Investigating Work Environment for Service Delivery of Library Personnel in Academic Libraries

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Abstract

This study explores the perceptions work environment for service delivery academic libraries, in Ondo State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research was adopted with the population of 140 library personnel in all the tertiary institutions, and libraries in Ondo State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument of data gathering. 140 copies of the questionnaire were administered and 116 were duly completed and returned. This gave a response rate of 82.9%. The findings reveal that good working conditions increase personnel motivation to serve library patrons better. The respondents also reported that they are satisfied when their experience is well appreciated and rewarded. The study recommends that library management should make the work environment conducive for the library personnel so as to enable them to offer effective services in their daily library services. The study concludes that it is imperative for libraries to provide conducive work environment for their personnel so that they can map out pragmatic strategies to meet the needs of their patron, thereby enhancing library service delivery.

Keywords: Work Environment, Library Personnel, Incentives, Library Services, Service Delivery,

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Introduction

In this 21st Century, the obligations of libraries in academics setting are to ensure that the immediate and future information needs of the clientele are met through the relentless service delivery by library staff. Service delivery is an element of professionalism that illustrates the connections between the service provider and clients, where the provider delivers a service either information or a task Ekere, Ewulum, Eze, Okpala, and Ebobo, (2019). Service delivery involves a range of organizations such as education, health services, and social welfare, as such, the library as a service-oriented establishment is an integral aspect of the education system which plays a vital role in the system.

Oghenekaro, (2019) sees service delivery as a process in which the outcome is transferred to the customer. Service delivery in an academic library can be referred to as the totality of assistance provided by library staff to see that users' information needs are met. Service delivery in libraries ascertains the supply of information resources in the library and meets the users' information needs Yusuf, and Fasae, (2021). Library services are services offered to disseminate library resources (print and electronic resources) to meet the needs of library users Ponsignon, Smart, and Maull, (2017). Several studies have defined library services as services delivered to ensure that information resources (print and electronic resources) are disseminated to meet the needs of library clients Gavit, (2019), Oghenekaro, (2019). Generally, library service delivery can simply be defined as the activities that are organized by the library to deliver information services and resources to the community it serves Eze (2017). According to Quadri, Quadri and Oluwasina (2015); Chukwudum and Dika (2017), library services are numerous and are delivered in different divisions such as the technical service division and the readers/user service division, as well as ICTs division. Studies by Kimi and Preeti, (2019); Oladipo, (2021) have concluded that users' satisfaction with reference service (readers' service) depends on adequate service delivery.

However, to deliver effective and efficient library services, there is a need for the provision of a conducive work environment for library staff. The work environment is well-defined as the surrounding conditions where an employee works. It is one of the factors that determine the service delivery of an organization. Ashaju-Kayode et al. (2018) opined that effectiveness in organisational services depends on the suitable work environment which can be illustrated as the immediate environment in which an employee works. The work environment is one of the essential elements of satisfaction that motivates library staff to deliver effective services. This is supported by literature that, when an organisation improves the environment in which the job is performed, employees are motivated to perform better Karugu (2018). Suifan, (2018) argued that the work environment is sub-divided into three environments such as the technical environment, the human environment, and the organizational environment. The technical environment includes the provision of technical infrastructures, tools, and equipment. The human environment consists of relationships with co-workers, team and group work, and leadership. While the organizational environment comprises organisational culture, procedures, rules and

regulations, and values of the organization. Several studies have been conducted in the area of physical work environment and work condition and how they affect library staff performance and reader's satisfaction. Nevertheless, limited studies have been conducted on how library staff within the academic environment have bettered their service delivery through the work environment especially in the aspect of comfort, altruism, safety, status and so on. However, a gap is created in the literature on these aspects of work environment and service delivery by library staff in tertiary institutions. As a result, this study examined the impact of the work environment (comfort, altruism, safety, and status) on service delivery by library staff in tertiary institutions in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:
1. ascertain comfort in the work environment for service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State.
2. examine safety of work environment for service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State.
3. investigate the altruist factors of work environment for service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State.
4. examine personnel status in the work environment for service delivery

Research Questions

1. What are the comforts in the work environment for service delivery in academic libraries in Ondo State?
2. What are the safety indices in work environment for service delivery in academic libraries in Ondo State?
3. What are the altruism factors in the work environment for service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State?
4. What are the personnel status in the work environment for service delivery service delivery in academic libraries in Ondo State?

Literature Review

Work environment in the academic library

The environment in which the employees work is a considerable element that can affect their duties. The term "work environment" entails all the circumstances both external and internal conditions and other features that can influence work spirit and employees' activities Nwezi, Chiekezie, and Alphonsus, (2017). The work environment is described as the conditions or surroundings under which a set of individuals work. It is also described as the link that exists between the employees and the place of work. The survival of an organization hinges on the condition of its environment, and how it impacts the employees' behaviour, attitudes, motivation, satisfaction, and job performance; thus, influencing organizational productivity

Ahmed, Newaz, Alkhalifa and Jakowan, (2019). Likewise, the work environment can be defined as the general (organizational structure, policies, work conditions), and immediate (office layout) environments that influence the level of employees' performances Fajonyomi, (2021). Therefore, the library environment is a key determinant to be considered for the effectiveness and efficiency of library service in tertiary institutions' libraries.

The library work environment is one of the key basics to motivate the library personnel towards job performance; when workers are given the necessary stimulus they require, they exhibit utmost readiness in the discharge of their duties. This is affirmed in the literature that, a conducive and supportive workplace environment gives conditions that facilitate employees to carry out their job effectively, using their acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies with the available resources to provide high-quality organizational service Pandey, (2017). According to Suifan (2019), the work environment is categorized into three sub-environments as technical environment, human/behavioural environment, and organizational environment. The technical environment includes the provision of technical infrastructures, tools, and equipment. The human/behavioural environment consists of relationships within co-workers, team and group work, and leadership. The organizational environment comprises organizational culture, procedures, rules and regulations, and values of the organization

The library work environment constitutes one of the most important factors that contribute to improving the commitment and dedication of employees to the achievement of library goals in today's contemporary world. Within the frame of this study, the library work environment could be illustrated as everything that can be ascribed to the employees' morale in workplaces and consequently influence their contributions to the work itself. In other words, the work environment in this study is described as the satisfaction basics which if provided in the tertiary institutions' libraries, will enhance the service delivery by library personnel. The satisfaction elements are as follow: Comfort, Altruism, Status, and Safety adapted from the Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) (The Careers Group Theory of work adjustment, University of London)

Comfort: Comfort in the workplace environment is a work condition that encourages a lack of stress. Comfort involves a conducive and favourable work environment, availability of working tools, adequate and regular remuneration, and work incentives. Work conditions in the library are referred to as the incentive measures prevalent in library services, such as regular payment of salaries, study leaves, shift allowances, medical allowances, and transport allowances, and how these incentive measures affect the productivity of librarians in library services. However, effective service delivery is difficult to imagine in the library setting without good and conducive working conditions. Working conditions impact employees' job performance.

Altruism: Altruism is a condition that fosters a good relationship in the workplace environment. A good relationship within colleagues and superiors allows the flow

of library operations, and librarians have opportunities to share knowledge, thus, improve library service delivery. Co-worker relationship also gives room for the efficient dissemination of information and knowledge as well as significant ideas among colleagues.

Status: Status in the workplace involves conditions that provide recognition and prestige. Status in the library is when the library personnel is recognized as part and parcel of the library and partners in progress, hence contributing to the library's success instead of being seen as mere subordinates. At the point when employees are perceived by valuing their accomplishments and commitments, they will be more connected to their work, and the organization completely. According to Wickham (2022) the recognition of employees in an organization increases employees' commitment and productivity; improves employees' fulfilment and satisfaction in work

Safety: Safety is essential in the workplace environment. It is the measures taken by the management of an organisation to protect the employees from all forms of hazards and to lessen the risk of being harmed and other bad consequences Amin and Chakraborty (2021). Safety is also linked with the location of the workplace and it is a fundamental element to be considered while sighting any organisation. Safety in the library environment is the measure taken by the library management to protect the library personnel from all forms of hazards and to lessen the risk of being harmed and other bad consequences. If a library is situated in a good, standard, favourable, and conducive physical work environment, the services of the library will be effectively delivered to the users. If organisations like libraries are concerned with employee's safety, it is expected that employees' confidence and comfortability will increase.

Work environment and library service delivery in academic library

A comfortable and inclusive workplace environment enhances employees' performance and improves the organization's productivity. Every organisation, including the library aims to provide high-quality services and opportunities for lifelong learning to its patrons. The library work environment is very important because it determines how library personnel would effectively and efficiently deliver their services. A good library work environment leads to increased output and improved results. The library services will be effectively delivered to the users if the library is situated in a good, standard, favourable, and encouraging work environment. This is supported by literature that, when an organization improves the environment in which the job is performed, employees are motivated to perform better Karugu, (2018). The workers exhibit utmost readiness in the discharge of their duties when they are given the necessary stimulus they require. Accordingly, the library environment is a key determinant to be considered for the effectiveness and efficiency of library service in tertiary institutions' libraries. A group of researchers in Lahore, Pakistan investigates the impact of workplace environment performance in university libraries in the country. The study's objectives were to determine the impact of the library's work environment on librarians' job performance and whether

there was a link between work environment and librarian job performance. The study's findings reveal that there is a lack of clarity in job descriptions. It was also discovered from the findings that workers do not have access to adequate training opportunities and they are not motivated in the way they should be. The study concluded that creating a pleasant working atmosphere for employees will result in higher performance. Chaudhry, Ullah, Shahzad, and Sulehri, (2021)

Fajonyomi (2021) conducted research on how the physical work environment influences service delivery in Federal University libraries. Six federal universities in Nigeria's southwest with a total number of 218 were used for the study. The data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. According to the findings, the rate of library service delivery was moderate and the physical work environment and service delivery had a favourable and significant relationship. Therefore, recommendations were made that library management should embrace and provide ICT-based services. Also, physical facilities and other tools should be provided to enhance effective and efficient service delivery. Another research conducted by Badmus and Ogunlana (2020) to investigate the impact that the work environment has on the performance of librarians at Federal University Libraries in North-East Nigeria. The study establishes the importance of the workplace environment in the job performance of librarians because there is a modest level of job performance from data analysis. Nevertheless, the study concludes that the work environment determinants do not affect librarians' job performance. Hence, it was suggested that the institution management collaborates with University Librarians should make the work environment more favourable as needed and encourage library personnel to improve their performances.

Similarly, Elvis and Sahabi (2021) investigated the effect of work environment and job performance of librarians in Ahmadu Bello University Library (KIL), Zaria, Nigeria. A survey research method was implemented to carry out the study. A total population of 131 librarians was surveyed for the study with the aid of a self-structured questionnaire. It was discovered from the findings that the responses from the librarians on job performance were to a high extent and the work environment is moderate for librarians to perform their duties. Due to the result of the findings, it was concluded that the work environment is a key issue when considering the job performance of librarians in the academic library. Hence, the following recommendations were made: to a large extent, librarians should be provided with much needed to enhance their productivity. Also, university management should make provisions for a workplace environment that is conducive. Hence, performance assessment should be done regularly. Likewise, a group of scholars Alegbeleye, Unegbu, Babalola and Gbemi-Ogunleye (2020) carried out investigation on the work environment and performance of staff in university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The study was conducted using a survey research design, with a questionnaire serving as the primary data-gathering tool. All of the librarians in Southern Nigeria's 38 public universities were surveyed using total enumeration. The study showed that there is a link between the work environment and library personnel performance. Though the study observed a significant cumulative impact of work environment metrics on both task performance and contextual performance of university library

employees in Southern Nigeria, only occupational safety, workload, and health safety are found to have a relative influence on task performance, while the physical environment is the only workplace environment index that has a major influence on contextual performance. According to the study, employees in university libraries should be provided with a pleasant work environment to function at their best.

Nevertheless, Oyerinde, and Mayowa-Adebara, (2019) in their study poised that many polytechnic libraries appear to have a low level of effectiveness in delivering library services to their users which has been linked to some factors. In their research to look into how the work environment affected the institutional performance of polytechnic libraries in Nigeria's southwest, the institutional efficacy was found to be low and employees' work environments are adjudged to be unfriendly. It was concluded that a poor work environment is a primary contributor to low institutional performance. As a result, the study suggests that library directors should create a pleasant work environment for the enhancement of library delivery by polytechnic library personnel. Consequently, in tertiary institutions, the workplace environment does not only affect service delivery by library personnel but also affects the job performance of academic staff. To establish this, research was conducted by Afolabi, Abiola, Olaiya, and Emeje, (2020) at Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria. the results reveal that the polytechnic work environment has a considerable impact on academic staff teaching efficacy and research output. It is discovered that the academic staff's teaching ability and research output are both lacking. According to the findings, the polytechnic work environment does not foster effective teaching or high-quality research. It is suggested that management restructure the polytechnic work environment to promote academic staff performance, particularly in the areas of suitable lecture room illumination, furniture and ventilation, internet access, class control, lecturer/student ratio, and congenial office arrangement.

Methods

A descriptive survey research design is adopted for the study. The population of this study is one hundred and forty (140) library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study covers all the librarians and library officers in the selected academic libraries. This is because they are the library personnel that is directly involved in all the process of library service delivery, based on their educational qualification, professional skills, and knowledge of library and information science. A total enumeration sampling otherwise known as census was adopted in the study. As a result, all the one hundred and forty (140) librarians and library officers in all the academic libraries in Ondo State Nigeria constituted the sample of this study. While a structured questionnaire is used as the research instrument. The instrument was validated by giving the questionnaire to professional librarians and lecturers in the department of library and information science to scrutinize the questionnaire. Their submissions are used to make necessary corrections to the questionnaire before final administration on the respondents. Meanwhile, to ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pre-test was conducted on thirty (30) library personnel in the two institutions that were not part of the study. Their responses serve as a pre-test that helped to discover the areas of weaknesses and strengths of the study. The result

thereby helped the researcher to restructure the questionnaire properly. The data collected was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. a total of 140 copies of the questionnaire were administered and 116 are duly filled and returned. This gave a response rate of 82.9%. The response rate of 82.9% is considered adequate for the study because the standard and acceptable response rate in social science and education is 60% in accordance with Clearinghouse (2019). Data collected were analysed via descriptive and inferential statistics. The demographic data are analyzed through descriptive statistics while research questions are analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentages. Criterion means are placed at 2.50 indicating that the average mean that is below 2.50 is considered low and the average mean above 2.50 is considered high.

Results

Comfort work environment for service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State. The result is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 1. Comfort work environment on service delivery by library personnels

S/N	COMFORT (Working Condition)	SA		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	Good working conditions in the library make me concerned for and serve library patrons better.	66	56.9	42	36.2	7	6.0	1	0.9	3.49
2	The availability of professional tools needed for routine processes makes me function at my optimum level.	53	45.7	32	27.6	20	17.2	11	9.5	3.09
3	I am satisfied with my office building and layout	19	16.4	30	25.9	50	43.1	17	14.7	2.74
4	The Temperature and noise level of my library is bearable	31	26.7	19	16.4	44	37.9	22	19.0	2.51
5	Regular and adequate remuneration and compensation motivate me to be more dedicated to achieving the goals of the library	21	18.1	34	29.3	42	36.2	19	16.4	2.49
6	I am satisfied with the library furniture's lightening and painting	27	23.3	49	42.2	23	19.8	17	14.7	2.44
	Average Mean									**2.82**
	Criterion Mean									**2.50**

As revealed in table 1, the average mean recorded for comfort (working condition) is ($\bar{x}$=2.82). It reveals that good working conditions increase personnel concern to serve library patrons better ($\bar{x}$=3.49), availability of professional tools needed for routine processes for optimum level of performance ($\bar{x}$=3.09), and happiness and eagerness to work harder in a befitting office and congenial work environment ($\bar{x}$=3.08) are needed in the library work environment.

Safe work environment for service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State. This is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2. Safe work environment and service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries.

S/N	SAFETY	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	I am satisfied when my future and job security are guaranteed in my present job	39	33.6	37	31.9	20	17.2	20	17.2	2.82
2	My library is located in an area where I feel safe and comfortable performing my work.	31	26.7	42	36.2	27	23.3	16	13.8	2.76
3	There is job security in my workplace	41	35.3	28	24.1	18	15.5	29	25.0	2.70
4	I am pleased with the security architecture of my workplace	21	18.1	42	36.2	31	26.7	22	19.0	2.53
5	I always feel safe at my workplace	19	16.4	40	34.5	35	30.2	22	19.0	2.48
6	The security of my workplace is satisfactory	19	16.4	31	26.7	47	40.5	19	16.4	2.43
	Average Mean									**2.63**
	Criterion Mean									**2.50**

Table 2. revealed the average mean of 2.63 for safety; and this portends goodwill for the libraries. The table further shows that respondents indicated that they are satisfied when their future and job security are guaranteed in the present job ($\bar{x}$=2.82), their library is located in an area where they feel safe and comfortable performing their work ($\bar{x}$=2.76), and there is job security in their workplace ($\bar{x}$=2.70).

The effect of altruisms work environment on service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries in Ondo State. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Altruism work environment on service delivery by library personnel in academic libraries

S/N	ALTRUISM (Interrelationship)	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
		No %		No %		No	%	No	%	
1	I am satisfied when I have a cordial relationship with elderly library personnel	50	43.1	47	40.5	16	13.8	3	2.6	4.08
2	Good interpersonal relationship in the library enhances my service delivery.	62	53.4	34	29.3	15	12.9	5	4.3	3.32
3	I am satisfied with the existing relationship between departments and colleagues in my library	25	21.6	48	41.4	24	20.7	19	16.4	2.68
4	There is a cooperation between the units in the library	27	23.3	44	37.9	20	17.2	25	21.6	2.63
5	I have a good working relationship with my boss	39	33.6	22	19.0	22	19.0	33	28.4	2.58
	Average Mean									**3.06**
	Criterion Mean									**2.50**

It was reported in Table 3 above that the average mean of 3.06 is recorded for altruism (interrelationship). Under altruism, the respondents indicated that they are satisfied when they have a cordial relationship with other library personnel ($\bar{x}$ =4.08), good interpersonal relationship in the library enhances their service delivery ($\bar{x}$=3.32), and they are satisfied with the existing relationship between departments and colleagues in their libraries ($\bar{x}$=2.68).

Personnel status in the work environment for service delivery

Table 4. Status in the work environment for service delivery.

S/N	STATUS (Recognition)	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	I am satisfied when my experience is well appreciated and rewarded	66	56.9	47	40.5	2	1.7	1	0.9	3.53
2	I am satisfied when I am recognized for better performance	66	56.9	47	40.5	2	1.7	1	0.9	3.39
3	I always get motivated to work without being supervised	49	42.2	51	44.0	12	10.3	4	3.4	3.25
4	There is always an urge to remain in an organization where I am appreciated	53	45.7	44	37.9	12	10.3	7	6.0	3.23
5	Being recognized will help to improve my commitment to the library	36	31.0	64	55.2	12	10.3	4	3.4	3.14
6	I feel motivated when my contributions are recognized by my superior	48	41.4	28	24.1	23	19.8	17	14.7	2.92
7	Recognition shows that my contribution is noticed in the library	33	28.4	49	42.2	22	19.0	12	10.3	2.89
8	I feel happy and eager to work harder in good office and congenial work environs	41	35.3	59	50.9	0	0	16	13.8	3.08
9	Incentives measures enhance my productivity in library services delivery	30	25.9	41	35.3	30	25.9	15	12.9	2.74
	Average Mean									**3.13**
	Criterion Mean									**2.50**

Table 4 shows an average mean of 3.13 for status (recognition). In this wise, the respondents indicated that they are satisfied when their experience is well appreciated and rewarded ($\bar{x}$=3.53) when they are recognized for better performance ($\bar{x}$=3.39) and that they always get motivated to work without being supervised ($\bar{x}$=3.25).

Discussion of Findings

The research question on the effect of comfort in the work environment of library services in Academic Libraries in Ondo State revealed that work environment found in tertiary institutions' libraries as comfortable (good working conditions, availability of professional tools needed for professional routine duties), status (good reward system, recognition for better performance, and motivation to work without being supervised), altruism (cordial relationship with other library personnel, good interpersonal relationship, and good relationship between departments and colleagues in library), and safety (satisfaction due to job security, safe and comfortable environment, and good security). This finding agreed with that by Chukwudum and Dika (2017) who reported that comfort in the place of work motivates employees to perform their duties and services with enthusiasm. Also, Saka and Yahaya (2021) indicated that good working conditions give room for efficient dissemination of information as well as effective library services delivery. In contrary however, Tuwei and Benjamin (2017) noted in their study that comfort as type of work environment have a negative effect on service delivery in Kenya hospital.

The second research question sought the effect of altruisms work environment on service delivery by library personnel in tertiary institutions libraries and the results revealed that the average mean of 3.06 is recorded for altruism (interrelationship). Under altruism, the respondents indicated that they are satisfied when they have a cordial relationship with other library personnel, good interpersonal relationship in the library enhances their service delivery and they are satisfied with the existing relationship between departments and colleagues in their libraries. This result corroborated the findings by Zubair, Khan and Mukaram (2021) who affirmed in their study that altruism type of work environment has a positive relationship on employee services delivery.

On effect of safe work environment on service delivery by library personnel in tertiary institutions libraries. It was revealed that the average mean of 2.63 for safety; and this portends goodwill for the libraries. The findings further reported that respondents indicated that they are satisfied when their future and job security are guaranteed in the present job their library is located in an area where they feel safe and comfortable performing their work and there is job security in their workplace (=2.70). This finding is consistent with that by Adenekan and Solomon (2022) who noted that safety type of work environment is adequate for librarians and other library personnel to effectively and efficiently discharge their services to library users. This was also supported by Badmus and Ogunlana (2020) who reported in their study safety and conducive environment has positive influence on library personnel services delivery in South-West federal university libraries. More so, Alegbeleye, et al. (2020) confirmed that work load and health safety have relative impact on both task performance and services rendered in the sampled libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Academic libraries in Ondo State in particular, and Nigeria in general, should make the work environment conducive for the library personnel so as to enable them offer effective services their daily library services.

2. Library management should acquire the relevant tools needed to carry out library operations and deliver library services.

3. Library management of academic institution in Ondo State must guarantee the safety of the library personnel especially in the area of job security so they can have work satisfaction which in turn enhances services delivery in libraries.

Conclusion

Libraries are service-oriented organisations that require the provision of a conducive work environment to ensure that library services are efficiently and effectively delivered to meet the information needs of library users. This study establishes that through the provision of a conducive work environment, service delivery by library personnel in tertiary institutions libraries in Ondo State will be enhanced. The work environment must be such that will be conducive enough for the library personnel to conveniently perform their job It is imperative for libraries to provide a conducive work environment for their personnel so that they can map out pragmatic strategies to meet the needs of their patron, thereby enhancing the library service delivery.

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