



Effect of Staff Socio-Mobility Skills on Librarian's Productivity in Selected Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the effect of Staff Socio-Mobility skills on Library Staff Productivity in seven Academic Libraries in South West, Nigeria. The focus of the study is to identify socio-mobility skills of staff, determine the effect of staff socio-mobility skills on staff productivity in these libraries. The sample population consisted of 150 librarians, and a descriptive survey was adopted for the study with the questionnaire used as the main instrument of data collection. However, a total number of 113 copies of the questionnaire were returned, thus giving a response rate of 75%. The findings revealed that librarians at Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAB) have higher productivity than those in each of the other academic libraries. In order to determine the effect of socio-mobility skills on library staff productivity, an hypothesis was formulated and tested and it shows there is no significant effect of staff socio-mobility skills on staff productivity in the selected academic libraries. The study concluded that library staff should be encouraged to attend seminars, trainings, and workshops in order to improve their socio-mobility skills, and librarians should ensure they publish regularly in learned journals to enhance their productivity.

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Introduction

The Coalition Government's Social Mobility Strategy (2008) defines social mobility as a "measure of how free people are to improve their position in society". For the Government, it is about "fairness" and ensuring that "everyone [has] the chance to do, irrespective of their beginnings". For the Institute for Public Policy Research, it is about society and whether "people have an equal chance to define, pursue and achieve their conception of the good life, and where reward reflects talent and effort, not an accident of birth or persistent injustice.

Social mobility is usually defined as the movement or opportunities for movement between different social classes or occupational groups (Aldridge, 2003; 189).

According to Decoulon (2008), to improve social mobility, interventions to improve librarian skills must be more successful and such skills must cut across the educated and those that are not educated. Hence a policy aimed at improving the skills needs to be carefully assessed in terms of its potential benefits in improving social mobility and its potentially high costs of implementation.

Kavulya (2007) identifies priority areas of training and critical IT skills required by professional librarians in relation to current job market and performance requirements.

It is crucial to recognize, however, that if policy is to improve social mobility via improvements in individuals' skill levels, then there must be genuine gains in skill levels, and the skills acquired must be valued in the library. (Elgie, 2010).

Heath and Payne (1999) opine that, an open fluid society is one where individuals are able to move freely, as a result of factors which include: intelligence, ability and effort up the

social scale, regardless of their social position in childhood. As such, the extent to which social mobility is possible is often used as one proxy measure of societal fairness (Blanden, 2005).

Educational attainment continues to be a strong predictor of social mobility. As such, recent trends in educational attainment can be seen as a proxy measure for the impact of more recent public policy interventions. These measures are complex and demonstrate mixed trends but overall they do not indicate that there has been any major positive shift in relative social mobility over the last decade (Platt, 2005).

Staff socio mobility skill has to do with the ability and intelligence of workers within an organization which dictates the productivity of such organization. Trained workers with high qualification are highly valued by the labor market (with returns exceeding those for degrees in some instances). Hence such qualifications are likely to improve the social mobility of those in the middle class rather than at the bottom of the distribution (Jenkins, 2007).

Policies aimed at improving social mobility are often targeted on the most disadvantaged individuals and specifically the least skilled. Perhaps counter-intuitively, this may not be the most efficient way of improving mobility. Evidence on skill suggests that investing in individuals with only very low levels of skill will be costly, and that achieving gains in their cognitive skills in particular will be difficult. Furthermore, attempting to move individuals from the bottom to the middle of the income distribution may be harder, as there are fewer jobs in the middle though in the longer term increasing the supply of intermediate skilled workers may encourage firms to up-skill jobs in order to employ such workers (Walker & Zhu, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that despite all the efforts of librarians, low level of relevant skills possessed by staff to improve themselves and lack of encouragement and motivation to improve staff productivity are considered to be detrimental to librarian's productivity in selected academic libraries.

Research Questions

- i. What are the socio-mobility skills possessed by the staff of the selected academic libraries?
- ii. What is the staff productivity of the selected academic libraries?
- iii. What is the effect of socio mobility skills on staff productivity in selected academic libraries?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant effect of staff socio-mobility skills on the staff productivity in the selected academic libraries.

Literature Review

Library Staff Socio Mobility Skills for Productivity

There is strong current interest in social mobility, especially in the light of the conclusion of the Leitch Review (2006) that highlighted the importance of up skilling the workforce and the ongoing review on the need for greater inclusion. It considers the aim of higher progression framework, ability to do well, their role and potential impact on social mobility.

Elgie (2010) opines that the interests of employers have also manifested themselves in a desire level to increase the skill of their employees. Furthermore, many have targeted their developments on subject areas for which there was a regional employment need. However, the current challenging economic climate might constrain employers and their willingness to engage with the remaining lifelong learning network (LLN) placing their sustainability in doubt.

According to International Labour Organization (ILO), development is a primary means of enabling young people to make a smooth transition from school to work. A large number of youth struggle to find productive employment due to low demand for or lack of recognition of their skills as well as lack of training opportunities. Availability and improvement in the quality of skills development, provision of adequate trainings will improve librarians' skills and their productivity (ILO, 2008).

Retraining and skills upgrading by governments or employers and through commitment by workers to lifelong learning by using these opportunities contributes to their productivity (ILO, 2008).

According to Masterov (2006), there are a number of ways in which government policy might improve social mobility: skills and education policy are just one potential area for intervention. For example, labour market policies in their own right, and in conjunction with education and training policies, are also likely to be important for tackling social mobility and unchaining the cross-generational links in mobility.

Fagbemi (2014) observed that with the poor cognitive skills of people from low socio-economic backwoods worsened by poor quality education, there will be a negative effect on librarian's productivity which is in line with earlier findings of Burgess & Briggs (2010)

Nutbrown (2012) identified a series of weaknesses in the quality and low-level certification among the library workforce and this has a negative effect on efficiency and productivity of such library.

Fagbemi (2014) reviewing Decoulon (2008) submitted that to improve social mobility, interventions to improve librarian skills must be more successful and such skills must cut across the educated and those that are not educated. Hence a policy aimed at improving the skills needs to be carefully assessed in terms of its potential benefits in improving social mobility and its potentially high costs of implementation.

Library Staff Performance and Productivity

Skill is seen as a factor for productivity. Lack of requisite skill, and techniques makes it harder for employers to introduce the innovations, new products and new working methods that feed Improvements in productivity. That creates a low skill equilibrium where employers do not express a need for skills because they pay low wages to low-skilled staff to produce low-value goods and services' (HM Government, 2005).

(HM Treasury 2006) explored the benefits of investing in skills which indicated that 'the prize' for investing in the skills of a workforce is: '...a more prosperous and fairer society... A boost in the productivity growth rate of up to 15% and an increase in the employment growth rate by around 10% Social deprivation, poverty and inequality will diminish (HM Treasury, 2006).

Professional librarians are expected to perform specialized library functions at levels of achievement commensurate with minimum qualifications outlined for each relevant Instructional Research Class Specification. The professional obligation is comprised of both scheduled and non-scheduled activities, with duties being carried out generally within the framework of a 40-hour week. Non-scheduled activities include contributions to the library profession. These activities may be in the form of committee work, projects, offices held, accomplishment in bibliographic activities, research, publication, and other scholarly efforts such as participation in institutes, workshops, or conferences (Bender, 2008).

The dictionary defines 'productivity' as the state of producing rewards or results.

Training is a fundamental and effectual instrument in successful accomplishment of the firm's goals and objectives. Training not only improves them resourcefully, but also gives them a chance to learn their job virtually and perform it more competently hence increasing productivity (Ojo, 1994).

Training has been an important variable in increasing employee (librarians) productivity. Sepulveda (2005), Konings & Vormelingen (2009) opined that training is a fundamental and effectual instrument in successful accomplishment of the firm's goals and objectives, resulting in higher productivity.

Staff productivity refers to the degree to which a librarian within the library uses his skills, ability, to transfer learning back to the job (Holton, 2000). The success of training depends on the correct implementation of all steps of the process: previous analysis of training needs, development and implementation of an adequate training plan and evaluation (Pineda, 1995). In conclusion, training, together with other activities positively affects results and is associated with a productivity increase and a staff turnover decrease (Arthur, 1994, Ichniowski et al., 1997).

According to Ajila (1997), good remuneration has been found over the years to be one of the policies organization's can adopt to increase their workers productivity and thereby

increase the organizations productivity. Also, most employers of labour have realized the fact that for their organizations to compete favorably, the productivity of their employees goes a long way in determining the success of the organization. On the other hand, performance of employees in any organization (library) is vital not only for the growth of the organization but also for the growth of individual library staff (Ajila, 1997).

Fagbemi (2014) carried out a research on librarian's productivity and opined that the performance of workers has become important due to the increasing concern of staff and personnel experts about the level of output obtained from workers due to poor remuneration and as such, all efforts must be geared towards developing workers interest in their job so as to make them happy in giving their best to their work resulting in library staff productivity. This corroborates earlier findings of (Ajila, 1997).

Objectives of Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are an essential component of any educational institution, be it a college or a university. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) recognizes this fact and asserts that university libraries are indispensable to the functioning of universities and the achievement of their academic missions. So important are university libraries to IFLA that it has a University Libraries Section, which seeks to promote: "the integration of the library in the core institutional functions of learning, teaching, research and services" (IFLANET, 2003).

According to Ajibero (2004), librarians have information dissemination as their predominant function. The library has a unique position as a potential educational force. For this role, library holdings are organized for maximum exploitation by users. The effectiveness of a library as an instrument of education is determined by the success with which it is able to provide the user with information he/she seeks. The library can fulfill this function best by pursuing a policy of constant self evaluation in order to be alert to the changing needs of its users.

Ajibero (1995) sees the University Library as the heart of the University and no other single non-human factor is as closely related to the quality of university education. The philosophy of librarianship is based on the concept of service and the provision of relevant materials for users. Librarians have continued the struggle of collecting and organizing printed and other forms of recorded knowledge in order to satisfy both present and future users.

Chukwu (1998) maintains that the major indicator of a good library is the quality and quantity of its collections. It is necessary for Academic libraries in Nigeria and elsewhere to acquire current and relevant information resources necessary for sustaining the teaching, learning, and research activities that universities are known for.

According to Whitmire (2002) academic library resources are considered a good measure of an institutions excellence and quality. Popoola (2008) affirmed that the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among the students and faculty members.

Methodology

Methodology is about techniques used in finding answers to the problem under investigation which includes Research design, population of study, sample size and sampling technique, data collection instrument and data analysis procedures. The design adopted for this research is the descriptive survey type of research design and questionnaire was used as a method for Data collection. According to Chandler (2005) research design can be used to investigate problems in realistic settings, the cost of survey is reasonably relative to the amount of information gathered and a large amount of data can be collected with ease from a variety of people. The population of study comprises of Librarians in seven academic libraries in South West, Nigeria. The population size comprised of 150 staff and total enumeration sampling technique was used for the study. Thus, all the professional Librarians (150) in the seven selected academic libraries were selected for sampling. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).Analyses of research questions was done by using percentages.

Table 1: shows the socio - mobility skills possessed by the staff of the selected academic libraries. For the purpose of analysis the scale was dichotomized in "agree" (strongly agree and agree) and "Disagree" (strongly Disagree and disagree). The result shows that the majority of the respondents (93; 82.3%) agreed that they often attend seminars and conferences to improve their skills while 20(17.7%) respondents disagreed. Also, 106(93.8%) respondents agreed that they are conscious of always improving their skills to enhance their job performance while 7(6.2%) disagreed. In-addition, 111(98.2%) respondents agreed that they source for information on the internet to improve their skills, while 2(1.8%) disagreed. Furthermore, 89(78.8%) respondents agreed that they do not have enough money to embark on training programmes to enhance their skills, while 24(21.2%) disagreed. Moreover, 111(98.25) respondents agreed that they seek information on what they have no knowledge of in order to improve their knowledge base while 2(1.8%) disagreed. Finally, 106(93.8%) respondents agreed that they engage in personal study and ask senior colleagues series of questions when they were not clear while, 17(6.2%) disagreed. The results of findings show the socio mobility skills possessed by the staff of the selected academic libraries.

Table 1. Socio Mobility Skills Possessed by the Staff of the selected Academic Libraries

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Total
I often attend seminars and conferences to improve my skills	93(82.3)	20(17.7)	113(100.0%)
I am conscious of always improving my skills to enhance my job performance	106(93.8)	7(6.2)	113(100.0%)
I source for information on the internet to improve myself	111(98.2)	2(1.8)	113(100.0%)
I do not have enough money to embark on training programmes to enhance my skills	89(78.8)	24(21.2)	113(100.0%)
I seek information on what I have no knowledge of in order to improve my knowledge base	111(98.2)	2(1.8)	113(100.0%)
I engage in personal study and ask my senior colleagues series of questions when I am not clear	106(93.8)	17(6.2)	113(100.0%)

Table 2. Staff Productivity at the selected Academic Libraries

Name of Libraries	Productivity			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
UI	8(34.78%)	15(65.22%)	0(0%)	23(100%)
OAU	10(45.45%)	11(50%)	1(4.55%)	22(100%)
IB POLY	7(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(100%)
FUNAB	2(10.52%)	14(73.68%)	3(15.8%)	19(100%)
LASU	13(59.10)	9(40.90%)	0(0%)	22(100%)
EKSU	8(47.06%)	9(52.94%)	0(0%)	17(100%)
FEDPOADO	0(0%)	3(100%)	0(0%)	3(100%)
Total	48	61	4	113

Table 2 shows the staff productivity at the selected academic libraries. The result shows that majority of the respondents 3(15.8%) from Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAB) are more productive than the staff in each of the other academic libraries. University of Ibadan (U.I) was the highest in terms of medium productivity with 15(65.22%) followed by Federal university of Agriculture Abeokuta with 14(73.68%); then Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) with 11(50%). This depicts that, in terms of library staff productivity, University of Ibadan library staff have medium productivity than the staff in each of the other academic libraries. Lagos State University Library staff leads low productivity scale with 13(59.10%), OAU had 10(45.45%), University of Ibadan had 8(34.78) while Ekiti State University was 8(47.06%). Ibadan Polytechnic has 7(100%) and Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta has the lowest in terms of low productivity with 2(10.52%). The result of findings shows that library staff at Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta has high productivity while those at University of Ibadan library has Medium productivity and Polytechnic Ibadan library staff has a low productivity.

Hypothesis

In order to determine the effect of socio-mobility skills on library staff productivity, an hypothesis was tested.

Ho: There is no significant effect of staff socio-mobility skills on the staff productivity in the selected academic libraries.

Since the calculated value (0.813) was lesser than the Critical value (5.99). It indicates that there is no significant effect of staff socio-mobility skills on the staff productivity in the selected academic libraries, X^2 Calculated (2) = 0.813 was lesser than X^2 Critical (2) = 5.99 at $P=0.66 > 0.05$.

It is concluded that there is no significant effect of staff socio-mobility skills on the staff productivity in the selected academic libraries. Therefore null hypothesis was accepted and H_0 was rejected.

Findings

Majority of the respondents 93(82.3%) agreed that they often attend seminars and conferences to improve their skills while 20(17.7%) disagreed. One hundred and six representing 93.8% respondents agreed that they are conscious of always improving their skills to enhance their job performance.

In-addition, 111(98.2%) agreed that they source for information on the internet to improve their skills. Furthermore, 89(78.8%) respondents agreed that they do not have enough money to embark on training programmes to enhance their skills. Finally, 106(93.8%) respondents agreed that they engage in personal study and ask senior colleagues series of questions when they were not clear while, 17(6.2%) disagreed. The results of findings show the socio mobility skills possessed by the staff of the selected academic libraries.

Majority of the respondents 3(15.8%) from Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAB) are more productive than the staff in each of the other academic libraries. University of Ibadan (U.I) was the highest in terms of medium productivity with 15(65.22%) This depicts that, in terms of library staff productivity, Ibadan Polytechnic has 7(100%) and Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta has the lowest in terms of low productivity with 2(10.52%). The result of findings shows that library staff at Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta has high productivity while those at University of Ibadan library has Medium productivity and Polytechnic Ibadan library staff has a low productivity.

It is concluded that there is no significant effect of staff socio-mobility skills on the staff productivity in the selected academic libraries. Therefore null hypothesis was accepted and H_0 was rejected.

Conclusion

Educational attainment is a strong predictor of social mobility. Staff socio mobility skills has to do with the ability and intelligence of workers within an organization which dictates the productivity of such organization. Trained workers with high qualification are highly valued by the labour market and are likely to improve the social mobility of those in the middle class rather than at the bottom of the distribution. However, skills possessed by an individual differ from one person and organization to another. Library staff productivity is the total number of work done by staff within a particular time divided by the number of hours of work or compensation whereby time and money are two sides of the coin.

Librarians are to be motivated to be more productive by attending seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. They are also to be encouraged by promotions and increase in remuneration as at when due.

Table 3. Shows the Effect of Staff Socio-Mobility Skills on Staff Productivity

Factors	Effects of Staff productivity				X^2 Cal	Crit. Val	df	P Value	R	
	Disagree	Low	Medium	High						Total
Staff mobility skills	Disagree	4	3	0	7	0.813	5.99	2	0.66	Sig.*
		57.1	42.9	0.0	100.0					
	Agree	44	58	4	106.0					
		41.5	54.7	3.8	100.0					
Total		48	61	4	113					

Decision = 0.05 level of significant

Recommendations

From the findings of this research and recognizing the importance of staff socio-mobility skills, and librarian's productivity, the following recommendations are hereby made;

1. Library staff should be encouraged to attend seminars, trainings, workshops in order to improve their socio-mobility skills.
2. Librarians should keep themselves abreast of new developments and technological innovations by browsing the Internet regularly to improve their socio-mobility skill
3. Librarians must ensure they publish regularly in learned journals.
4. Librarians should engage in academic, administrative and teaching service with regards to student's performance thereby increasing their productivity.
5. Academic librarians should be well trained in preparation for managing changes.
6. Government, donor and agencies should help by engaging in manpower training.
7. The continual training and education of librarians and library staff members were also suggested.

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