Interpersonal relations and job satisfaction among librarians in universities in Southern Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explored the relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of librarians in the university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The study employed the *ex-post-facto* survey design with a population of 841 respondents consisting of all the librarians in federal, state and private university libraries that are located in Southern part of Nigeria. The study employed total enumeration (purposive) sampling technique to select eight hundred and forty-one (841) respondents for the study. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Data were collected and analysed with descriptive statistics such as Mean($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD). The demographic data of the respondents were, however, analysed with frequency counts. One research question was answered and one research hypothesis tested in this study. Research questions 1 and hypothesis 1 were answered and tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The study found that, significant relationship existed between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of librarians in the university libraries in Southern Nigeria. It was also found that interpersonal relations influenced job satisfaction among librarians. The study recommended that in order to boost job satisfaction of librarians in the university libraries, administrators of university libraries should create enabling environment that will motivate job satisfaction. Library administrators should ensure that they facilitate the sponsorship of librarians. In addition, management of university libraries in Southern Nigeria should endeavour to send staff on courses on interpersonal relations and workshops order to enhance their job satisfaction.

Keywords: Interpersonal relations, Job satisfaction, Librarians, University libraries, Southern Nigeria

Introduction

For academic libraries to live up to expectation, rendering of adequate services to patrons is paramount. It is only when librarians manning academic libraries are satisfied with their job that they will be able to render effective services to library users. Badawi (2006) asserted that librarians are contented only when their jobs give them satisfaction; that satisfaction occurs when staff assess their jobs alongside with those issues that are essential to their needs. Job is a professional act which is carried out by a person in return for wages. Job is a vital feature of an individual's life. Ogunleye, Odebiyi and Olaoye (2013) asserted that an employee will demonstrate positive attitude when pleased with the job. Job satisfaction has to do with a sense of fulfilment an employee gets when he/her

enjoys his/her work and does it well. Job satisfaction plays an indispensable role in achieving organisational goals. In the same vein, Bosede (2014) opined that job satisfaction plays an essential role in achieving organisational goals and objectives. The major aim of university libraries is to support their parent bodies in achieving organisational objectives. These goals can be achieved in the university libraries when librarians are satisfied with the work they do.

In this era of retrieval and dissemination of information materials through digital means, the job of librarians has become more challenging because they navigate, arrange, preserve and disseminate information materials at the right time in the right collection to library users. It is imperative to note that job satisfaction of librarians can be effective

when librarians have good interpersonal relations with their users. Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe (2000) stated that positive interpersonal relations were a key forecaster for achieving organisational goals and objectives. Velmurugan (2016) noted that interpersonal relations have an impact on organisational effectiveness and that persons are made for and made of the relationship. The workplace is where the populace spends nearly one third of their lives. If they do not have good relations, it affects their attitude, overall behaviour and job satisfaction.

According to Reich and Herscovis (2014), interpersonal relations are an individual's personal experience of repeated communication or connection with another person. They further stated that interpersonal relations in the workplace are an unavoidable reality for all those working in the context of an organisation. Library management is a progressive initiative, although the activity may seem like just an administration, for the accomplishment of service delivery, good interpersonal relations are an extremely important detail between library users, librarians and administrators. The work place interpersonal relations has been related to numerous optimistic outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction, team work, effective communication, co job involvement, job performance, team cohesion, organisational commitment, and decreased intentions to turn over (Berman, West & Richter, 2002; Feeley, Hwang & Barnett, 2008). Similarly, Mainiero (1989) asserted that positive interpersonal relations among co-workers enhance teamwork, effective communication, and cooperation. Librarians need interpersonal relations for effective communications among peers, patrons on inter-library loans or with administrators on financial statement concerns. Koganuramath and Angadi (2005); Kaul, (1998) asserted that librarians require good communication skills, record-keeping skills, teaching skills, management skills, information

research skills and the aptitude to assess and organize materials implies that management skills may also be useful, as librarians are involved in team management. Similarly, Partridge, Lee and Munro (2010) opined that librarians need to be good at negotiation and diplomacy and should be able to use whatever language is needed to persuade or influence the target audience to their point of view. This implies that, it is essential to establish a good relationship and communication skills with library users.

Deb(2006) grouped qualities of interpersonal relations in relationship to job satisfaction in the working environment into two: managerial qualities and professional qualities. Under the managerial qualities, he pointed out seven specific qualities such as cleverness, theoretical clarity, logical ability, motivational ability, emotional maturity, business acumen, and professional integrity. Under the professional qualities, he listed additional seven qualities such as empathy, communication, human relation skill, knowledge, responsiveness, presentation, and management of change and culture. In the present day environment, librarians should be able to understand problems, manage users and encourage teams of individuals with different skills to work together, as those hybrid teams will be the cornerstones of progress for the management and provision of information systems in the future (Biddiscombe, 2001). Edy (2009) stated that interpersonal communication is a factor affecting job satisfaction. Naturally, it is easier to believe that librarians who are more contented with their jobs are likely to exhibit traits of interpersonal relations in the library. Quintessence, librarians who exhibit traits of interpersonal relations are satisfied with their job. Therefore, this study seeks to examine interpersonal relations and job satisfaction among librarians in the University libraries in Southern, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of librarians in universities in Southern Nigeria. Specifically, the study set out to:

1. find out the relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians in the university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Research question

This research question was answered in the study:

1. What is the relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians in the university libraries of Southern Nigeria?

Hypothesis

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

1. There is no significant relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians in the university libraries of Southern Nigeria.

Literature review

Interpersonal relations in the library context, according to Tanawade and Shri (2011), can be defined as the ability to help librarians move near their goal by dealing efficiently and effectively with people in an effective and pleasant work environment. In other words, interpersonal relations are ways of communicating with people, which include communication skills, effective learning and problem solving skills. Interpersonal relations are the life skills we use each day to converse and relate with other people, both individually and in groups. In short, to build their image, librarians need to master all these skills. Sias (2008) noted that interpersonal relations are essential for existing systems and are the hub of organisations. Wheatley (2001) suggested

that ‘scholars should give attention to how a place of work arranges its relationships; not just its tasks, roles and hierarchies, but also, the form of relationships and capacities built to maintain and transform them.

Srivalli and Vijayalakshmi (n.d) asserted that workplace relationships comprise those interpersonal relations in which individuals are involved in the route of performing their jobs. Such relationships encompass supervisor-subordinate relationships, peer worker relationships, workplace friendships, romantic relationships and customer relationships (Sias, 2008).

Similarly, Pellack (2003) asserted that librarianship is a public service profession which stresses patron service skills and interactions with the general public, that there would ever be a need to deal with interpersonal relations with co-workers. Whether you were drawn to this profession because you love books, or because you wanted to put off student loans, having interpersonal relations is a must (Hack Library School, 2012). Nofsinger (1999) as cited by Katz (2012) asserted that the core competencies for the librarians, especially for the reference librarians were reference skills, subject knowledge, communication and interpersonal abilities. Katz further opined that interpersonal relations are especially needed for the reference librarians. However, interpersonal relations are also needed by librarians working in other sections of the library.

Canadian Association of Research Libraries (2010) propounded that librarians should have the following interpersonal relations:

- i. *Adaptability, flexibility, and eagerness* for new experiences and knowledge.
- ii. *Communication and advocacy* – effectively passing on the significance of libraries to their parent institutions, to their target audiences/constituencies, and

- advancing the standards of the library profession (e.g. Empowering users to be self-sufficient, freedom of expression, upholding the right to access information and knowledge in all expressions, preserving the corpus of human knowledge for future generations, etc.).
- iii. *Negotiation* – working with others to reach a mutually acceptable/beneficial solution. Change management – being able to work effectively in the face of ambiguity; open-mindedness to change and adaptation of work habits/behaviour to different conditions.
 - iv. *Decision making* – making well-informed decisions in a manner that is perceptive of the implications; committing to actions, even when faced with uncertainty in order to fulfill organisational goals.
 - v. *Problem solving* – identifying problems, determining relevance and accuracy of related information, and using good judgment to proffer solutions: possessing the capacity to oversee and resolve conflicts/disagreements in constructive ways.
 - vi. *Initiative* – the capacity to recognize issues and to develop and put into practice solutions to address those issues.
 - vii. *Innovation* – applying the imagination for the reason of devising solutions to problems, and designing new methods/procedures when established ones do not suffice or they are non-existent. Collaboration – working with various groups, in and out of the library, in pursuit of shared goals and with an appreciation of diverse perspectives; taking the library's story into the community.
 - viii. *Marketing* – promoting the expertise, services, collections, and facilities of the library to a varied clientele (e.g., undergraduate students, graduates, and faculty in all disciplines), and making the case to administrations for the library as a vital institution in the research enterprise and for teaching and learning.
 - ix. *Mentoring* – providing positive advice and feedback to novel members of the profession to help them achieve success in the field and in their new positions.
 - x. *Writing skills* – preparing persuasive grant proposals or reports.
 - xi. *Presentation skills* – aptitude to speak in front of an audience – with or without technology.
- Zainuddin and Junaidah (2010) investigated job satisfaction and work commitment among lecturers in Kelantan. Their finding reveals that a positive significant correlation between workplace interpersonal relations and job satisfaction. Similarly, Danish and Usman (2010) examined impacts of reward and recognition on job satisfaction and motivation in Pakistan. Their finding reveals that a positive relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction. This implies working in an environment with good interpersonal relations and mutual respect will increase the job satisfaction of staff. Ramjee (2018) opined that one cannot deny the fact that organization or business performance is also depending on interpersonal relations. It is a fact that job satisfaction is a result of interpersonal relations and such job satisfaction can affect the organizational performance (Bakotic, 2016). Ram (2013) asserted that job satisfaction is one of the results of interpersonal relations and such job satisfaction is not just caused by salary. Patricia (2015) argued that management intervention can be helpful in creating friendship at work through social activities inside and outside of the

workplace. In the same vein, Edwards (2015) argued that workplace satisfaction is crucial to increase in productivity. According to Schreiner (2018) managing interpersonal relations between employer and employee is vital to business success, as strong relationships can lead to greater employee happiness and even increased productivity. Mustapha (2013) examined job satisfaction from the perspective of interpersonal relationship and faculty workload among academic staff at public universities in Kelantan, Malaysia. Her finding reveals that there is a positive significant correlation between interpersonal relationship and job satisfaction ($r = 0.641$, $p = 0.000$). Waskiewicz as cited by Mustapha (2013) asserted that the effect of interpersonal relations at the workplace, such as a good treatment received from a supervisor was significantly important for intrinsic, extrinsic, and general job satisfaction and was the strongest explanatory variable for extrinsic job satisfaction. Campbell and Brown (2010) stated that the importance of interpersonal relations is also pointed out by studies that have been applied in the last half of the 20th century, when most Americans reported that the number and quality of interpersonal relations are at the basis of a high quality life. According to Mitrache and Ciorbagiu (2009), beyond the human basis and security needs, the job is the milieu within the man satisfies self-superior needs, inclusive interpersonal relationships. Lin and Lin (2011) investigated the impacts of co-workers' relationships on organizational commitment and intervening effects of job satisfaction. Their finding reveals that co-workers' relationship has a positive effect on job satisfaction. To reap these benefits, keep the dynamics of users, colleagues and management interpersonal relations at work is vital. These include forming teamwork, encourage individuals to share their ideas with each other, assign targets to each team, promote bonding activities, encourage open communication among

users, employees and management, schedule common meeting or general assembly. Srivalli and Vijayalakshmi (n.d) examined job satisfaction on interpersonal relations and faculty workload in Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh. Their finding reveals that interpersonal relations have a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Correlation analysis reveals that interpersonal relations have a positive relationship with job satisfaction ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.000$). Interpersonal relations are able to explain 22% of variance in job satisfaction ($r^2 = 0.22$, $p < 0.000$). Lachowski, Florek, Zagórski and Lachowska (2018) investigated satisfaction with interpersonal relations among staff of State forests in Poland. Their findings reveal that respondents working in the forestry who were more satisfied with job, were also more satisfied with their relationship with co-workers ($\beta = -0.205$).

Methods

This study adopted the *expost-facto* research design. The populace of the study consisted of all librarians - eight hundred and forty-one (841) from 84 university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The whole population of 841 librarians was used as sample of the study. This was as a result of the manageable size of the population. A questionnaire was the research instrument used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire is entitled: "Interpersonal Relations and Job Satisfaction Scales (IRJSS)". Interpersonal relations items in the questionnaire were adapted from Roger (1999) while job satisfaction was adapted from Spector (1994). Items in the questionnaire were positively and negatively worded on a four-point scale range from very large extent = 4, large extent = 3, small extent = 2 to very small extent = 1. The questionnaire was pretested on a sample of 40 librarians for psychometric study. The instrument was administered to 28 respondents (Librarians) in University of Ilorin, Kwara State and 12 librarians in Bauchi State

University, Gadau in Bauchi State which were outside the scope of the study. The items were tested for significance at 0.05 level of significance. The Cronbach alpha analysis showed the case processing summary reliability statistics; the computed values are: librarian interpersonal relations scale has alpha.95, $p = 0.05$ level of significance and the Librarian Job Satisfaction scale had alpha.95, $p = 0.05$ level of significance. To estimate the content and construct validity of the instrument, Principal Component Analysis (PCA), using the extraction method was used. All items with factor loadings matrix above.50 were selected into the scale or instrument. The interpersonal relations scale had 79% content validity while its construct validity was estimated with component matrix between .94 and .85. The librarian job satisfaction scale had 76% content validity while its construct validity was estimated with a rotated factor loading matrix which ranged between .96 and .69. The rotated sum of squared loadings which revealed the true Eigenvalue of above one for each component was computed. A total of 841 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 679(76.2%) duly completed copies were retrieved and found usable - a

total of 362 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and 277 were retrieved from 18 federal university libraries used in the study; 224 copies were distributed and 172 were retrieved from 20 state university libraries and from 46 private university libraries 255 copies of the questionnaire were administered and 230 were retrieved. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages, descriptive and inferential statistics. The demographic information of the respondents was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Results and discussion

The results of the study are presented according to the research question and hypothesis.

Research question 1: What is the relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians in the university libraries of Southern Nigeria?

Table 1 presents simple correlation analysis output of interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians in the university libraries of Southern Nigeria.

Table 1: Simple correlation analysis output of interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	r^2	$r^{2\text{adjusted}}$
Interpersonal Relations	679	21.1546	2.88490	.547	.300	.299
Job Satisfaction	679	56.5361	6.6829			

Independent variable: Interpersonal relations of librarians.

Dependent variable: Job satisfaction

Table 1 shows that there exists a correlation between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of librarians. The computed simple correlation using Pearson Product Moment Correlation produced an output ($r = .547$). This provides an answer to research question 1. It reveals that there is a relationship between interpersonal

relations and job satisfaction among librarians in the university libraries of Southern, Nigeria. The r^2 adjusted value of.299 constitutes 29.9% amount of variance accounted for by interpersonal relations in job satisfaction among librarians. This implies as interpersonal relations increases, job satisfaction also

increases. Therefore a percentage change in the amount of standard deviation of the librarian interpersonal relations will account for a 29.9% amount of variance in job satisfaction among librarians in the university libraries of Southern Nigeria. This finding is in line with that of Hauck and Hussey (1997); Krapels and Davis (2000); and Woods (2000) that, the profession of the librarians needs interpersonal relations for the effective day- to- day running of the library. Similarly, Pellack (2006) asserted that librarians need to be trained to interact with their colleagues and library users; having interpersonal relations will lead somebody to the world of success. In addition, Stoetzer (2010) and Edy (2009) observed that interpersonal relations have been identified as an important factor in the psychosocial work environment that could affect wellbeing, job satisfaction, performance and productivity. This means

that an employee (librarian) with high level of interpersonal relations skills will experience job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction of the librarians.

In testing hypothesis 1, the correlation model in Table 2 shows that interpersonal relations have a significant relationship with job satisfaction among librarians. The calculated $F = 289.805$, $df (1, 678)$, $P \leq .05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative holds. Therefore, the finding is that there is a significant linear relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction among librarians involved in the study. Thus interpersonal relations has a significant relationship with job satisfaction among the librarians involved in this study.

Table 2: Simple regression analysis of the relationship between interpersonal relations and job satisfaction among librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria

	SS	Df	MS	F	B	S.E	P
Regression	9076.851	1	9076.851	289.805	.547	.075	.000
Residual	21204.02	677	31.321				
Total	30280.87	678					

$P \leq 0.05$ level of significance; $N = 678$

Conclusion

This study has concluded that interpersonal relations is paramount for job satisfaction among librarians. In order to boost job satisfaction of librarians in the universities, administrators of university libraries should create enabling environment that will motivate job satisfaction. This will definitely motivate and increase the job satisfaction of librarians. Library administrators should ensure that they facilitate the sponsorship of librarians. The study has shown that interpersonal relations have a relationship with job satisfaction among librarians in the universities. Since interpersonal relations have influence on job

satisfaction, university management in Southern Nigeria should encourage staff by sponsoring them to courses on interpersonal relations in order to increase their job satisfaction.

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