

JOB PLACEMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR LIBRARY, CALABAR NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

A survey of staff placement and how it affects workers performance service delivery in the University of Calabar Library, Nigeria was carried out. A sample of 320 library staff made up of professional, paraprofessional and none professional staff was used for the study. Questionnaire, direct observation and interview were the instruments used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentage %). The finding reveals that the largest category of staff in the University of Calabar library was the administrative staff that had 90 respondents, representing 40.9 % of the total staff strength. This was followed by the junior staff that had 80 respondents, representing 36.4%; then the library officers with 26 respondents, representing 11.8%. It also shows that 81 staff, representing 36.9% were properly placed across all categories of staff. On the contrary, 139 staff, representing 63.1% were not properly placed. Filing of catalogue cards, shelf-reading, computation of library use statistics and circulation duties were the specific job responsibilities and services that were most seriously affected by improper job placement. It was recommended, among other things that, the number of administrative staff in the library should be reduced significantly in preference to professional and paraprofessional staff and there should be induction programme for newly employed staff.

Key Words: Job, Placement, Service, Delivery, University, Library.

Introduction

A library is a service oriented agency whose duties are tailored towards the provision of free, adequate and quality services to clients. The library relies on available resources, both human and material, in addressing users' needs. Therefore, the quality of services provided by the library is a function of its resources. The material resources are to be adequate in terms of number of volumes of books, journals, reference materials, including other information bearing resources. The relevance of these resources can be measured in terms of currency, adequacy and spread. The human resources should be professional, paraprofessional, technical and non-professional in nature to guarantee quality service delivery.

The human resources create the interface between information seekers and the information sought. They organize the material resources to serve the needs of users and the library generally. It is the human resources that attend directly to the needs of users through registration, lending of books, reference services, provision of library clearance, checking users in and out of the library, providing assistance to users who are not Computer or internet compliant, shelving and shelf-reading, teaching users on how to acquire basic library use skills and competences. Thus, human resources, in their various categories, are crucial to quality service delivery in a library system. Therefore, there is a clear division of labour in the performance of different duties in a library. Consequently, staff should be placed in areas where they have the qualification, experience and competences needed to perform the duties associated with their job placement.

It is therefore imperative that job placement and job description should be based strictly on staff qualification, experience and competence. For example, the technicians should be assigned to technical services in the first instance, according to their areas of technical competences, while the professional and para-professionals will take care of administrative and professional duties. The non-professional, non-technical staff will work as library attendants, library assistant, cleaners, messenger and porters. The professional staff are those with Bachelors' Degree, Masters' Degree or Doctorate Degree in Library and Information Science. The Para-professionals are those with Diploma Certificate in Library and Information Science and they are designated as Library Officers.

It is necessary for the library to strike a balance between the different categories of staff in a library. Each category should be staffed based of vacancy, demand or need. The ratio may not be static, though the magnitude of the work load in the various categories should be duly

considered in relation to the staff competence and the work environment. The junior members of staff are, in most cases, higher in number than the senior staff. This scenario can be explained base on the fact that academic libraries run shift duties: the morning shift and the afternoon shift. There are some libraries that have a third shift, the night shift. Library users' their comfort and convenience is the reason why academic libraries run shift duties. The user should be able to assess library resources and services at their convenience. This is imperative because in Library and Information Science Profession, provision of adequate, relevant and current information resources and service is the major focus while client satisfaction is the major goal. To achieve this goal, the human resources in the library would have to be deployed in such a way that each staff is placed and assign to duties that corresponds to their qualification and competence.

Job placement is the deployment to staff to different Divisions and Units in the library where they would be give their job description or assignment depending on their Division and Units. In other words, it is the official process that defines where a staff is to work in and what the staff is expected to do on a daily bases. Job placement in a library system, just like in any other organization, is a crucial assignment. It is understood as the allocation of people to the areas of responsibility according to their qualification, experience and need. It refers to the assignment or re-assignment of an employee to a new or different job. Job placement practice includes initial assignment of new employees and promotion, transfer or demotion of present employees. The need for job placement arises out of promotion, transfer, demotion or new recruitment. Assignment of new employee to a job apparently seems to be simple task, but it is more difficult and technical than it appears. If properly done, with a good work environment, the staff will be properly positioned to deliver good and quality services to users. Conversely, if staff are wrongly placed, even with a good work environment, there will be poor quality services rendered to clients and to the library in general. This explains why job place is so crucial in a library setting or in any other organization.

For an organization to run smoothly, it is essential for employees to ensure tasks are accomplished within the stipulated time frame and with minimal or no error. Otherwise why would a client come to you again if you do not deliver good, qualitative and timely services?

The services rendered by academic libraries to their clients ranges from teaching them basic library use skills, through lending services, reference services, registration of users, photocopying services, shelving and shelve

reading, filing of catalogue cards to proving library clearance to graduating users. These services could be categorized broadly into two: those that requires direct interface with library users and those performed behind the scene. The workers' competences, based on job placement, experience and attitude towards users, will manifest greatly as the staff interacts with users. If the right attitude towards users is not exhibited, there will be frustration on the part of users arising from wrong job placement, poor attitude to users and incompetence on the part of staff. The same scenario will play out if those working behind the scene are experiencing improper job placement.

In a typical academic library, there is a flow of sequential activities, from ordering of materials, through processing, to lending of these materials to registered library users. It requires that the human resources available should be properly placed at each stage and properly coordinated to guarantee good and quality service delivery. Once there is distortion of the sequence, arising from wrong placement of staff in positions they are not competent to function, it will manifest significantly in users frustration and apathy towards library resources and services. To guard against the occurrence of the above scenario, it is pertinent to design a formal induction programme for newly employed, including staff moved to new areas of responsibility.

Induction is an orientation programme designed to acquaint new staff with the rule, regulations, work ethics, responsibilities and job description. This is necessary to make the new staff feel welcome, to understand how the system works, to know their respective job description and expectations. The staff will be made to understand the channels to follow in addressing issues and challenges arising from the performance of their duties.

Insaideo (2001) opined that, human resources are the key to sustainable library services in any library. When the services of any library are evaluated, the staff of that library are indirectly being evaluated. There is therefore the need to have efficient and dynamic personnel that can translate the objectives of the library into reality. Therefore, librarians and other supporting staff will discharged their duty as expected if they acquired the necessary skills essential for the job, when there is proper job placement and when there is induction for new staff and for staff placed in areas where the lack the necessary skills and competences to discharge the duties associated their job placement

Statement of the Problem.

The University of Calabar library is one of the best academic libraries in Nigeria in terms of physical structure and content. There is an electronic library section that complements the physical resources. This therefore gives opportunity to users to choose between e-resources and the physical resources or both, depending on their information literacy competences. There is a Library Use Instruction Programme taught in the University to prepare library users' on how to make independent and effective use of library resources and services. The library equally has a large work force that should be able to address the information needs of users given the availability of adequate and current resources. With this development, one would expect to see a beehive of activities in the library by users seeking to take advantage of available resources to improve their academic performances, improve their learning and research skills. However, the apparent state of apathy towards the library has remained a source of concern. It becomes imperative to ascertain if job placement is in anyway responsible for poor quality of service and the state of apathy towards the library and its resources.

Objectives of the Study.

This study was conceived with the view to:

1. Ascertain the different categories of staff available in the University of Calabar library.
2. Ascertain if the staff are properly place in their areas of qualification and competencies.
3. Ascertain if there is a formal induction programme for newly employed staff in the University of Calabar library.
4. To ascertain if there specific job that are not properly carried out due to lack of qualification and competence of staff assigned to such duties.

Review of Related Literature.

In a study of job placement and employee performance and service delivery, Kavoo-Linge (2013) found a strong associations between job placement, service delivery and employee performance. Dessler (2008) holds that faulty placement can result in poor employee performance and poor services which in turn could lead to reduced organizational efficiency, increased attrition, threats to organizational integrity, and frustration of personal and professional ambitions. Conversely, he argues that proper placement fosters personal growth, provides a motivating climate for employees, maximizes performance, and increases the probability that

organizational goals will be met. Kumar and Sharma (2001) suggest that proper placement of workers reduces employee turnover, absenteeism and accident rates, and improves morale, all of which have implications on overall employee performance and productivity in the library or organization. Employee performance in any library is reflected in the effectiveness and efficiency with which goals and objectives are achieved (Sousa, Aspinwall, Sampaio and Rodrigues, 2005). Excellent employee performance means that the employee will carry out duties efficiently and effectively to meet agreed job objectives and quality of service, (Baldwin, 2008). The ability to effectively manage employee performance can lead to increased customer satisfaction and growth (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

To support the need for induction of new employees, Nankervis et al., (2009) observed that frequently, newcomers suffer feelings of failure because of inappropriate or absence of induction to the library or organization and this can be true for the newly hired experienced employees as for the novice. The same authors suggest that new employees should be inducted through a properly planned induction program. Studies that emphasizes the importance of induction or orientation of new staff and how it affects employee performance and services in libraries or other organizations included: Acevedo & Yancey, 2011; Ardts et al., 2001; Ballard & Blessing, 2006; Bauer & Erdogan, 2011; Black & Leyson, 2002; Cable et al., 2013; Chapman, 2009; Dunn & Jasinski, 2009; Graybill et al., 2013; Ingles et al., 2005; Kammeyer-Mueller, et al., 2013; Klein & Weaver, 2000; Knight, 2013; Oud, 2005; Oud, 2008; Portilla & Young, 2001; Whitmell, 2006). The most common benefits cited were better retention, increased job satisfaction and job fit, and higher rates of productivity and achievement for the library or organization. Acevedo & Yancey (2011) note the following: "New employee orientation (NEO) programs have been shown to socialize newcomers and increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) upon completion. These types of programs are perhaps the most influential piece of an employee's development". Uzorh (2002) is of the opinion that manpower development programme starts after the recruitment and placement of a workers in an organization or library as the case may be.

Methodology

A survey of staff placement and how it affects workers performance service delivery in the University of Calabar Library, Nigeria was carried out. A population of 320 library staff made up of professional, paraprofessional and none professional staff was used for the study. Questionnaire, direct

observation and interview were the instruments used for data collection. In view of the relatively small size of the population, sampling was not done. The entire population was used. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (simple percentage %).

Presentation of Data and Discussion of Findings.

The data on the different categories of staff in the University of Calabar Library is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Showing the different categories of staff in the University of Calabar Library.

S/N	Different categories of staff	Number available	percentage
1	Professional Librarians	14	6.4
2	Library Officers	26	11.8
3	Administrative staff	90	40.9
4	Technical staff	10	4.5
5	Junior staff	80	36.4
	Total	220	100 %

The finding reveals that the largest category of staff in the University of Calabar library was the administrative staff that had 90 respondents, representing 40.9 % of the total staff strength. This was followed by the junior staff that had 80 respondents, representing 36.4%; then the library officers with 26 respondents, representing 11.8%; followed by the academic librarians with 14 respondents representing 6.4% and lastly, the technical staff with 10 respondents representing 4.5% of the staff in the library. The above finding reveals a worrisome scenario where administrative staff constitutes the highest category of staff in the library. These are senior staff but lacks professional training in Library and Information Science that should have made them qualified and suitable for the basic routine services and responsibilities performed by staff in a library. If forty percent of senior staff in a library lacks professional training, it invariably means that they cannot fit perfectly well irrespective of where they may be placed. Moreover, as senior staff, it would be inappropriate to subject them to performing the duties of junior staff. Why would such a large

number of administrative staff be engaged in a library? At most, two to three administrative staff are enough to work with the secretary to the University Librarian.

The data on whether there were staff who were properly placed and those who were not is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Showing staff who were properly placed and those who were not.

S/N	Different categories of staff	Properly placed	%	Wrongly placed	%	Total
1	Professional Librarians	14	6.3	-	-	
2	Library Officerssss	26	11.8	-	-	
3	Administrative staff	3	1.3	87	39.5	
4	Technical staff	4	1.8	6	2.7	
5	Junior staff	34	15.4	46	20.9	
	Total	81	36.9	139	63.1	220 (100%)

The finding on table 2 above reveals library staff that were properly placed and those who were not based on their qualification, experience and competences. It shows that 81 staff, representing 36.9% were properly placed across all categories of staff. On the contrary, 139 staff, representing 63.1% were not properly placed. Apart from the professional librarians, who did not experience improper job placement, other categories of staff do experienced improper job placement of varying magnitude. The above finding is worrisome. If 63.1% of the workforce in a library were experiencing improper job placement, it is obvious that the quality of services rendered by such a library cannot be at optimal level. To make matters worse, there is no induction programme for newly employed staff. This programme would have taken care of some of the deficiencies arising from improper job placement.

The data on whether the staff were given any form of induction when they were employed or posted to a new place is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Showing staff who had induction and those who did not in different categories.

S/N	Different categories of staff	Staff inducted	%	Staff not inducted	%	Total
1	Professional Librarians	5	2.3	9	4.1	14 (6.4%)
2	Library Officers	8	3.6	18	8.2	26 (11.8%)
3	Administrative staff	4	1.8	86	39.1	
4	Technical staff	2	0.9	8	3.6	
5	Junior staff	14	6.4	66	30	
	Total	33	15	187	85	220 (100%)

Induction programme for newly employed and older staff on new posting is not a common feature in the University of Calabar library as the study found that only 33 staff, representing 15% of the respondents, across the various categories, confirmed that they had orientation when they were newly employed into the University of Calabar library. The remaining 187 staff, representing 85% never had any form of orientation given to them at the time they were newly employed. It was revealed, from the interview conducted, that staff who were admitted to having received induction when they were employed where those employed before 1996. This implied that, the culture of inducting new staff had existed in the University of Calabar Library before 1996. From this date, up till now, that wonderful induction experiences for new staff was denied to staff engaged thereafter with its attendant consequences.

The data on whether there were specific jobs not properly carried out due to improper job placement of staff revealed that, filing of catalogue cards, shelf-reading, computation of library use statistics and circulation duties were the specific job responsibilities that were most seriously affected. This is because junior and senior none professional staff were assigned to file catalogue entries. This is an aberration considering that filing is one of the technical services in a library. It is imperative to state that filing and maintenance of the catalogue is the responsibility of Library Officers and not that of junior or senior none professional staff. However, if junior or senior none professional staff were to be engaged in filing, they would have to "file on the Rod" while a library officer would check, correct where necessary and drop the cards.

Shelving and shelf reading is another technical service carried out in a library. In the University of Calabar Library, all staff, apart from the professional staff and the Secretary to the University Librarian were attached to specific shelves. They were expected to maintain their respective shelves by ensuring that the shelves were properly arranged and read. The administrative staff, constituting 40% of the total work force, does not have the competence to do shelf-reading and since there was no induction programme for new staff, shelving and shelf-reading continue to be one of the library duties suffering from improper job placement.

Circulation duties entails issuing out library books on loan to registered library users and receiving them back at the expiration of the loan period. The process requires proper filing of multiple book cards and the borrowers' tickets. Those saddled with this duty in the University of Calabar Library were the junior staff and the administrative (senior non professional) staff. These are not professional staff and because there was no induction programme for them, they lack the core values and ethics of the Library as a service oriented agency. These are the staff who interface directly with library users, and because they lack orientation, they are most often unfriendly to the library clients.

The essence of keeping proper statistics of library use is to provide a yardstick to evaluate the relevance of a library by measuring the extent of utilization of library resources and services by relying on the statistics of library use. In the University of Calabar Library, porters, Library Assistants and Library Attendants were these of handle the compilation of these records. Regrettably, most of these staff admitted to not knowing the reason for keeping statistics of library use. The obvious consequence of this is the apparent lack of seriousness in the compilation of the statistical records. Moreover, because they are not professionals, coupled with the absence of induction, the genuineness of the statistical records created by these staff cannot be guaranteed.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

The quality of services rendered by any academic library is to a large extent depended on the human and the material resources in the library. The material resources bears the information needed by library users while the human resources organizes the material resources for easy access and retrieval. The human resources interface directly with the information seekers. It is imperative to have the desired staff base on their qualification, experience and competence. It is equally necessary to ensure that there is

proper job place and provision of induction programme for newly recruited staff as well as staff posted to new places of responsibilities. The ratio of staff in their different categories should be skewed in favour of professional, paraprofessional and junior staffs

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