

# Work Environment and Personal Variables as Factors that Determine Job Performance of Library Personnel in Public Universities in the South-South, Nigeria

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## Abstract:

*Job performance of library personnel is one of the essential requirements for achievement of library goals and objectives in public universities. The study was carried out to investigate personal variables as factors that determine job performance of library personnel in public universities. The survey design of the correlational type was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of 762 library personnel, notably librarians, para-professionals and library assistants working in the 13 public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. A total enumeration was adopted as the sampling technique. The instrument used to collect data for analysis was questionnaire. The research instrument was validated, to consider its suitability for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that significant relationships existed between work environment ( $r = 0.40$ ), personal variables (PV - Educational Qualifications  $r = 0.177$ ; Job Positions  $r = -0.116$ ; Work Experience  $r = 0.158$  and Job Tenure  $r = 0.074$ ) and job performance. Work environment and personal variables relatively determined job performance of library personnel. The paper concluded that, job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria is determined by work environment and personal variables. The paper recommended among others that library management should take cognisance of factors such as work environment and personal variables to improve and sustain the level of job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Factors that Determine, Job performance, Library personnel in public universities, South-south, Nigeria, Personal variables, Work environment

## INTRODUCTION

Public universities within the South-south, Nigeria are established and funded by federal and state governments of Nigeria to satisfy the information needs of stakeholders. Globally, no university exists without a library. Every university exists with a standard library and as central points around which academic activities revolve. Public university libraries, therefore, are integral parts and also among the most essential units of those universities that established them. University libraries in Africa, particularly Nigeria, provide literature support in different formats (print and electronics) thereby extending the frontier of knowledge through teaching, learning,

research, and community services. They help their founding institutions to achieve excellence in their teaching, research and community services functions. They provide and meet users', faculty members' and staff' needs. Thus, serving members of their university communities. Public university libraries, generally, are organised into departments and various units or sections facilitating attainments of library goals and objectives.

Nevertheless, the success of public university libraries in performing expected roles rest not only on information resources, facilities and equipment but also on the quality of personnel, their work environments and personal variables as manifested in their job performance. It therefore shows that library personnel, their work environments and personal variables play important roles in job performance in various departments and units of university libraries facilitating the attainment of library goals and objectives. Library activities in public university libraries by their very nature are performed by a team of library personnel (librarians, para-professionals and library assistants). Library activities, in line with Campbell (1990) believe, are not single action, rather, they are complex activities. Undoubtedly, library tasks undertaken by library personnel in public universities are crucial to libraries. It is vital not only to library's growth and development, but also for the growth and development of library personnel. Library tasks perform by library personnel could also be part of yard stick for accrediting a university during accreditation.

Performance of library personnel in completing given tasks, is important attributes measured frequently by all libraries. Performance of library personnel is also measured by technical performance efficiency and effectiveness, job knowledge, job skills and job outputs. Moreover, the viability and credibility of parent institutions are strengthened by tasks perform by library personnel in universities because, when services of university libraries are assessed or evaluated, especially during accreditation, library personnel are equally indirectly assessed and evaluated. However, performance of library personnel can be determined by work environment and personal variables, indicating equipping the library personnel to perform jobs with ultimate aim to achieve quality, quantity, cooperation, dependability and creativity and so deserve serious attention.

Work environment of library personnel refers to the architectural design, aesthetics as well as the conducive nature of the workplace in which library personnel operate their jobs, such as the building with adequate lightings, ventilations, adequate workspaces, air quality, air conditioners, fans, comfort, good conveniences with running water, adequate furniture with spaces for ICT facilities/equipment, outlets for ICT facilities, clean environment, among others, expected to make library personnel feel comfortable and happy to do their jobs for better outputs. This influences how libraries strive. Furthermore, the work environment of library personnel could involve the social interactions at the workplace, including collaboration and relationships with colleagues, subordinates, supervisors and managers. The interactions could also involve library users. Work environment, therefore, involves everything that forms part of library personnel involvement with the work itself. This study concentrates on work environment such as the physical work environment (lightings, ventilations, workspaces, technological facilities) and social work environment (collaboration) among library personnel.

Another important factor that can determine job performance of library personnel in public universities is personal variables. Personal variables of library personnel are their individual-based and quantifiable personal characteristics that

include information such as age, educational qualifications, work experience, positions or ranks, marital status, job tenure, gender (sex), among others. Personal variables by definition are independent variables because they cannot be manipulated. Personal variables are essential in the workplace as they determine the quality of library personnel to be employed to work in university libraries as well as the quality of job outputs expected by employers. Library personnel who possess quality personal variables will be able to give and perform good jobs. They can transmit these characteristics to unskilled and unknowledgeable personnel and unskilled beginners. These also add value to job performance of library personnel. Agreeably, in organisations such as libraries, emphasis is placed on educational qualifications and work experience as criteria for and during employments of library personnel.

Personal variables enhance effective and efficient services delivery to users. Personal variables such as job tenure and work experience result from the length of time that library personnel are exposed on the job to learn different new job skills and responsibilities. These can be achieved through job rotation of library personnel. Personal variables do not only help library personnel to be relevant on the job and to perform assigned roles, they also provide libraries with more flexible and capable workforce who engage in practical as well as theoretical work, who have better insights into their organisations and what strings to pull to get jobs quickly done and to solve problems from employees who had tools but do not possess the required characteristics. Personnel can fill vacancies, reduce work stoppages and backlogs of work when a staff is out on an extended sick leave, annual leave or study leave, retirement, or demise.

Library personnel who possess quality personal variables can impact on staff, thereby improving library services. The organisation can also benefit from personnel, by not having to recruit and train new employees thereby saving money and also maintaining high level of job outputs without hindrance and performing assigned roles below expectation. These therefore, positively determine the quantity and quality of job outputs of library personnel in universities. It is the researcher's suggestion that literature on personal variables and job performance of library personnel in universities in Nigeria are scarce. Therefore, more work should be done in these areas. In the context of this study, personal variables tested against job performance of library personnel are educational qualifications, job positions, work experience and job tenure.

Considering the importance of library tasks undertaken by library personnel to attain set goals and objectives of public universities in the South-south, Nigeria, yet, the performance of these personnel is hindered by some factors such as unfavourable work environments (poor illumination, ventilations, unstable power supply, inadequate workspaces, ICT facilities, collaboration) and lack of adequate attention given to personal variables (educational qualifications, work experience, among others). These, probably, contribute to difficulties in performing their jobs to expectation and low level of performance. Studies also support the fact that the level of performance in most public university libraries today is low due to job dissatisfaction of personnel (Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017; Babalola, 2013; Eyo, 2021). These have been a cause for concern. There is the need to investigate some factors that determine tasks performed in public universities especially in the South-south, Nigeria. Consequently, this study investigated work environment and personal variables as factors that determine job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The researcher's observation and preliminary investigations of some public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria revealed that adequate attention has not been given to libraries and library personnel by library management, probably, contributing to the low level of performance as well as difficulties in performing jobs to expectation. Furthermore, interactions with personnel also showed that they perform their jobs in unfavourable work environments (poor illumination, ventilations, inadequate workspaces, technological facilities, collaboration). In the same vein, adequate attention has not been given to personal variables of personnel (educational qualifications, work experience, among others). This is a problem when one considers the strong need for good personal variables and quality library personnel, as well as conducive work environments in an increasingly computerised library services environment in universities in Nigeria.

If management of public university libraries do not mind whether or not adequate work environments as well as personal variables are put in place to enable library personnel perform their jobs, these could negatively hinder the effective performance of their personnel, contributing to low level of their performance in the public universities. It is against this backdrop that the study was carried out to investigate work environment and personal variables as factors that determine job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives were to:

- i. ascertain the relationship between work environment and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria;
- ii. ascertain the relationship between personal variables (educational qualifications, job positions, work experience and job tenure) and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between work environment and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Jobs perform by library personnel in public universities are essential for the attainment of library set goals. However, apart from the combination of work environment and personal variables, the performance of library personnel in public universities can be determined by many variables. In modern university library services delivery,

applications of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in work environment positively determine opportunities to improve and increase the level of performance in carrying out library services. According to Ogbonna and Okenyi (2014), work environment is a major determinant and one of the important existing phenomenon in the organisation. Udo, Bisong and Offili (2011) asserted that comfortable work environments enable workers to attain high performance. Al-Omari and Okasheh, (2017) opined that the physical library setting maximised performance among employees, while, Okoye and Ezejiolor (2013) on the other hand stated that, poor work environment caused incapability in performance and brought about tragedies associated with less outputs, profitability and impairment of overall organisational effectiveness to organisations.

Furthermore, Chandrasekar (2011) and Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) affirmed that having the right physical and psychosocial environmental factors led to increase in performance. Similarly, the social work environment of library personnel cited in Oludeyi (2015) study, revealed a significant contribution of interpersonal relationship among colleagues to job commitment. In the same vein, Amir and Sahibzada (2010) study on private sector companies in Pakistan, discovered that human components in work environment significantly have great impact on the level of performance of employees and level of relationships, as well as strong positive influence on outputs of employees. However, Irons (2006) established significant relationships between comfortable work environments and job performance.

A study of Juhel Company in Emene, Enugu State, Nigeria by Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) identified a relationship between employees' work environments and their performance which was seen as the totality of factors that affect, influence, or determine the operations or performance of library services. All these stimulate creativity and high performance of library personnel. Moreover, apart from the combination of work environment and personal variables as factors that determine performance of library personnel, the performance of library personnel in public universities can be determined by personal variables. Personal variables of library personnel such as educational qualifications and work experience that improve competencies in library services delivery are very essential in the workplace, particularly, during recruitment and deployment of personnel to various departments and units for job roles. Many authors believed that educational qualifications facilitate performance in most jobs. This therefore supports the fact that educational qualifications must conform to job roles of personnel in organisations to enhance their efficiency and level of tasks performance.

Emphatically, in many professions, no issue is more contentious than personal variables of their employees. Certainly, for good performance, some professions require personnel with high cognitive ability to fill job vacancies. In library profession practices, the Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) recognises these variables, educational qualifications (certificate, diploma, bachelor, master, postgraduate diploma and doctorate degrees in library and information science) before personnel can work in libraries (Ifidon & Ifidon, 2007; Eyo, 2021). Personal variables predict better performance and also significantly have stronger relationships with performance of personnel. Studies had also established significant relationships between personal variables and performance of personnel. A study carried out by Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) revealed a significant relationship between educational qualifications and performance of employees. Ajidahun (2007) also established a relationship between educational qualifications and job performance. He also stated that, employees'

educational background must be relevant to the profession and job roles for enhance performance.

Nevertheless, work experience also had a strong relationship with employees' performance. This further supported the finding of Sneed, Vivian and D'Costa (2015) that quality of work experience scores may be predictive of performance and had implications for employees' selection, performance appraisal, etcetera. This also corroborated Oyewole (2013) findings that work experience positively related to personnel performance. Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) affirmed that, work experience correlated with tasks performance. This is also in consonance with Schmitt, Cortina, Ingerick, and Wiechmann (2001) Theory of Performance, that experience is another characteristic that individual brought to a job situation which certainly contributed to her competence. Consequently, the work environment, personal variables and job performance of library personnel had significant relationships. Furthermore, work environment and personal variables relatively determined and contributed to job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study was the survey design of correlational type. The study population consists of seven hundred and sixty-two (762) library personnel (librarians, para-professionals and library assistants) working in the thirteen (13) public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. There are 6 federal as well as 7 state public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. A total enumeration was adopted as sampling technique. Instrument used to collect data for analysis was a questionnaire. The research instrument was validated. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by involving librarians at Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan who were not included in the population of the study. A pre-test was conducted to ascertain the content validity. The research instrument was considered reliable and suitable for the study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson's product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

## FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented in the table below:

**Table 1: Questionnaire administration and response rate**

S/N	Name of institution	No. of questionnaire administered	No. of useful questionnaire returned	Response rate (%)
1	Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa State	47	46	97.9
2	Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta State	38	30	78.9
3	University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State	126	116	92.0
4	University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State	80	75	93.8
5	University of Port-Harcourt, Port-Harcourt, Rivers States	55	46	83.6
6	University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State	121	93	76.9
7	Akwa Ibom State University, Ikot-Akpaden, Mkpat Enin LGA, Akwa Ibom	25	23	92.0

	State			
8	Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State	54	50	92.6
9	Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Cross River State	33	33	100
10	Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State	56	50	89.3
11	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	17	16	94.1
12	Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State	78	65	83.3
13	Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State	32	23	71.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>87.4</b>

N = 666 (87.4%)

Table 1 showed that seven hundred and sixty-two (762) copies of questionnaire were administered to library personnel working in the 13 public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. Out of these, six hundred and sixty-six (666) copies were validly completed and retrieved for analysis, which accounted for 87.4% response rate.

### Test of hypothesis

**H01: There is no significant relationship between work environment and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria**

The independent variable is work environment whereas the dependent variable is job performance of library personnel. The statistical analysis used to test hypothesis 1 was Pearson's product moment correlation. The result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Relationship between work environment and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>
Work environment	666	72.97	9.79	0.40	.000	0.15
Job performance of library personnel	666	76.34	12.34			

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 664; Critical r value = 0.098

Data analysis on test of relationship between work environment and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria is presented in Table 2. The result in table 2 showed that the calculated r - value of 0.40\* was greater than the critical r - value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with df = 664. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The test of hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between work environment ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $N = 666$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and job performance of library personnel. This showed that, work environment is very important and key in job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

**H02: There is no significant relationship between personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria**

The independent variable is personal variables whereas the dependent variable is job performance of library personnel. The statistical analysis used to test hypothesis 2 was Pearson’s product moment correlation. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Relationship between personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>
Educational qualifications	666	4.39	1.83	0.18**	.003	0.031
Job performance	666	76.34	12.34			
Job positions	666	1.97	0.70	-0.116*	.047	0.013
Job performance	666	76.34	12.34			
Work experience	666	9.04	2.48	0.16*	.049	0.024
Job performance	666	76.34	12.34			
Job tenure	666	4.62	2.64	0.074	.061	0.005
Job performance	666	76.34	12.34			

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 664; Critical r value = 0.098

Table 3 presents data analysis on the test of significant relationship between personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria. The result in Table 3 revealed that, personal variables positively and negatively significantly relate to job performance of library personnel in public universities. For educational qualifications: the calculated r - value of 0.18\*\* is greater than the critical r – value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with df = 664; For job positions: the calculated r – value -0.116 was less than the critical r – value of 0.098 at 0.05 level of significance with df = 664; For work experience: the calculated r – value of 0.16\* is greater than the critical r – value of 0.098 p< 0.05 level of significance with df = 664. Though for job tenure: the calculated r – value of 0.074 was less than the critical r – value of 0.098 p< 0.05 level of significance with df = 664. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The test of hypothesis revealed that there is positive and negative association between personal variables and job performance of library personnel in public universities. However, 3.1% and 2.4% of the variance in job performance are accounted for by educational qualifications and work experience respectively. This showed that, there is a positive significant relationship between personal variables (Educational Qualifications r = 0.18, N = 666; p< 0.05; Work Experience r = 0.16, N = 666; p< 0.05) and job performance of library personnel in public universities.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are quite revealing. Based on the findings, work environment and personal variables have been significantly found to determine the performance of library personnel in the South-south, Nigeria. Furthermore, work environment, personal variables and job performance had significant relationships. These factors, also contribute to job performance of library personnel. The findings corroborated Irons (2006) and Nnamani and Ajagu (2014) studies that significant relationships exist between comfortable work environments and job performance. In the same vein, Oludeyi (2015) study revealed a significant contribution of interpersonal relationship among colleagues to job commitment. Furthermore, Amir and Sahibzada (2010) study



discovered that human components in work environment significantly have great impact on performance of employees and level of relationships, as well as strong positive influence on outputs of employees. The findings supported the fact that, working in a stimulating, privileged intellectual environments enhanced performance.

Moreover, the findings showed that personal variables determine the recruitment and outputs of services expected by employers. These significantly have relationships with employee performance to achieve library goals in universities. This supported Ajidahun (2007) and Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) studies that revealed significant relationships between educational qualifications and performance of employees. The findings supported Oyewole (2013) and Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) findings that work experience positively related to and correlated with tasks performance. This further supported Sneed, Vivian and D'Costa (2015) finding that quality work experience scores may predict performance. In the same vein, Schmitt, Cortina, Ingerick, and Wiechmann (2001) Theory of Performance stated that, experience that individual brought to a job situation certainly contributed to her competence. All these variables determined and contributed significantly to better performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the findings, the study concludes that the level of performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria is determined by conducive work environment and the possession of quality personal variables.

Furthermore, the study established that work environment, personal variables and job performance of library personnel had significant relationships. In the same vein, work environment and personal variables relatively contributed to job performance of library personnel. This, therefore implied that, these factors significantly determined and contributed to enhance the performance of library personnel. If these are ignored by management of public university libraries, these could negatively hinder the performance of library personnel. But, if management of public university libraries take cognisance of these factors, these would determine and improve performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Library management should take cognisance of factors, such as work environment and personal variables to improve and sustain the level of performance of library personnel in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.
2. Library management should pay adequate attention to quality personal variables when recruiting and deploying personnel to various departments and units for job roles for improve performance in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.
3. Library management should regularly develop library personnel and give priority and serious attention to on-the-job training, particularly, job rotation to expose, increase their competencies and work experience to avoid low performance of jobs in libraries.

4. Library management should give serious priority to work environments of library personnel in this Information Age, to make them happy so as to perform their job roles better for attainments of goals and objectives of public university libraries in the South-south, Nigeria.
5. It is, therefore, imperative that federal and state governments and public university authorities in Nigeria should improve their funding and budgetary allocations to libraries to create conducive work environments with adequate infrastructures and facilities, recruit personnel with quality personal variables for job roles in libraries in public universities in the South-south, Nigeria.

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