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WORK ENVIRONMENT AS CORRELATES OF LIBRARIANS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH-CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated work environment as correlates of librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in North-Central Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 175 librarians in the eight (8) Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria. There was no sampling since the entire population is relatively small and manageable. The researcher developed questionnaires titled ''Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ)'' and ''Librarians' Job Performance Questionnaire (LJPQ)'' which were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Library and Information Science, and one from Measurement and Evaluation in Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. Cronbach alpha method was used for a test of internal consistency of the instruments which yielded coefficients of 0.81 and 0.78 for WEQ and LJPQ respectively. The researcher together with eight research assistants collected data for the study using the direct approach method and 98% return was recorded. Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and t-test of correlation to test hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that physical work environment and psychosocial work environment had strong relationship with librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north central Nigeria. Also, physical work environment and psychosocial work environment had significant relationship with librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north central Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that University management should offer annual training and development opportunities to all librarians to enable them acquire skills and knowledge of manipulating work environment to improve the job performance of librarians.

Keywords: Work Environment, Librarians, Job Performance, Electronic Library

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Introduction

Library is place established in educational institution to meet the information needs of students and staff for effective teaching, learning and research. According to Udoh and Akwang (2023), library is a place where materials that cut across books, films, recorded sound, periodicals and digital media are organised and stored for students and others to freely access them for many purposes such as reference, study and recreational reading. A library is a building containing information resources that users can read for relaxation or to support their academic and research activities.

A librarian is a person who is professionally trained to manage and facilitate access to information resources in the library. Aghadiuno, Ayele and Itodo (2020) defined a librarian as professionally trained person who is in charge of assisting users to access information resources in a library. A librarian maintains available information resources, gives direction on the use of resources in the library and provides instruction on information literacy. Librarians provide a wide range of services such as technical, reference, serial and administrative related services in the university libraries.

Librarians are saddled with the responsibilities of acquiring, organising, preserving and disseminating information resources. According to Saidu, Saka and Kur (2020), librarian is someone who has acquired Library and Information Science (LIS) training in any approved institution of learning and has obtained first or higher degree in librarianship to enable him or her perform professional duties such as selection and acquisition, cataloguing and classification, conducting reference services, bibliographic services etcetera. Librarians are believed to be the backbone of the services offered by the university libraries on their different job description. The success or failure of university libraries in meeting the information needs of users depends on the job performance of librarians.

Job performance put succinctly refers to the result of tasks executed by employee. Atanda and Udoedouok (2020) defined job performance as outputs attained by an employee in carrying out an assigned task. Job performance is the outcome or contribution of employees that make them attain set goals. Every employee owes the employer the responsibility of performing their duties for which they are employed and paid for so that the institution or organisation can achieve their aims and objectives for which they were established. Job performance is the ability to carry out statutory duties which could be based on the field of specialisation or areas of training and development as well as organisations objectives. Job performance could also refer to the different work activities and duties that are carried out in the university libraries including the electronic ones so that the users can utilize the information resources that are available in the electronic and also the conventional library in order that the goal of establishing the libraries will be met.

Librarians' job performance is the discharge of their duties of organising, safeguarding and managing information resources to meet the needs of library users. Unobe and Ikonne (2020) defined librarians' job performance as the discharge of statutory duties or functions of managing information resources geared towards the attainment objectives and goals set in the library. The authors added that librarians perform jobs that are technical in nature such as cataloguing and classification, acquisition and user services such as referencing and response to users query. The job performance of librarians determines their success in cataloguing books, creating awareness of the available services in the library, keeping track of information resources and ensuring all users can easily access them. According toFabunmi, Ikonne and Madukoma (2023), librarians' job performance is the

application of their competencies, practical skills and cognitive abilities in discharging their duties of providing services to library clientele to meet users' information needs. Operationally, librarians' job performance is the behaviours or activities carried out by university library staff to meet information needs of users for accomplishment of set university's goals and objectives. Librarian could effectively perform their duties in university academic libraries with good work environment.

Work environment is the immediate surroundings which members of staff perform the duties for which they are employed for so that the aim and objectives of the organisation can be achieved. According to Zubairu and Oyekale (2021), work environment is a place that comprises both the physical and mental conditions that employees discharge their duties. It is the definite area and condition in which an employee goes about performing their daily job. Rasli, Azman, Noor, Mohd and Faizal (2022) defined work environment as the setting, social features, as well as physical conditions wherein employees carry out their tasks. It consists of the location, policies, norms, resources, buildings, office space, furniture, nature of interaction and climate of the workplace. A comfortable and supportive work environment could contribute to the improvement of job performance of librarians. Nyoman, Nengah, Anak and Baniline (2022) noted that a work environment that meets decent standards of needs will contribute to the comfort of employees in carrying out their work, exhibiting friendly attitude, showing mutual respect to one another and maintaining harmonious relationship that can ultimately improve their job performance. Contextually, work environment is the place and conditions in which librarians discharge their daily duties in a university.

The nature of work environment in which members of library staff operate could determines their dedication and job performance. Work environment consists of physical and psychosocial aspects. In the same vein, Umahi, Madukoma and Bamidele (2022) categorized work environment into two main components namely the physical component and psychosocial component. Similarly, Atanda and Udoedouok (2020) noted that work environment includes the physical, psychological and social aspects that make up the working condition. The study is interested in the physical and psychosocial components of work environment.

Physical work environment is the buildings, sanitary equipment, office and other facilities surrounding the place of work. Enwezor and Obi (2020) stressed that the physical work environment deals with the tangible facilities at the place where job is performed. Continuing, Enwezor and Obi (2020) stated that it includes laboratories, workshops, office layout, temperature, space, ventilation and lighting surrounding workplace. A well-equipped physical office environment will boost the employees and ultimately improve their job performance. The way and manner in which the physical work environment is structured could influence how employees in such establishments perform (Nzewi, Arachie, Ibrahim and Okoli, 2018). A well-equipped and organized physical work environment could stimulate librarians to remain focused at work for improvement of their job performance. Umahi, Madukoma and Bamidele (2022) noted that physical component of work environment comprises of comfort level of the work place or workspace, lighting, temperature, ventilation, conveniences, office equipment and office design.

Psychosocial work environment is the nature of interpersonal relationships that influence the emotional well-being of librarians. Umahi, Madukoma and Bamidele (2022) averred that the psychosocial work environment component includes level of interaction and distraction in terms of interpersonal relationship among workers, superiors and subordinates,

and noise level. Psychosocial aspect of work environment includes procedures, policies, rules and norms surrounding the place of work. It also captures cooperation among staff, work load and time allotted for completion of assigned task. Enwezor and Obi (2020) asserted that psychosocial work environment is the set of those characteristics of work environment that affect how members of staff feel. The authors added that it also deals with communication styles and relationships at job settings. A positive psychosocial work environment promotes the social and emotional wellbeing of librarians.

The job performance of some librarians seems to be below expectations in academic libraries in North-Central Nigeria. To buttress this, Aghadiuno, Ayele and Itodo (2020) noted that some librarians of universities in Northern part of Nigeria still exhibit poor attitudes such as poor commitment to work, absenteeism and lateness which make them perform below expectations, is associated with unconducive work environment. The authors added that, this has affected the information needs of library users thereby hindering the general progress in research, scholarship and the institutional development. The researcher observed that library work environment of public universities in north central Nigeria is unsafe and ill-equipped with facilities that make it uncomfortable for librarians to effectively discharge their duties which probably contribute to low job performance. The study thus, sought to investigate work environment as a correlates of librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in North-central Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher observed that some work environment of public university libraries in North Central, Nigeria are poorly designed as shown by excessive noise due to where it is situated, poor ventilation as most of the air conditioners and ceiling fans are in poor working conditions and inappropriate lighting of the building and shortage of relevant equipment. Mohammed, Kolyang and Kinta (2022) noted that the environment of library buildings where librarians carry out their tasks is unconducive which make them not to effectively and efficiently discharge their duties in federal universities in North Central, Nigeria. The work environment of public university libraries in northern-central Nigeria seems to be characterised by noise, heat, heavy workload and role complexities that demoralize library staff to remain commitment, dedication and work harder to effectively discharge their duties. Some management of public university libraries in Northern-central Nigeria exhibit hostile and unsupportive attitudes which create unfavourable and uncomfortable work environment for library staff. Library remain unsafe as the available equipment and spaces are too close to each other which increases the risk of workplace accident and stress level that could adversely affect the job performance of librarians. It is in view of the highlighted problems that the researcher investigated work environment as correlate to librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine work environment as correlate of librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in North-Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the;

1. Relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.
2. Relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north central Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

Methods

Correlation research design was adopted for this study. Ansari, Rahim, Bhoje and Bhosale (2022) defined correlational research design as the type that involves the collection of data on two or more variables to establish statistical relationships that exist between them. Correlational design is appropriate for this study because the researcher collected data from the given sample of librarians to determine the relationship among work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in North-Central Nigeria. The study was conducted in North-Central Nigeria which is one of the six zones in Nigeria. North-Central, Nigeria has six states including Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, namely; Benue State, Kogi State, Kwara State, Nasarawa State, Niger State and Plateau State. The choice of North Central for the study is the unpleasant state of universities libraries that could be contribute in the job performance of librarians.

The population of the study comprised 175 librarians in the eight (8) Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria. There was no sampling since the entire population is relatively small and manageable. Therefore, the researcher applied census sampling technique in selecting all 175 librarians for the study. Thus, the 175 librarians were used by the researcher for the study without sampling.

Two sets of instruments titled ''Work Environment Questionnaire (WEQ)'' and ''Librarians' Job Performance Questionnaire (LJPQ)'' were used for data collection. The researcher developed the instruments from the information gathered from literature review and consultation of experts in the field of education. The first instrument titled WEQ contained 29 items arranged in two clusters namely: A and B. Cluster A contained 15 items on physical work environment and Cluster B which centred on psychosocial work environment had 14 items. The second instrument titled LJPSQ contains 18 items which measure librarians' job performance. Each of the two sets of instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, two from the Department of Library and Information Science, and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Their suggestions were used to produce the final version of the instrument. Cronbach alpha method was used to determine the internal consistencies of instruments coefficient values obtained for Clusters A and B of work environment (WEQ) were 0.80 and 0.82 with the overall reliability of 0.81, while

coefficient value of 0.78 was obtained for librarians' job performance (LJPQ). This is in line with Said (2018) who recommended that a co-efficient (r) of 0.75 and above should be considered high enough to judge an instrument as reliable.

The researcher together with eight research assistant librarians administered instruments to librarians. The research assistants were briefed on the nature of the study and method of data collection. A total of 175 copies of the instruments were distributed, out of which 171 copies were properly filled and successfully retrieved indicating 98% return rate. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer research questions and t-test of correction to test the hypotheses. For decision on the research questions, the coefficient r and the size of the relationships were interpreted using the correlation coefficient by Alsagr (2021), as follows

Coefficient	Relationship
.00- .19	Weak correlation
.20- .39	Fair correlation
.40- .69	Moderate correlation
.70- .89	Strong correlation
-.90- .1.00	Very strong correlation

In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if p-value is equal to or less than significant value of .05 (P≤ .05), the null hypothesis was rejected, but if p-value is greater than the significant value of .05 (P>0.5), the null hypothesis was accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria?

Table 1: Pearson r on Relationship between physical Work Environment and Librarians' Job Performance

Variables	N	Physical Work Environment	Librarians' Job Performance	Remarks
Physical Work Environment	171	1.00	.830	Strong
Librarians' Job Performance	171	.830	1.00	

Result of table 1 showed a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.830. This shows that there is strong positive relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. This indicated that physical work environment has strong relationship with their job performance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

Table 2: The Summary of t-test on the Relationship between Physical Work Environment and Librarians' Job Performance in Federal University Electronic Libraries in North-Central Nigeria

N	r	Df	T	P-value	Remark
171	830	169	2.35	0.00	Significant

Table 2 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 169df, the calculated t 2.35 with P-value 0.00 which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance of federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria?

Table 3: Pearson r on Relationship between Psychosocial Work Environment and Librarians' Job Performance

Variables	N	Psychosocial Work Environment	Librarians' Job Performance	Remarks
Psychosocial Work Environment	171	1.00	.872	Strong
Librarians' Job Performance	171	.872	1.00	

Result of table 3 showed a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of 0.872. This shows that psychosocial work environment has strong positive relationship with librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. This indicated that psychosocial work environment has strong relationship with their job performance.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

Table 4: The Summary of t-test on the Relationship between Psychosocial Work Environment and Librarians' Job Performance in Federal University Electronic Libraries in North-Central Nigeria

N	R	Df	T	P-value	Remark
171	.872	169	2.60	0.00	Significant

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 169 df, the calculated t 2.60 with P-value 0.00 which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. This agreed with the finding of Nur, Farah, Mimi, Norrini and Wan (2020) which showed that workplace environment has strong positive and significant relationship with the job performance of employees. The reason for this finding may associated with the fact that physical work environment makes librarians feel safe, comfortable and motivated to perform their job to their highest abilities in librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. The provision of physical facilities in the libraries boost the morale and work attitude of librarians which is responsible for the strong relationship with their job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria.

The result of the hypothesis test also revealed that there is significant relationship between physical work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. This is in line with the finding of Nzewi, Arachie, Ibrahim and Okoli, 2018) which showed that there was a significant positive relationship existing between physical work environment and job performance. This is also in agreement with the finding of Shaari, Sarip and Ramadhinda (2022) which revealed there was a significant relationship between physical environment of employees and their job performance. Favourable physical work environment could enable librarians to relax comfortably and feel motivated in discharging their duties to bring about the significant relationship with their job performance.

The result of the study indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. This agreed with the finding of Huma (2022) which showed that there was strong positive correlation between psychosocial workplace factors and teachers' performance. This also supported by the finding of Osazevbaru and Agbor (2022) which noted that a strong positive relationship exists between psychosocial work environment and employee performance. The agreement in the findings could be attributed to time span of just a year difference. Psychosocial work environment offers emotional supports and encourage social interactions among librarians which make them go extra mile in discharging their duties and thereby strongly improve their job performance. Librarians who execute their duties in favourable psychosocial work environment are likely to receive supports that are helpful in accomplishing their job requirements.

It was also revealed through hypothesis test that there is significant relationship between psychosocial work environment and librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. This affirmed the finding of Akhigbe and Issa (2022) which indicated that there was significant relationship between psychosocial work environment and employee job performance. This is also in consonance with the finding of Huma (2022) which showed that there was strong positive and significant correlation between psychosocial workplace factors and teachers' performance. The psychosocial work environment enables librarians to feel safe and comfortable around through colleagues which improve their mental well-being and thereby account for significant relationship with their job performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that work environment have positive significant relationship with librarians' job performance in federal university electronic libraries in north-central Nigeria. Favourable work environment boost the morale and improve the job performance of librarians. A good physical work environment enables librarians have access to facilities that help them to effectively discharge their duties. The general quality of psychosocial work environment influences the work perception, attitudes and behaviour perception of librarians which are directly related to the level of their job performance. A favourable psychosocial work environment makes them to feel comfortable in performing their daily routine of providing information resources services to library patrons.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of federal university electronic libraries should provide sufficient modern office facilities in libraries to create favourable physical work environment that enable librarians feel relaxed, comfortable and motivated in rendering library services to improve their job performance.
2. University librarians should engage in regular interaction with librarians and open their suggestions to create positive psychosocial work environment that will improve their job performance.

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