's (2013) study showed that 87 (87%) of the scholars used the reference service, 48 (48%) used indexes, and 46 (46%) used abstracts services. The findings revealed that reference and bibliography services were the most used among research scholars.

Selvamani (2012), in a study at the University of Madras, India, showed that most of the respondents (75 (63%)) used journals or periodicals and circulation services for their job performance, followed by 65 (54%) for selective dissemination of information, 64 (54%) for abstracting and indexing services, and 59 (49%) and 57 (48%) for current awareness services and reference service recorded respectively. The findings of the present study concur with those of the previous studies conducted by Owusu-Ansah, Mprah, and Kumah (2014), which established that the majority of the respondents believed that the influence of information resources on library services was critical to the growth of academic librarians' job performance. They noted that two sets of need (esteem and self-actualisation) of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy theory relate to personal growth and development, which improves performance as noted by Ferri et al. (2010). Although the theoretical view suggests that the self-esteem level of academic librarians

should be either high or low, the literature suggests that such effects are either available or non-existent (Ferri et al. 2010).

The findings are in contrast with those of the studies by Onifade and Sowole (2011), which reported that reference materials and services available in the Federal University of Agriculture Library, Nigeria, and Mbeere South, Mmbu Country, Kenya, respectively, were very old and had a negative effect on the services rendered by the personnel of the libraries. Onaolapo (2016) found that services such as reference services, lending of books, displays and exhibitions and research support services rendered by the Federal Polytechnic Offa Library in Nigeria are not optimally used by most of the target users owing to several inherent factors. Statistically, some of the respondents noted that if services such as awareness services, selective dissemination of information, photocopy services and internet services were available, they could have made use of these services to enhance their job performance.

Furthermore, the results as shown in Table 2 of the study revealed that 81 (81%) of the respondents adjudged themselves to be most effective in getting their jobs done and 81 (82%) indicated a high competence in their job performance. Corroborating this assertion, the heads of the seven selected libraries noted that academic librarians get work done effectively owing to their competence, as noticed from the results of the interviews. The finding is in agreement with the submission of Boxall and Macky (2009) and Boxall and Purcell (2011) that when employees are given adequate training and other incentives, their performance will be enhanced.

Based on the available findings, evidence suggested that the respondents were aware of the extent to which academic librarians at universities in North Central Nigeria are performing their jobs. The extent to which information resources improve individual performance in the library from a utilisation–behavioural perspective is confirmed by the task–technology fit theory (Goodhue and Thompson 1995).

The second research question focused on the obstacles hindering effective job performance among academic librarians at universities in North Central Nigeria and revealed several challenges. To answer this question, 22 items were used. This study noted that all the items listed were obstacles to effective job performance of academic librarians.

The seven respondents (heads of library) indicated that inadequate funds and poor electricity supply were some of the constraints confronting effective job performance. Corroborating this assertion, Ani et al. (2016) assert that a paucity of funds, high cost of internet use, inadequate access to ICT resources, poor ICT skills and awareness of ICT-based library materials were some of the problems affecting the use of ICT-based library materials. Also, Mbagwu and Nwachukwu (2010) found that inadequate funding hindered academic librarians' job performance in Nigeria. The finding is consistent with Familusi and Ajayi's (2015) view that the major obstacles facing academics in Nigeria

are poor internet connectivity, poor ICT facilities and inadequate funds. The findings of this present study support the previous scholars on the constraints of academic librarians' job performance. The results have shown that academic librarians in all universities face considerable challenges in their effort to use these information resources for their job performance. Some of these obstacles will now be looked into.

The first major obstacle identified by the academic librarians in this study was the type of technology used in an organisation. The majority of the respondents opined that the type of technology in an organisation influences librarians' job performance. This finding concurs with the submission by Okiki and Durodolu (2018) that technology changes are a major constraint in academic libraries. It is also consistent with Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique's (2010) study in Pakistan and Ajie's (2019) study in Nigeria.

In a study of three libraries in Kuwait, Al-Fadhli, Corral and Cox (2016) found that the lack of technological skills, staff workload and insufficient number of staff are the major obstacles confronting job performance among librarians. A significant number of the respondents noted that innovative technology added more creativity and responsibility to their job performance. Al-Fadhli, Corral and Cox (2016) concluded that, considering the effect of technology on job performance, academic libraries must focus on the strategies that will produce a dynamic philosophy of technological development for both librarians and library users. Similarly, Ndakalu (2014) found that the absence of adequate information skills, poor information infrastructure and inadequate training are the major challenges confronted when accessing and using digital information resources in the Nairobi University Library.

Other major problems confronting effective job performance of academic librarians at universities in North Central Nigeria included poor internet connectivity and motivational factors. For instance, 90 (87.4%) respondents opined that internet connectivity and motivational factors rated as the second highest constraint confronting academic librarians' job performance. This finding is confirmed in the studies by Sejane (2017) in Lesotho, Khuong and Yen (2016) in Vietnam, Amusa, Iyaro, and Olabisi (2013) in Nigeria, Hashim and Mokhtar (2012) in Malaysia, Kisiedu (2010) in Ghana, and Parameshwar and Patil (2009) in India. They all assert that a number of challenges are impeding the use of information resources for effective job performance.

As reported in the extant literature reviewed, other studies conducted in Nigeria concurred with the present findings on the subject matter (Agba, Mbotto, and Agba 2013). These authors assert that the internet services at the universities contribute little to improving productivity of librarians. From the findings, it is obvious that some of the obstacles are similar. Thus, this study concurred with Maslow's (1954) theory on self-actualisation; it is an important construct in enhancing academic librarians' job performance. This theory is relevant in explaining factors that could motivate academic librarians to perform effectively in a given task. The theory further explains the importance of motivation in securing employees' optimal performance. In relation to

this construct as affirmed by Maslow (1954), the satisfaction of librarians' basic needs would go a long way in enhancing their self-actualisation. The desire for self-actualisation encourages academic librarians to target high capacity development which will in turn enable them to do their jobs effectively.

Recommendations

In view of the findings, the literature review and theoretical viewpoints, the study makes the following recommendations for improving the job performance of academic librarians in North Central Nigeria.

- It is recommended that the 26 per cent UNESCO policy on the proper funding of education be observed. To solve Nigeria's tertiary education problems on budgetary allocations, there should be an increase of at least 15 per cent from the present 7.04 per cent allocation if the UNESCO policy cannot be observed.
- Motivation and capacity building should also be put in place by the university management to equip academic librarians with the relevant skills that will enhance their job performance. Such motivation includes a reward system in terms of compensation (overtime, annual leave, leave bonus and regular promotion) and capacity building (in-house training, workshops, conferences and seminars at both local and international levels). This reward system can be incorporated into the service scheme of librarians from entry level to the topmost position. This would serve as a fallback cushion for academic librarians in their line of duty which will improve their performance.

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