Full Length Research

Work Experience and Personnel Productivity In Polytechnic Libraries In South-East And South-South Nigeria

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This study investigated the relationship between work experience and personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. In carrying out the study, a research question was formulated to guide the study. The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study and a total of 284 respondents drawn from personnel of the 19 polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria were studied. The instrument used for collecting data was a self-structured questionnaire which was duly validated and the result justified its use. The findings showed that work experience has a significant relationship with personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria. The study recommended that polytechnic libraries should transform the way they recruit by improving on the extent of consideration of the recruitment variables in recruitment exercises. This transformation should not only involve allowing recruitment practices to be guided by recruitment variables, it should as well involve leaving personnel recruitment in the hands of recruitment experts who can use customizable criteria such as Application Tracking Systems (ATS) to filter candidates and shortlist top choices based on skills, work experience, specialization, academic background, or other conditions. More so, work experience should be a key factor in recruitment exercises. Because of the correlation between work experience and personnel productivity, interviews should be tailored to filter candidates and shortlist top choices based on work experience.

Key Words: work, work experience, Personnel, Productivity and Polytechnic Libraries

INTRODUCTION

Work experience is one of the most frequently used assessment criteria for evaluating applicant suitability for employment. Most organizations seek employees whose prior work experience matches the current needs of the organization with the expectation that the experience will help them deliver better, quicker and more satisfactory services. Experience refers to the knowledge or skills gathered from a collection of events or activities. It is the accumulation of knowledge or skill that results from direct participation in events or activities. Collins Dictionary (2020) defines experience as that knowledge or skill in a particular job or activity that you have gained because you have done that job or activity for a long time. The picture these definitions are painting is that there is that knowledge or skill which a given library staff that has worked in a library for say ten years possesses which another staff that is just fresh from (a library) school does not possess.

Productivity refers to the ability to produce goods and services or the efficiency of an organization measured by comparing the amount of goods or services produced with the time taken or the resources used to produce it (Crowther, 1992). Nwizu (2007) defines productivity as the amount of goods that a worker can produce in a given space of time. Sharma and Sadana (2011) argue that productivity is the relationship between physical output and one or more of the associated physical inputs used in the production process. The authors further posit that productivity is broadly conceived as a systems concept which means that it can be applied to various entities, ranging from an individual or machine to an organization, industry or national economy. The definitions of Nwizu (2007), Sharma and Sadana (2011) limit productivity to tangible and visible items alone which is difficult to determine in a polytechnic library whose products are more of services rather than tangible goods. According to Daft (2000), productivity simply refers to an organization's output of goods and services divided by its inputs. This means that productivity can be improved by either increasing the amount of output using the same level of inputs or reducing the number of inputs required to produce the output.

Youssef (2020) posits that being productive means handling your time effectively, which leads to: getting more work done (which means financial stability either by improving your primary job or adding another stream/s of income because of your productivity), better work-life balance (which enhances your psychological wellbeing), prioritized tasks done (which enhances self-actualization through achievements), stress-free life, by having everything under control (which leads to healthier and happier mental wellbeing) and more social relationships (which enhances social wellbeing).Onah (2013) defines productivity as the output resulting from a given resources input at a given time. According to Robbins and Coutler (2010) productivity refers to the amount of goods or services produced divided by the inputs needed to generate the output. Business Dictionary (2019) defines productivity as a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine, factory, system, etc., in converting inputs into useful outputs. Productivity is computed by dividing average output per period by the total costs incurred or resources (capital, energy, material, personnel) consumed in that period.

Librarianship as a profession provides a variety of employment opportunities. Self-development is a step one takes or training one acquires to better himself, advances his skills and become mastery in a particular field. This could be achieved by learning new skills, participating in enlightenment programmes and doing away with bad habits(Opara, Unegbu, Ndulaka and Emmanuel, 2023).Library and information professionals are experts in the provision of information services in a systematic and defined manner that meet the information needs of users globally. Library and information professionals are held in high esteem in the business and management of information in all spheres of human field. Library and information professionals have grown to be innovative, creative and developed mastery in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in providing library and information services to the users (Unegbu, Opara and Ubochi, 2023).According to Nworie, Unegbu and Opara (2022), librarians are those that are trained to carry out core duties of a library beyond the day-to-day routines of library officers and library attendants.

According to LRCN (2013), being a librarian encompasses a wide range of areas; technical skills, interpersonal skills, subject area knowledge, ICT skills, current awareness services or selective dissemination of information skills, and conservation and preservation skills. By this definition ofLRCN (2013), it means that a librarian has some skills with which he will use as stewardship to render services to his or her users. Librarians are expected to be alive to their duties in the provision of information in different formats to their users especially in the academic institution where research is paramount, and not until this is done, the library would not be said to be performing her assigned roles of information provision and dissemination. Work experience and personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria is not adequately documented especially in South-East and South-South, Nigeria and this has created a gap in knowledge which prompted this study. In the light of the above background, this study therefore, seeks to investigate the relationship between work experience and personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study.
What is the relationship between work experience and productivity of library personnel?

Literature Review

Our present day librarianship is quite a complex profession which requires specific and detailed knowledge of many kinds from practitioners. This is because the greatest aim of any library or information center is to provide satisfactory information services to its clientele. The changing services which modern libraries render to changing clients require well experienced and transforming library personnel. This has led to the quest for every library to be staffed with experienced employees.Various scholars have explored the relationship between work experience and personnel productivity and come up with different findings. While many of them believe that work experience and job performance correlate, there

are some who do not believe that work experience influences performance/productivity.

Batty (2013) conducted a study captioned 'Intelligence matters more than you think for career success' which aimed at unearthing the relationship between work experience and personnel productivity. The findings of the study reveal that the significance of work experience as a predictor of job performance is debatable. According to the author, experience correlates with performance for people with 0-3 years' experience, but the correlation attenuates to just 0.15 at 12+ years of experience suggesting that experience does not increase performance after any more than a few years' experience. Among scholars that believe that experience impacts productivity are De Sivatte, Gordon, Olmos and Simon (2018). They investigated the 'Effects of job experience and site experience on job performance'. Results from their investigation indicate that the relationship between job experience and job performance is linear and positive. Consequently, they authoritatively posit that organizational experience major in job performance. Their findings also offer implications for human resource practices, specifically highlighting the value of encouraging a certain amount of longevity in employment location. Ishola, Adeleye and Tanimola (2018) support the view that experience enhances productivity. They inquired into the contributions of educational and professional certification to job performance among bursary staff of a first generation university in Southwestern Nigeria using a standardized self-report questionnaire. Results from the survey show that bursary staff with experience reported more job performance than non-experienced staff. McDaniel, Schmidt, and Hunter, (2012) also agree that for all levels of job, there is positive correlation between job experience and productivity.

Salwa and Kristiawan (2019) agree as well that there is connection between experience and productivity. They sought to determine the influence of academic qualifications, work experience and work motivation on the performance of school principals in Kalidoni, Palembang, Indonesia. They used questionnaire and the partial correlation method to study the productivity of 28 principals in Kalidoni. The results of that study indicate significant effect of the experience of the principals' on their performance.However, there are still some other scholars who hold a different view on the relationship between experience and employee productivity. This group rather believes that the older employees get on their jobs, the less they produce in terms of goods and services. For example, Wagner and Murphy-Hill (2019) posit that what matters most in productivity is capability (competence) and not experience or longevity in a job. They are resolute that being in a profession (working in a library) for a long time does not necessarily make one more productive or smarter at work. Heller (2019) corroborates the view of Wagner and Murphy-Hill (2019). According to Heller (2019), work experience is a poor predictor of future job performance. Harver (2020) appears as well to decimate the link between experience of library personnel and their productivity. According to the author, even if job applicants do not have a lot of experience with certain tasks, having a strong track record in other complex areas could mean their skills can translate.In view of the foregoing, the intention of this study to establish whether or not there is relationship between work experiences of personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted Correlational Survey Research Method. This method was preferred because the study involves a population that is diverse in nature. The researchers used a self-developed structured questionnaire for data collection. The choice of the questionnaire is because the respondents are all literate and can easily fill the instrument. The questionnaire is titled "work experience and personnel productivity in polytechnic libraries **(WEPPPL)**". The total population of the study is two hundred and eighty-four (284). Out of the two hundred and eighty four (284) copies of the questionnaire distributed, two hundred and thirty-four (234) representing 82.4% were returned and found valid for analysis. Out of the other fifty (50) representing 17.6%, thirty six (36) were not returned at all because the respondents could not be found on their seats again to submit the filled questionnaires. Some had gone on leave while others were simply absent from work. Worse still, fourteen (14) of them were simply apathetic; eleven (11) returned the copies of the questionnaire unfilled while three (3) lost the copies of the questionnaire given to them. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample size population from the total population of each of the personnel in polytechnic libraries South-East and South-South, Nigeria. This allowed all the elements that made up the population equal opportunity to be selected.

Analysis

Research Question: What is the relationship between work experience and productivity of library personnel?

Table 1. Relationship between Work Experience and Personnel Productivity in Polytechnic Libraries.

S/No	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Remark
1.	Experience enhances productivity in my library	122	98	14	-	234	3.46	S
2.	Experienced staff better understand job requirements and handle tasks more efficiently than inexperienced staff	124	93	16	1	234	3.45	S
3.	Experienced workers in my library make less risk mistakes	106	94	28	6	234	3.28	S
4.	In my library, experienced staff aremore productive than inexperienced staff	101	89	39	5	234	3.22	S
5.	Experienced and inexperienced workers in my library are equally productive	2	18	83	131	234	1.53	NS

*Significant mean = **2.99***

With a significant mean of 2.99 as is evident on Table 4.6, work experience has positive relationship with the productivity of workers in polytechnic libraries, this is so because work experience enhanced the productivity of library workers (X= 3.46), experienced workers had better understanding of their jobs and were more efficient on their various duties and tasks (X=3.45), experienced workers made less risk mistakes (X=3.28), and the output of experienced employees was greater than that of the inexperienced ones (X 3.22). While it could be true that both experienced and inexperienced workers are productive, there is no basis for comparing their productivity because the output of the inexperienced workers in relation to work experience was insignificant because their mean value of 1.53 was less than the significant mean value of 2.5.

FINDINGS

As can be seen from the evidence of data analyzed in the Table, this study discovered that work experience influenced the productivity of polytechnic library personnel in South-East and South-South Nigeria. The finding shows that work experience enhances productivity because experienced workers in the polytechnic libraries under survey are more productive than non-experienced workers. The finding is in agreement with the outcome of the research report of De Sivatte, Gordon, Olmos and Simon (2018) who investigated the *Effects of job experience and site experience on job performance* and found that the relationship between job experience and job performance is linear and positive. The authors authoritatively posited that organizational experience major in job performance. It also agrees with the finding of Ishola, Adeleye and Tanimola (2018). They inquired into the contributions of educational and professional qualification to job performance among bursary staff of a first generation university in Southwestern Nigeria and found that experience enhances productivity. Results from that survey showed that bursary staff with experience reported more job performance than non-experienced staff.

Similarly, the finding of this study agrees with the finding of Little (2011) that the truism that qualification is related to productivity is so apparently self-evident that few have thought to question it. According to the author, the influence of human capital theory on education and manpower planners for close to half a century in all corners of the globe perpetuated (and perhaps even created) the belief that more qualification leads to increased productivity. McDaniel, Schmidt, and Hunter (2012) studied the relationship between job experience and personnel productivity and arrived at a discovery that agrees with the finding of this study. They discovered that for all levels of job, there is positive correlation between job experience and productivity. Consequent upon the foregoing and in line with the changing services which modern libraries render to changing clients which require well experienced and transforming library personnel, polytechnic libraries need to be adequately staffed with experienced employees. Put differently, this research investigation establishes that work experience enhances productivity and as such, should be made to guide the recruitment exercises of libraries for efficient delivery of services and better satisfaction of the information needs of library patrons.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Aside from speculations, this study has empirically revealed that work experience has significant relationship with personnel productivity in the polytechnic libraries in South-East and South-South-South, Nigeria. As a result, this study recommended that polytechnic libraries should transform the way they recruit by improving on the extent of consideration of the recruitment variables in recruitment exercises. This transformation should not only involve allowing recruitment practices to be guided by recruitment variables, it should as well involve leaving personnel recruitment in the hands of recruitment experts who can use customizable criteria such as Application Tracking Systems (ATS) to filter candidates and shortlist top choices based on skills, work experience, specialization, academic background, or other conditions. More so, work experience should be a key factor in recruitment exercises. Because of the correlation between work experience and personnel productivity, interviews should be tailored to filter candidates and shortlist top choices based on work experience.

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