

## **Work environment, staff development and personal variables as contributors to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Job performance of library personnel is one of the essential requirements for achievement of library goals and objectives in public universities. The study was carried out to investigate work environment, staff development and personal variables as contributors to job performance of library personnel in public universities. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of 762 library personnel, notably librarians, para-professionals and library assistants working in the 13 public universities in South-South, Nigeria. A total enumeration was adopted as the sampling technique. The instrument used to collect data for analysis was questionnaire. The research instrument was validated, to consider its suitability for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, simple percentage and Regression analysis. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that work environment, staff development and personal variables relatively contribute to job performance of library personnel. Furthermore, the variables do not equally contribute to job performance of library personnel. Work environment ( $\beta = 0.248$ ) made highest contribution, followed by staff development ( $\beta = 0.204$ ) and the next is personal variables (educational qualifications ( $\beta = 0.177$ ); work experience ( $\beta = 0.155$ )). The paper concluded that, work environment, staff development, as well as personal variables relatively contributed to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that library management should take cognisance of variables such as work environment, staff development and personal variables to improve and sustain the level of job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Contributions, job performance, library personnel in public universities, personal variables, staff development, work environment, South-South, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

University libraries are integral parts and also among the most essential units of those universities that established them. University libraries acquire, process, store, preserve and disseminate information from whatever source to users. They house the intellectual contents of the institutions such as the administrative output of the institution, directories, reports, scholarly articles, among others. Every university exists with a standard library and as central points around which academic activities revolve. University libraries in Africa, particularly Nigeria, provide literature

support in different formats (print and electronics) thereby extending the frontier of knowledge through teaching, learning, research, and community services. They help their founding institutions to achieve excellence in their teaching, research and community services functions. They provide and meet users', faculty members' and staff' needs. Thus, serving members of their university communities (Eyo, 2021).

Nevertheless, the success of university libraries in performing expected roles rest not only on information resources, facilities and equipment but also on the quality of personnel as manifested in their

job performance. It therefore shows that library personnel play important roles in various departments and units of university libraries facilitating the attainment of library goals and objectives. Library activities in public university libraries by their very nature are performed by a team of library personnel (librarians, para-professionals and library assistants). Library activities are not single action, rather, they are complex activities. Undoubtedly, library tasks undertaken by library personnel in public universities are crucial to libraries. It is vital not only to library's growth and development, but also for the growth and development of library personnel. Library tasks performed by library personnel could also be part of yardstick for accrediting a university during accreditation.

Job performance of library personnel in completing given tasks, is important attributes measured frequently by all libraries. Performance of library personnel is also measured by technical performance efficiency and effectiveness, job knowledge, job skills and job outputs. Moreover, the viability and credibility of parent institutions are strengthened by tasks performed by library personnel in universities because, when services of university libraries are assessed or evaluated, especially during accreditation, library personnel are equally indirectly assessed and evaluated. However, work environment, staff development and personal variables (educational qualifications, job positions, work experience, job tenure), contribute to job performance of library personnel, indicating equipping the library personnel to perform jobs with ultimate aim to achieve quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity and so deserve serious attention.

Work environment of library personnel refers to the architectural design and aesthetics as well as the conducive nature of the workplace in which library

personnel operate their jobs, such as the building with adequate lightings, ventilations, adequate workspaces, air quality, air conditioners, fans, comfort, good conveniences with running water, adequate furniture with spaces for ICT facilities/equipment, outlets for ICT facilities, clean environment, among others, expected to make library personnel feel comfortable and happy to do their jobs for better outputs (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Eyo, 2021). This influences how libraries strive. Furthermore, the work environment of library personnel could involve the social interactions at the workplace, including collaboration and relationships with colleagues, subordinates, supervisors and managers. The interactions could also involve library users. Work environment, therefore, involves everything that forms part of library personnel involvement with the work itself. This study concentrates on work environment such as the physical work environment (lightings, ventilations, workspaces, technological facilities) and social work environment (collaboration) among library personnel. The work environment of personnel should be safe, healthy, comfortable, and make personnel enjoy coming to work (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Heryati, 2019; Eyo, 2021).

Staff development is another factor that can contribute to jobs undertaken by library personnel in universities in Nigeria. Staff training is subsumed in staff development. Staff development entailed education, training and retraining for employees to acquire job knowledge, job skills, experiences, increase efficiency and improve competencies on the job to contribute to attainment of organisation goals. Staff development plays important roles in ongoing career development of library personnel, makes them ready for changes in the profession as well as fit to accept new and difficult tasks (Eyo, 2021).

These help personnel to become excellently better in operational efficiency, attain customer satisfaction, reach higher standards, accept great challenges, enhance on-the-job performance and to work confidently and competently. It also adds values to what already exist.

Another important factor that can contribute to job performance of library personnel in universities is personal variables. Personal variables of library personnel are their individual-based and quantifiable personal characteristics that include information such as age, educational qualifications, work experience, positions or ranks, marital status, job tenure, gender (sex), among others (Ugwu & Ugwu, 2017; Eyo, 2021). Personal variables by definition are independent variables because they cannot be manipulated. Personal variables are essential in the workplace as they contribute to the quality of library personnel to be employed to work in university libraries as well as the quality of job outputs expected by employers. Library personnel who possess quality personal variables will be able to give and perform good jobs. They can transmit these characteristics to unskilled and unknowledgeable personnel and unskilled beginners. These also add value to performance of library personnel enhancing effective and efficient services delivery to users. Agreeably, in organisations such as libraries, emphasis is placed on educational qualifications and work experience as criteria for and during employments of library personnel (Eyo, 2021).

Personal variables can be achieved through job rotation of library personnel. Work environment, staff development and personal variables do not only help library personnel to be relevant on the job and to perform assigned roles, they also provide libraries with more flexible and capable workforce who engage in practical as well

as theoretical work, who have better insights into their organisations and what strings to pull to get jobs quickly done and to solve problems from employees who had tools but do not possess the required characteristics. Personnel can fill vacancies, reduce work stoppages and backlogs of work when a staff is out on an extended sick leave, annual leave or study leave, retirement, or demise.

Library personnel who work in conducive work environment, and expose to regular staff development opportunities as well as possess quality personal variables can impact on staff, thereby improving library services. The organisation can also benefit from personnel, by not having to recruit and train new employees thereby saving money and also maintaining high level of job outputs without hinderances and performance of assigned roles below expectation (Eyo, 2021). These, therefore, positively contribute to the quantity and quality of job outputs of library personnel in universities. The researcher, however, suggests that, literature on personal variables and job performance of library personnel in universities in Nigeria are scarce. Therefore, more work should be done in these areas. In the context of this study, personal variables tested against job performance of library personnel are educational qualifications, job positions, work experience and job tenure.

Considering the importance of library tasks undertaken by library personnel to attain set goals and objectives of Public Universities in South-South, Nigeria, studies revealed that the level of job performance in most public university libraries today is low due to job dissatisfaction of personnel (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Eyo, 2021). These, probably, contributed to difficulties in performing their jobs to expectation and low level of performance. These have been a cause for concern. There is the need to investigate some factors that contribute to tasks performance in public universities

especially in the South-South, Nigeria. Consequently, this study investigated work environment, staff development and personal variables as contributors to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

The researcher's observations and preliminary investigations of some public university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria revealed that adequate attention has not been given to libraries and library personnel by library management, probably, contributing to the low level of job performance as well as difficulties in performing jobs to expectation. Furthermore, interactions with personnel also showed that they perform their jobs in unfavourable physical and social work environments (poor illumination, ventilations, inadequate workspaces, technological facilities, collaboration). In the same vein, adequate attention has not been given to staff development and personal variables of personnel. This is a problem when one considers the strong need for staff development and personal variables of library staff in an increasingly computerised library services environment in universities in Nigeria.

If management of public university libraries do not mind whether or not adequate work environment, staff development and personal variables are put in place to enable library personnel perform their jobs, these could negatively hinder effective performance contributing to low level of job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. It is against this backdrop that the study was carried out to investigate work environment, staff development and personal variables as contributors to job

performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study was to investigate work environment, staff development, personal variables as contributors to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objective was to:

1. determine the relative contributions of work environment, staff development, personal variables to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis is tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relative contributions of work environment, staff development, personal variables to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Literature review**

Jobs performed by library personnel in public universities are essential for the attainment of library set goals. Many factors, such as, motivation, work environment and leadership in the work environment (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017) contribute to job performance of library personnel. Jones (2019) listed traits like knowledge, experience, skills, abilities, awareness, values, motives and needs individuals bring with them to the job. Some factors, according to Woods (2021), include: personal issues, job suitability, motivation to succeed, working conditions, job training, and performance feedback. Other factors, according to Periyasamy (2020), include: job satisfaction, training and development,

employee engagement, goals and expectations, tools and equipment, morale and Company culture, clarifying goals, providing the right tools, listening to employees and gratitude. A study reported in Eyo (2021) agreed that, working in a stimulating, privileged intellectual environments enhanced job performance.

In this era of modern services delivery in university libraries, applications of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in work environment positively contribute to opportunities to improve and increase the level of performance in carrying out library services. Work environments of library personnel are major contributors to job performance in university libraries. Work environment, according to Ogbonna and Okenyi (2014), is one of the important existing phenomenons in the organisations. Comfortable work environments as well enable workers to attain high performance. Al-Omari and Okasheh, (2017) opined that the physical library setting maximises performance among employees. While, poor work environment that caused incapability in personnel performance brought about tragedies associated with less outputs, profitability and impairment of overall organisational effectiveness to organisations. Thus the adverse effects on job performance and productivity may lead to high turnover rates in the library (Edem, Akpan & Pepple).

Nevertheless, Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) cited in Eyo (2021) affirmed that the right physical and psychosocial environmental factors increase job performance. Similarly, Oludeyi (2015) study on the social work environment of library personnel, revealed a significant contribution of interpersonal relationship among colleagues to job commitment. In the same vein, a study reported in Eyo (2021) on private sector companies in Pakistan, discovered that human components in work

environment significantly have great impact on the level of performance of employees, as well as strong positive influence on outputs of employees. The conducive, safe, healthy and hazards free work environment, stimulate creativity and high performance of library personnel.

Moreover, apart from the combination of work environment, staff development and personal variables, staff development and personal variables significantly contribute to job performance of library personnel in public universities. Hassan and Ogunkoya (2014), and Ugwu and Ugwu (2017), among other authors believed that, education facilitates performance in most jobs. Emphatically, in many professions, no issue is more contentious than staff development and personal variables of their employees (Eyo, 2021). Professionally, Azino (2014) asserted that developed personnel are very competent to deliver services to satisfy needs of library communities.

Staff development is very essential for library personnel to meet up with expectations required of them by their parent organisations. It fills the gaps that existed between what personnel know and what they do not know. Tasks performance and competencies in library services delivery can only be guaranteed through staff development. This, contribute significantly to tasks performance. Studies by several authors reported in Cobblah and van der Walt (2017) established that continuous educational programmes enable employees to acquire the knowledge that helps them to cope with the tasks to provide better information services to support teaching and learning. This affirmed the findings of a study reported in Eyo (2021) that staff development through conferences, and seminars equipped library personnel for better tasks performance.

It is imperative to regularly improve job skills of personnel through the attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops within and outside university libraries. The acquired job skills through workshops and at job sites, could be improved to provide more efficient customer services. In the same vein, Obukohwo (2015) stated that staff development opportunities enable personnel to contribute more competently in the work of libraries. These, however, motivate personnel to perform their jobs better. Furthermore, according to Obukohwo (2015), staff development through formal education, job rotation, conferences attendance, workshops, on-the-job training, among others equipped personnel in the profession and improve their capacity to solve problems, share understanding of jobs, enhance tasks performance, competencies, increase team efficiency and to avail promotion opportunities.

Saputri, Lorensa, Asriani and Zainurossalamia Za (2020) affirmed that staff development played important role to improve employee performance and higher quality human resources. While the results of studies such as Mamy, Shabbir, Hasan (2020) indicated that training has effect on the performance of employees. This shows that the more library personnel are developed, the more efficient their level of tasks performance would be, and also improved higher quality human resources they would also be. Personal variables of library personnel significantly contribute to better performance. This supports the fact that employees' educational background must be relevant to their profession and job roles for enhanced job performance. Staff development practices must conform to organisations needs. Certainly, in the library profession practice, before employees can work in libraries, they must possess the recognised educational qualifications

(certificate, diploma, bachelor, master, postgraduate diploma and doctorate degrees in library and information science) by the Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria (Eyo, 2021).

Nevertheless, personal variables also strongly contribute to employees' performance especially during recruitment and outputs of services expected by employers (Eyo, 2021). This corroborates the findings of Sneed, Vivian and D'Costa (2015) that the quality of work experience scores may be predictive of performance and have implications for employees' selection, performance appraisal, etcetera. In the same vein, this is also in consonance with the Theory of Performance cited in Eyo (2021), that experience is another characteristic that individual brings to a job situation which certainly contributes to her competencies. Consequently, work environment, staff development and personal variables relatively contribute to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

## Methods

The research design adopted for this study was the survey research design. The study population consists of seven hundred and sixty-two (762) library personnel (librarians, para-professionals and library assistants) working in the thirteen (13) Public Universities in South-South, Nigeria. There are 6 federal as well as 7 state universities in South-South, Nigeria. A total enumeration was adopted as sampling technique. Instrument used to collect data for analysis was a questionnaire. The research instrument was validated. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by involving librarians at Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan who were not included in the population of the study. A pre-test was conducted to ascertain the content validity. The research instrument was

considered reliable and suitable for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentages and Regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

### Findings

The findings of the study are presented in this section.

**Table 1: Questionnaire administration and response rate**

Num.	Name of institution	No. of questionnaire administered	No. of useful questionnaire returned	Response rate (%)
1	Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa State	47	46	97.9
2	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta State	38	30	78.9
3	University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State	126	116	92.0
4	University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State	80	75	93.8
5	University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Rivers States	55	46	83.6
6	University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State	121	93	76.9
7	Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot-Akpaden, Mkpata Enin LGA, Akwa Ibom State	25	23	92.0
8	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State	54	50	92.6
9	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Cross River State	33	33	100
10	Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State	56	50	89.3
11	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	17	16	94.1
12	Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State	78	65	83.3
13	Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	32	23	71.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>762</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>87.4</b>

N = 666 (87.4%)

Table 1 shows that seven hundred and sixty-two (762) copies of questionnaire were administered to library personnel working in the 13 Public Universities in South-South, Nigeria. Out of these, six hundred and sixty-

six (666) copies were validly completed and retrieved for analysis, which accounted for 87.4% response rate.

**H01:** There is no significant relative contributions of work environment, staff development, personal variables to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria Independent variables in the hypothesis are

work environment, staff development and personal variables whereas the dependent variable is job performance. The hypothesis 1 was tested using Regression analysis  $p < 0.05$ . The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Relative contributions of work environment, staff development and personal variables to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria**

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standard. Coefficient	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std Error	Beta contribution		
(constant)	29.231	3.545		9.360	0.000
Work environment	0.303	0.052	0.248	6.055	0.000*
Staff development	0.451	0.072	0.204	6.058	0.000*
Edu. qualifications	0.792	2.69	0.177	2.95	0.000*
Job positions	-.087	.701	-0.105	1.99	0.034*
Work experience	.100	.052	0.155	2.10	0.003*
Job tenure	.125	.079	0.057	1.57	0.421

\*Significant  $p < 0.05$  level

Regression analysis was used to determine the relative contributions of work environment, staff development and personal variables to job performance. These are expressed in beta weights. The test of hypothesis one revealed that work environment, staff development and personal variables do not equally contribute to job performance of library personnel. Work environment ( $\beta = 0.248$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) made the highest contribution, followed by staff development ( $\beta = 0.204$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and personal variables (educational qualifications ( $\beta = 0.177$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ; and work experience ( $\beta = 0.155$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Only personal variables such as educational qualifications ( $\beta = 0.177$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ; and work experience ( $\beta = 0.155$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) significantly contributed to job performance, while job positions ( $\beta = -0.105$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ; and job tenure ( $\beta = 0.057$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) do not significantly contribute to improve and enhance job performance of library

personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

The variables as contributors to job performance showed that improved work environment, staff development opportunities and possession of quality personal variables, contribute to better performance, thus the personnel would perform at a higher level, can fill vacant positions and reduce management costs.

### Discussion

The findings of this study are quite revealing. Based on the findings, factors in the work environment such as the physical as well as social work environments, staff development and personal variables significantly contribute to job performance of library personnel in the South-South, Nigeria. The findings corroborate the studies of many researchers that many factors in the work environment improve and contribute to employees' performance (Al-Omori &

Okasheh, 2017; Jones, 2019; Periyasamy, 2020; Woods, 2021). Similarly, Oludeyi (2015) study revealed a significant contribution of interpersonal relationship among colleagues to job commitment. Furthermore, human components in work environment significantly have great impact on performance of employees, as well as strong positive influence on outputs of employees.

Staff development significantly contributes to job performance of library personnel. This corroborates Mamy, et al. (2020) findings that training and development have effects on the performance of employee. While Saputri, et al. (2020) study revealed that training and development significantly influence employee performance simultaneously. Lack of appropriate staff development practices for library personnel to improve on traditional as well as ICT skills are hindrances to personnel job performance. It therefore showed that, without continuous improvement of personnel on the job, this can adversely hinder performance of library personnel in public university libraries in Nigeria.

Moreover, the findings showed that personal variables, such as educational qualifications and work experience significantly contribute to employee job performance to achieve library goals in universities. This finding supported Sneed, Vivian and D'Costa (2015) finding that quality work experience scores may predict performance. The finding also supported the Theory of Performance cited in Eyo (2021), that experience that individual brings to a job situation certainly contributes to their competencies. However, work environment, staff development, as well as personal variables contribute to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the findings, the study concluded that work environment (conducive and appealing physical and social work environments), staff development, as well as the possession of quality personal variables relatively contribute to job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. This, therefore implied that, the combination of these factors significantly contribute to job performance of library personnel.

Furthermore, the study revealed that work environment, staff development and personal variables do not equally contribute to job performance of library personnel. They contribute differently to job performance of library personnel. Therefore, management of public university libraries in the South-South, Nigeria should take cognisance of these factors that contribute to job performance of library personnel to improve and enhance the level of job performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. But, if these are ignored by management of public university libraries, these would negatively hinder the job performance of library personnel.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Library management should take cognisance of factors, such as work environment, staff development and personal variables to improve and sustain the level of performance of library personnel in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.
2. Library management should pay adequate attention to quality personal variables when recruiting and deploying personnel to various departments and units for job roles

for improve performance in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

3. Library management should regularly develop library personnel. Giving priority and serious attention to on-the-job training, particularly, job rotation to expose, increase their competencies and work experience to avoid low performance of jobs in libraries.
4. It is, therefore, imperative that federal and state governments and public university authorities in Nigeria should improve their funding and budgetary allocations to libraries and upgrade infrastructural facilities necessary for improvement and sustainability of work environment in public universities in South-South, Nigeria.

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