

I NTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND **O** RGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN ACADEMIC **L** IBRARIES IN NIGER STATE

SULEIMAN, AMINA HASSAN, DR. A. O. AHMED AND DR. CHIKE-OKOLI CHIBUOGWU FELICIA

Library and Information Technology Dept., Federal University of Technology, Minna

ABSTRACT

The study was on the inter-personal communication and organisational effectiveness of academic libraries in Niger State. The study was guided by three objectives and three corresponding research questions. Among the objectives of the study were to: ascertain the extent of interpersonal communication practice in academic libraries in Niger State, factors affecting the interpersonal communication and organisational effectiveness in the selected academic libraries in Niger State. Survey research design method was adopted for the study while the total population was two hundred and twenty-five (225) which consisted of one hundred and five (105) professional librarians and one hundred and twenty (120) para-professional library staff in ten (10) tertiary institutions in Niger State. The researchers adopted the entire

Introduction:

Academic libraries are libraries that are attached to post-secondary or tertiary institutions. They exist to support academic activities such as teaching, learning, research and other activities including creativity, human intellect, knowledge and innovation. Academic libraries are established, managed and funded by the parent institutions to meet the information, research, and curriculum needs of their students, faculty members and other members of the community. Students, staff and other members of the institutions depend on academic libraries in order

population of both professional and para-professional library staff because the population size was manageable. Questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Out of two hundred and twenty-five (225) copies of questionnaire administered, two hundred and six (206) copies were filled, returned and used for the analysis. Descriptive statistical tool constituting of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that there was a high extent of interpersonal communication practice on organisational effectiveness in the selected libraries. The study revealed further that the inability of users to form queries correctly, inadequate listening skills, frustration due to poor working condition, physical distraction in the library environment, cultural differences between staff and users are some of the factors that affects the interpersonal communication and organisational effectiveness in the selected academic libraries. The study recommended among others that the management of academic libraries in Niger State should as much as possible provide adequate funding to the libraries to improve quality of services rendered in the libraries, the management of academic libraries in Niger State should encourage an improved feedback and/or appreciation system, as it will serve as a medium of evaluation and motivation for library employee which will invariably improve organisational effectiveness across academic libraries.

Keywords: *inter-personal communication, organisational effectiveness, academic library*

to meet their information needs. Anyim (2015) stated that academic library provides needed resources and services to enable libraries meet the needs of their users, interpret the sources of information to clientele and also direct them on how to access those sources. It is pertinent to note that a library occupies an indispensable position in any institution of higher learning. Perhaps, the major reason why a library is usually set up as soon as a tertiary institution is established. In essence, the presence of a library is to provide relevant and current information in various

formats that will facilitate effective learning, teaching and research in such institution of higher learning. It is however not enough to have the library but such library should be organisational effective so that the right information can be provided to the right user in the right format and at the right time. Without any doubt, organisational effectiveness is fundamental for any library or institution to attain its target goal. In this regard, communication is a major major factor in achieving organisational effectiveness in the library.

It is important for any organization therefore, to ensure effectiveness in it's processes and services rendered. Organisational effectiveness needs to be strategized to sustain an institution. Rakowska, Valdes and Espinansa (2014) described that the efficiency within which an organisation is able to meet it's objective is known as organisational effectiveness. Obviously, no organisation could produce the desired result without waste being productive. This is significant in academic libraries, for instance, where high effectiveness could exhibit strengths from leadership, collections, accessibility and user satisfaction. This also aligns with assertion of Rakowska, Valdes and Espinansa (2014) who opined that organisational effectiveness measures the big-picture performance of an organisation across broad range of criteria. Financial performance, long-term planning, internal structure, and adherence to core values as the critical components for the effectiveness.

Communication is very important in every established institution or society. This is because whatever library personnel intends to do is through communication. Man right from the beginning has been known to be involved in mutual relation as one of his greatest and recurrent activities within the society. Anyim (2018) stated that inter personal communication is an interactive process through which man exchanges information with his fellow man in the society in a manner that facilitate understanding and improve mutual rapport. Interpersonal communication in library operations is the process through which information, ideas, knowledge, messages are interpreted and conveyed from library personnel to library users or from library users to library personnel with perfect

understanding of each other in a consistent manne. Yuldiz (2012) posited that the social function of inter personal communication is stressed in the human relations perspective and organisation by capturing the hearts and minds of organisational members for effective coordination of organisational action in the pursuit of collective goals.

One of interpersonal soft skills is the skill of interpersonal communication. For many years until this time; in human resource settings, interpersonal soft skill has been reliably identified as an important prerequisite for steering successful performance in the division of every work unit and the academic library is not an exception. Users' satisfaction in the service sector like the academic library is an important and decisive element in developing an organisation so that it remains sustainable and efficient in service delivery. Islam et'al. (2016) related that interpersonal relationship skills are very important aspect in measuring service selling in recent times. They all affirm Rajandelved theory of service and industry; where non-verbal communication plays a vital role in interpersonal skills sets; whether most measurable features in a person's performance were interpersonal skills, communication and customers services, technical skills or sales techniques.

On this note, satisfaction with interpersonal relationships in the workplace is a significant indicator for organisational effectiveness. Studies have shown the need to broaden the scope of research into the variables such as interpersonal communication, which determines the character and personality of employees within an organisation like the academic library where service to the user is key. Work is closely related to effort, as well as joy and satisfaction from its creative impacts, or the likelihood to have spiritual and physical powers. Adriana (2014), put forward the theory of motivation and job satisfaction, among others. It includes motivational factors and hygienic factors.

Studies have also shown that the quality of interpersonal relations or communication has a significant influence on organisational effectiveness. Evaluating satisfaction of social relations in the workplace and identifying factors that influence the level of satisfaction can be the basis for actions

preventing social conflicts and negative consequences within the organisation.

Based on the foregoing, for the academic library to communicate the essence of library to the appropriate audience, mould the thought in their mind that library is source of incalculable significant information and also make them understand that the library staff are there for them to provide assistance, therefore the need for interpersonal communication and organisational effectiveness cannot be over emphasised.

Statement of the Problem

Academic libraries are libraries that are known to be the repositories of information resources for the educational developments of the members of the parent institutions. The relationship that exists between library users and librarians is very crucial in meeting the information needs of the users. Interpersonal communication aims at establishing appropriate social attitudes in academic libraries by creating a friendly atmosphere between users and librarians which helps in providing accurate and objective information that meet the information needs of the users.

Interpersonal communication enhances organisational effectiveness. Poor inter personal communication affect organisational effectiveness. Users become scared of using libraries where the library personnel are not approachable. Poor inter personal communication makes it impossible for librarians to interpret user queries which in turn makes it difficult to provide the information needed in a timely and efficient manner. The net effect of inadequate interpersonal communication is that the objective of the parent institution in supporting teaching, learning and research is hindered.

However, it has been observed that in recent times, the organisational effectiveness in many academic libraries has been very discouraging due to poor interpersonal communication. Obviously, no library service or establishment can be effective where there is weak interpersonal communication among the library personnel on one hand and between the library personnel and users on the other hand. It is against this backdrop

that this study examined interpersonal communication and organisational effectiveness of academic libraries in Niger State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design in order to gather data for the study. Descriptive survey research design is suitable for this study because it can be used to describe inter-personal communication and organisational effectiveness of academic librarians. The population of this study is 225. This consisted of 105 professional librarians and 120 para-professional library staff in ten (10) government owned tertiary institutions in Niger State. Total enumeration was used because the population size was manageable. The instrument used for this study was a self-developed structured questionnaire. Data was analysed using standard deviation, mean, and frequency count.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Extent of Interpersonal Communication Practice in Academic Libraries

S/ N		VL E	L E	HE	VH E	N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision				
		1	2	3	4									
1.	It makes exchange of message easier	10	5%	14	7%	83	41%	96	47%	203	671	3.31	0.81	High
2.	It enhances library staff understanding of work information needs within the library	9	4%	11	5%	94	46%	90	44%	204	673	3.30	0.76	High
3.	It enhances mutual interaction	6	3%	12	6%	104	52%	77	39%	199	650	3.27	0.71	High

	between library staff													
4.	It cultivates and promotes confidence among staff towards their duty	9	4 %	10	5 %	78	39 %	105	52 %	202	683	3.38	0.78	High
5.	It helps reduce work stress in the library	6	3 %	11	5 %	99	49 %	85	42 %	201	665	3.31	0.71	High
6.	It encourages timely provision of information from the Library	9	4 %	15	7 %	87	43 %	91	45 %	202	664	3.29	0.79	High
7.	It enhances effective service delivery	8	4 %	10	5 %	98	49 %	82	41 %	198	650	3.28	0.74	High
8.	It promotes the image of academic library to the host community	12	6 %	15	8 %	95	48 %	77	39 %	199	635	3.19	0.82	High
9.	It enhances familiarity with staff even outside the library	9	5 %	14	7 %	91	46 %	86	43 %	200	654	3.27	0.78	High

Key: VLE = Very Low Extent, LE = Low Extent, HE = High Extent, VHE = Very High Extent

The result in Table 1 shows that the extent of interpersonal communication practice in academic libraries in Niger State is high, as the responses from the respondents have an average score (\bar{x}) greater than or equal to the benchmark score (2.50). Although all the items had high extents, the top three items are; It cultivates and promotes confidence among staff towards their duty with ($\bar{x} = 3.38$; SD = 0.78); It makes exchange of message easier with ($\bar{x} = 3.31$; SD = 0.81); It helps reduces work stress in the library with ($\bar{x} = 3.31$; SD = 0.71).

Table 2: Degree of organisational effectiveness

S/N	VL	L		H		VH		N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision		
		1	2	3	4									
1.	Teamwork	2	1%	28	14%	129	66%	36	18%	195	589	3.02	0.61	High
2.	Good working relationship	0	0%	43	22%	110	56%	43	22%	196	588	3.00	0.66	High
3.	Punctuality to work	4	2%	44	23%	113	58%	33	17%	194	563	2.90	0.69	High
4.	Effective service delivery	5	3%	31	16%	112	59%	43	23%	191	575	3.01	0.70	High

Key: VL = Very Low, L = Low, H = High, VH= Very High

The result in Table 2 shows that the degree of organisational effectiveness in academic libraries in Niger State is high, as the responses from the respondents have an average score (\bar{x}) greater than or equal to the benchmark score (2.50). Although all the items had high extents, the top three items are; Teamwork with ($\bar{x} = 3.02$; SD = 0.61); Effective service delivery with ($\bar{x} = 3.01$; SD = 0.70); Good working relationship with ($\bar{x} = 3.00$; SD = 0.66).

Table 3: Factors affecting interpersonal communication and organizational effectiveness

S/N	NO	YES		N	FX	\bar{x}	STD	Decision		
		1	2							
1	Inability of users to form queries correctly	63	31%	141	69%	204	345	1.69	0.46	Yes

2	Inadequate listening skills	69	34%	135	66%	204	339	1.66	0.47	Yes
3	Frustration due to poor working condition	70	34%	134	66%	204	338	1.66	0.48	Yes
4	Lack of emotional control	69	34%	135	66%	204	339	1.66	0.47	Yes
5	Low level of education	72	35%	132	65%	204	336	1.65	0.48	Yes
6	Too much job stress	75	37%	129	63%	204	333	1.63	0.48	Yes
7	Physical distraction in the library environment	78	38%	126	62%	204	330	1.62	0.49	Yes
8	Academic stress and frustration	74	36%	130	64%	204	334	1.64	0.48	Yes
9	Promotion and training	76	37%	128	63%	204	332	1.63	0.48	Yes
10	Lack of proper mechanism to provide appreciation and feedback	58	29%	145	71%	203	348	1.71	0.45	Yes
11	Cultural differences between staff and users	74	36%	129	64%	203	332	1.64	0.48	Yes
12	Poor remuneration / working condition	59	29%	144	71%	203	347	1.71	0.46	Yes
13	Poor funding	61	30%	142	70%	203	345	1.70	0.46	Yes
14	Poor internet connectivity	64	32%	139	68%	203	342	1.68	0.47	Yes
15	Inadequate power supply	56	28%	147	72%	203	350	1.72	0.45	Yes
16	Language barrier as a result of the	74	36%	129	64%	203	332	1.64	0.48	Yes

use of lingua franca (English Language)										
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The result in Table 3 shows affirms the fact that the listed factors affect interpersonal communication, job satisfaction and organisational effectiveness, as the responses from the respondents has an average score (\bar{x}) greater than or equal to the benchmark score (1.50). Although all the items agreed, the top three items are; Inadequate power supply with ($\bar{x} = 1.72$; SD = 0.45); Poor remuneration / working condition with ($\bar{x} = 1.71$; SD = 0.46); Lack of proper mechanism to provide appreciation and feedback with ($\bar{x} = 1.71$; SD = 0.45).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the findings of this study, it was discovered that there is a high extent of interpersonal communication in selected libraries. As the responses from the respondents indicates a high level of interpersonal communication practices in the selected libraries. This is captured in Table 1. This finding corroborates the claims of Owoeye and Dhunsi (2014) who stated that interpersonal communication is an indispensable force towards achieving individuals and organisational goal and objective that facilitates the sharing of information, experience and knowledge, transmission of ideas, decision making, coordination and interpretation of activities.

Findings from this survey revealed that each of the items listed under this section of the questionnaire were identified to be problems affecting the interpersonal communication and organisational effectiveness in the selected academic libraries. However, some have more people affirming their effect on the subject matter. This is evident from the results in Table 3 as it was observed that the respective items had an average score greater than the benchmark score (1.5) in this instance.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the practice of interpersonal communication in the selected libraries is high to an extent.

The study further revealed that the inadequate power, poor remuneration / working condition, lack of proper mechanism to provide appreciation and feedback.

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

1. The management of government owned academic libraries in Niger State should as much as possible provide adequate funding to the libraries to improve quality of services rendered in the libraries.
2. The management of government owned academic libraries in Niger State should as much as possible improve the current remuneration of members of staff in academic libraries, while also improving the working conditions of library employees. This will further improve organisational effectiveness in these libraries.

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