

A Pragmatic Study of Library Management Competencies and Staff Commitment to Service Delivery in a Nigerian University

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Abstract. The study evaluates library management competency and staff commitment to library service delivery in a Nigerian University. The survey method was used to carry out this research. The population for the study comprised heads of section (Senior Librarian-University librarian), para-professionals and other supporting staff in the library. Eighty (80) copies of the questionnaires were administered and fifty-four (54) was duly filled, returned and found valid for analysis. (12 library managers, 42 para-professional/ supporting staff). This represents 67.5% of the total respondents. Similarly, 12 library management staff were sampled representing 100% response rate. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistic and percentages. The finding revealed that leaders are competent enough to transform the library operating system to achieve effective and efficient library service delivery. There is a cordial relationship in the mode of communication in the library from the leaders to the subordinates. Findings also indicated that leaders provide encouragement to his subordinates through constant interactions.

Keyword: Library Management, Competency, Leadership styles, Staff Commitment, Service Delivery, Nigerian University

1. Introduction

The library management personnel were professionally trained and adequately endowed with the technological competencies and intellectual capabilities that are constantly driving the library to the world best practice. A good manager must adequately plan and make decisions that will facilitate accelerated development in his organisation. In order to perform these functions effectively, there is a need to keep in mind, the nature of the job, the learning environment,

the skills and experiences of the people working with you, time available at his or her disposal in carrying out its duty.

Meanwhile, professional competences can be regarded as a flexible knowledge and skills that permit the librarians to function effectively within his environments and to produce a continuum of value-added information services to the users. Hence, personal competencies are defined as a set of skills, attitudes and values individual possessed that enable him to work efficiently, be good communicators and survive in the new world of knowledge (Haddow, 2012). Therefore, a combination of these skills by library management staff will propel greater value to the existence of the library system and subsequently provide better services to the clients. Undoubtedly, leading people require that a leader must appreciate the attributes of individuals, personality and perception that are unique for their existence. This is a very important factor in relation to those who may be your subordinates.

Library management is a discipline that encourages leaders to focus on specific issues that affect the progress of staff and organisational development. Recognizing the role of library manager in this new world order is a great task, Levinge (2006) notes that the influence of the library headship that is university librarian or equivalent is unequivocal in the efficiency of a quality library service delivery. Definitely, library operational management involves functions such as planning, organizing, leading and controlling all other activities in the library. In addition, planning is about systematically making decisions and execution of achieving the library goals while organizing is about gathering and coordinating human activities, financial, physical, informational, and other resources needed to achieve library goals. Leading involves efforts on the part of the librarians to stimulate employees for high performance. Hence, controlling is about monitoring various library operations and services. These management functions should be highly integrated into the library in order to excel in organizing human activities and material resources to give a better performance.

Interestingly, many studies reveal that leadership, communicating style is a contributing factor for managerial success and development. These leadership styles include autocratic, democratic and free-rein or laissez-faire. The autocratic communicating style involves the dominating and domineering in which information is typically flown in one direction, from the superior to subordinate in the form of instruction, directives, order, etc., a defaulter of this directive are regarded as saboteurs and they are heavily penalized. The communication pattern of this leadership style is retrogressive and can be destructive and employees are not allowed to use their initiative in doing their work (Jiboku 2000), democratic communicative style, on the other hand, allows full participation of everybody; there is free-flow of information, subordinate are allowed to make their suggestions and contributions towards decision making and execution. There exists a delegation of authority; a leader based his

communication on consultation, deliberation and participation of their group. This type of leadership encourages development, progress and goal achievement. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the employees and management team in the library to see to the successful achievement of these objectives. It is in the same vein, Ugah (2008) opines that the responsibility of the library management is to discover the natural potentials in each library staff and apply all needed strategy to ensure these strategies are harnessed; this is the only way productivity will be achieved in the library.

The application of new technology in the libraries has changed the traditional pattern of service delivery among staff in Nigerian libraries, therefore, a continuous staff training on evolving technologies is crucial to learn, improve and develop various kinds of professional skills, that will encourage knowledge and competency skills among staff.

The librarian is a link between the library resources and library user, bringing both together and ensuring that library resources meet the information needs of patrons in the most effective and efficient way. Satisfactory service cannot be provided unless the views of users are considered. Popoola (2008) in his work identified the following library services: selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), statistical data analysis (SDA), word processing, internet/e-mail services, facsimile, translation, photocopying, referral, bindery, abstracting and indexing, CD-ROM databases searching, document delivery/loan, and microfilming. These are the core of library services designed to help users to derive maximum benefit from the library. Igben (1993) noted that for a library to be most functional, the services it renders should relate closely with the needs of its users. The availability and accessibility of these resources go a long way to encourage users to visit the library more often.

Therefore, the major function of the library is to meet the information needs of its users, create an enabling environment that will encourage reading, teaching and research. In order to realize these objectives, there is a need for availability of information resources and qualified personnel to pull the resources together for maximum utilization. It must be noted that users are described as the reason for the existence of the library. Librarians should strive to ensure that their library users derived the best possible benefits from the services they render coupled with the conducive learning environment.

2. Objectives of the study

- i. To measure leadership competencies in managing the activities of the library
- ii. To examine the existing relationship between the leaders and the subordinates in the library.

- iii. To identify the mode of communication that can facilitate success between the leaders and subordinates.
- iv. To investigate the techniques used to motivate subordinates to attain success.

3. Literature Review

The library offers core services for learning and research for nation building. Aniebo (2011) stipulates that library gives individual's an ability to gather information for primary, secondary and tertiary sources to enhance their research work and making critical decisions. In another study, he investigated other possible factors that had a great impact on library performance. He identified, collections development, equipment and physical facilities were also germane to knowledge acquisition. He concluded that continuous library evaluation would help reposition the libraries to better service delivery and would increase users' utilization of research materials, which in the past has been adjudged to be very low.

Most writers have, therefore, explained public library in line with the way it relates to their assertion. For instance, Rubin (2000) believed that libraries are considered to perform the following basic functions, such as: developing collections and selecting materials that are relevance to user needs, ordering and acquiring materials, making documents available through document delivery of information, and the provision of information access mechanisms, conserving and preserving materials and providing bibliographic and other forms of instruction. The fact remains that the university library is an organized institution set up with outlined objectives that need to be achieved.

To a very large extent, librarians are expected to interact effectively with a variety of clientele and taught them verbal and nonverbal skills (Pellack, 2003). Laura Saunders (2012) observes that interpersonal communication skills, as well as the ability to build relationships through active listening and inquiring, are essential when offering a reference service. Saunders (2012) observed that reference services are gradually moving online connectivity and this will increase interpersonal communication skills and most especially the librarians are communicating with users globally.

Similarly, Ogunsola (2004) stated that the use of the library by clientele and indeed their satisfaction with library services depend on the availability of suitable learning materials, accommodation and competent staff in the library. He further comments that the main objectives of any library are to support the parent institution through the logical acquisition and organization of all forms recorded information in all fields pertinent to the goals and aspirations of the institution and making such information available to the member of the institution.

It must be restated that other factors that can influence user's satisfaction include responsiveness, competence and assurances, tangibles and resources. Providing quality services in academic libraries are now a major issue among academic librarians; they see the library more in terms of the provision of and access to service quality than as just a physical place. Technology and automation have also changed the way people perceive libraries. Based on these libraries and librarians have been re-evaluating their roles as reflected in many kinds of literature.

A good librarian is someone whose professional experience is recognized by the user. This is the most basic characteristics that re-engineering their activities. A librarian's experience should be demonstrated to the user in the information handling and delivery. A good library manager should be someone who produces results and adds value to the information he produces. This implies that the entire range of the personal and technical competence of the management should be manifested in searching skills; cataloguing, budget management, personnel management and resourcefulness in getting results in any tasks assigned to them.

Management is the process of working with people and resources to accomplish organizational goals and objectives. Good managers do things effectively and efficiently. To be effective is to achieve goals with minimum waste of resources, that is, to make the best possible use of money, time, materials, and people. However, some managers failed on both criteria, and focus on one at the expense of another. The best managers sustain the effectiveness and efficiency of service rendered. McNamara (2002) stated that traditionally the term management is described as the functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling (or coordinating) activities in an organization. In any larger set up like library organization, the tasks involve assembling, forming logical units of works, defining hierarchical structures, identifying staffing requirements, assigning tasks and responsibilities, coordinating human, financial, physical, informational, and other resources needed to achieve library goals.

The series of research into human resource management is presented as a managerial function which is used to develop potential abilities of the employees to achieve organizational goals. In human resource management, the most important view of the employees is their potential growth and professional development, training for acquiring new responsibilities and encouragement of innovation. Haenisch (2012) reiterates that leadership style is obviously the most influential factor affecting productivity in the 21st century; this is because the leaders in any organization are adorned with the responsibility of driving the attainment of set objectives based on their methods of operation, reward systems, communication methods and policy formulation.

Organizations are hereby challenged nowadays with the delivery of quality products and services in order to be able to respond to greater and changing demands from their clients. This makes job performance of interest to the organization because of the importance of high productivity in the workplace which every organization wants to achieve. It is, therefore, one of the most important activities that will reflect both the goals and the means necessary to achieve it. Hence, it becomes necessary to investigate the library management competency in directing the affairs of the library to support the goal and aspiration of the users.

4. Methodology

The research design used for this study was the survey. The instrument used in collecting data for this study is the questionnaire. The question was prepared and administered among the practicing librarian, but specifically, senior librarians that constitute library management staff, para-professional and their supporting staff in Nimbe Adedipe library. The questions were divided into three (3) sections. Section one (1) sought information on the demographic variables of the respondents. Section two (2) sought information on library management competencies and motivational techniques for the attainment of organizational goals. Section three (3) asked information from the para-professional and the supporting staff as regards their relationship and mode of communication with superior officers. A total number of 80 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the staff, out of which fifty-four (54) were completed and returned (12 library managers, 42 para-professional/supporting staff). This represents 67.5% of the total respondents. Similarly, 12 library management staff were sampled representing 100% response rate. The results of the study were analyzed using percentages and simple average calculations.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Data

Demographic data in terms of sex, age bracket, marital status, working experience and educational qualifications of staff were analyzed. A total of 30 (55.5%) male and 24 (44.5%) female responded to the questions. This shows that both male and female were adequately represented in the study.

Table 1: Demographic variables

S/N	Variables	Respondents		Percentage
		Mgt.	Para/Adm	
1	Rank/Status			
	Management Staff	12	-	22.2
	Para-professionals	-	12	22.2
	Supporting staff/Admin	-	30	55.6
	Total	12	42	100

2	Academic qualification			
	WACE/GCE	-	25	46.3
	NCE/OND/Dip	-	10	18.5
	HND/B.Sc/BA/MA/M.Sc	-	7	12.9
	M.Sc/MA/Ph.D	12	-	22.2
	Total	12	42	100
3	Age of the Respondents			
	20-30	-	25	46.3
	31-40	-	11	20.4
	41years and above	12	6	33.3
	Total	12	42	100
4	Working experience (years)			
	1-5	-	8	14.8
	6-10	-	16	29.6
	16year and above	12	18	55.6
		Total	12	42

Table 1 indicates the number of respondents in the library with their rank or status. The managerial staff are (22.2%). Paraprofessionals are (22.2%) and supporting/administrative staff are (55.6%). It is obvious that the library is an organization that stands to benefit immensely from the hierarchy of service, structure and stability.

The above analysis gave the frequency picture of educational attainments of the respondents. The distribution percentages of the respondents who possessed WAEC/GCE is (46.2%), followed by those having NCE/OND (18.5%), HND/B.Sc (12.9%) while M.Sc/PhD constitute the managerial staff with the rating of (22.2%). It is obvious that the employees of the libraries are of a higher educational standard that is capable of carrying out activities in the library.

The above table shows the working experience of the respondents, 8 of the respondents with (14.8%) have worked for 1 – 5 years. 16 of the respondents with (29.6%) have 6 – 10 years experienced, while only 30 respondents with (55.6%) have worked for 11 years and above respectively.

Table 2: Library management competencies

S/N	Items	SA %	A %	D %	SD
1	As a leader, I can control the working environment conveniently	7 58.3	3 25	1 8.3	1 8.3

2	I take full action to ensure tasks are accomplished	5 41.6	7 58.3	-	-
3	I have the ability to set goals and develop strategies to achieve those goals	6 50	5 41.6	1 8.3	-
4	I have the ability to be bold and take courageous actions	4 33.3	5 41.6	2 16.7	1 8.3
5	Provide facilities to accomplish goals	3 25	6 50	2 16.7	1 8.3
6	Put all machinery in motion to satisfy users	5 41.6	4 33.3	2 16.7	1 8.3
7	Have courage to mobilize subordinates	7 58.3	5 41.6	-	-
8	Have seals to articulate directions	5 41.6	7 58.3	-	-

N=12

SA= Strongly Agreed, A= Agreed, D= Disagreed

Table 2 shows the result of leadership traits/competencies in carrying out their activities in the library. Based on the findings of this study, 50% strongly agreed and 41.6% agreed that they have the ability to set goals and develop strategies to achieve those goals. While 58.3% strongly agreed and 41.6% agreed that they have the courage to mobilize subordinates. Also, 41.6% strongly agreed and 58.3% agreed that they take a full action to ensure tasks are accomplished at the stipulated time. It is obvious that the library management staff were competent enough to coordinate activities of the library for effective library service delivery.

Table 3: Motivational techniques to achieve results

S/N	Opinion	SA %	A %	D %	SD %
1	Recommendation of staff for promotion	6 50	4 33.6	2 16.7	- -
2	Always support salary increments	7 58.4	3 25	2 6.7	
3	Issuance of commendation letter	5 41.6	3 25	2 16.7	2 16.7
4	Cash gifts	2 16.7	3 25	7 58.4	- -
5	Verbal commendation	6 25	3 25	2 16.7	1 8.3

N= 12 SA= Strongly Agreed, A= Agreed, D= Disagreed, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 3 above shows different motivational techniques use by the library management as an incentive for service delivery among staff. One of the incentives is the recommendation of staff for promotion when due, 50% of the respondents strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed 16.7% disagreed. For recommendations for salary increment 58.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 25% agreed, 8.3% disagreed and 8.3% strongly disagreed. It is obvious that cash gift carried a very low percentage, which an indication that staff are not supported with cash gifts. It is not surprising, because of the dwindling economy.

Table 4: Attainment of organizational goals

S/A	Opinion	Very Regular %	Regular %	Irregular %
1	Staff discipline	4 33.3	6 50	2 16.7
2	Frequency monitoring staff on specific work to do	2 16.7	9 75	1 8.3
3	Frequency of staff cooperation	5 41.7	4 33.3	3 25
4	Frequency work supervision	9 75	2 16.7	1 8.3
5	Reward for performance	7 58.3	5 41.7	- -

N= 12

To achieve service delivery among the staff, discipline/correction for misconduct is very necessary to make sure that work ethics are strongly adhered to. From the result of this study, 33.3% assert that very regular discipline is adopted for misconduct, while 50% accepted regular discipline and 16.7% confirmed that both above-mentioned ways of correcting misconduct were used regularly. Values recorded on different discipline shows that large number support one way or the other, this in no small measure will help the staff to be law abiding, which will further promote the efficiency of operation at all levels.

Table 5: Mode of communication

S/N	Items	VF %	F %	NF %
1	Hold general meetings regularly	9 21.4	8 19	25 59.5

2	Information on a bulletin board	8 19.4	28 66.7	6 14.2
3	Use of internal memorandum	7 16.6	26 61.9	9 21.4
4	Telephone calls	9 21.4	6 14.2	27 64.2
5	e-mail messages	6 14.2	4 9.5	6 14.2
6	Meet one-on-one	23 54.6	16 38	2 4.6

N=42

VF= Very Frequent, F= Frequent, NF= Not Frequent

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents on their mode of communication in the library. These responses were posed for paraprofessional and administrative staff. 59.5% of the respondents assert that the holding of the sectional meeting is not frequent, 19% indicates frequent while 21.4% indicated very frequent. Meet one-on-one were equally reported 54.6% indicated very frequent, frequent 38% and 2.3% indicated not frequent. However, telephone calls indicate that 64.2% is not frequent, while 14.2% indicated frequent. From the result, it is obvious that the mode of communication among staff at the library is not all that cordial.

Table 6: Relationship between leaders and subordinates

S/N	Opinion	V. Often %	Often %	Occasionally %
1	Provision of leisure time of interaction	6 14.2	13 30.9	23 54.7
2	Allows frequency of staff socialization	8 19	1 2.3	33 78.5
3	Given the positive response to personal needs	16 38	25 59.5	1 2.3
4	Given the positive response to official needs	29 69	12 28.5	1 2.3

N= 42

Table 6 asked questions from para-professional and other supporting staff to hear their views on the interpersonal relationship with their leaders in discharging their work responsibility. 69% of the respondents assert that positive response to official needs is very often, 28.5% indicates often while 2.3% indicated occasionally. Given the positive response to personal needs 38% indicated very often, 59.5% indicated often and 2.3% indicated occasionally. From the result, it is obvious that response to official needs and staff

socialization is of appreciable values. The frequency of staff socialization, 19% indicated very often, 2.3% often and 78.8% indicated occasionally. From the result, it is obvious that the response to the provision of leisure time of interaction and staff socialization is not encouraging; hence, testify a dichotomy between leaders and subordinate in their social interaction. This indicates a class status among the leaders and subordinates

5.2. Findings of the study

- The findings indicated a high level of commitment to both official and staff personal needs by the leaders.
- The result of the finding showed that recommendation for promotion is a great reward that encourages commitment to efficient library service delivery among the staff
- The result indicates that the mode of communication in the library from the leaders to the subordinates is not much cordial.
- Findings also indicated that leaders give a positive response to personal needs and to official needs of their subordinates. This implies that employees will always make significant contributions to the achievement of organizational goals where a leader always there to assist them in the time of needs.
- Findings indicate that leaders are competent enough to transform the library for effective and efficient services. This was also observed by Is,haq, Musa (2008) that leadership styles is an all-encompassing approach that can be used to describe a wide range of leadership from very specific attempts to influence followers on a one-on-one to a very broad attempts to influence the whole organization.

5.3. Recommendation

- The leaders should strive to build a virile relationship with their subordinate while such has been a thread that could hold all sections of the library and allows it to perform successfully.
- The results indicated that provisions of leisure time for staff interaction and socialization among leaders and subordinates are not inspiring. Where these relationships are lacking, such organization will not get the best performance from its employees.

3. Conclusion

Library management competencies and effective library service delivery among staff will go a long way for organizational goal attainment. The library has its hierarchical structure, official decision-making processes, institutional policy and routines, which should be adhered to in order to achieve set goals. Management style can directly cause work outcomes that are either positive or negative. Positive work incentives are incentives that make work interesting, e.g.; attractive work environment, good personnel policies, provision of

benefits, job structure and compensation. Enabling work environment leads to motivation, good personnel policies, favourable work environment, provision of benefits, job satisfaction and compensation. The situation in the libraries worldwide has changed in the last few years. Therefore, the library needs a purposive leader who is ready to work assiduously to achieve results.

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