

An assessment of the influence of academic qualification and work experience on employment of staff in two federal university libraries in South-West Nigeria

Uwaebuka Wisdom Madu (CLN)

Department of Library and Information Science
Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State
maduwisdom40@yahoo.com

Sarah A. Akpobasah (CLN)

The Polytechnic Library, Federal Polytechnic, Ede
biggara4love@yahoo.com.

&

Ganiyu Idowu Buhari (CLN)

The Polytechnic Library, Federal Polytechnic, Ede
ganibuhari@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examined the influence of job recruitment variables of academic qualification and work experience on employment of staff in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Kenneth Dike library, University of Ibadan. Two research objectives and two null hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The ex-post facto research design was adopted. The population comprised all the librarians and library officers in the libraries under study. A structured and validated questionnaire titled "influence of academic qualification and work experience on employment of library staff questionnaire (IAQWEELSQ)" with a reliability index of 0.865 was used as instrument for data collection. Data generated were analysed using the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation; while t -test and ANOVA were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The findings revealed that, recruitment variables of academic qualification and work experience have significant influence on employment of staff in the libraries under study. Consequent upon the findings, it was recommended among others that, prospective employees should endeavour to acquire requisite qualifications and work experience to broaden their chances of securing employment in competition-driven Federal University libraries.

Keywords: Academic qualification, work experience, employment, university Libraries

Introduction

Librarianship today has become a complex profession requiring specific and detailed knowledge of many kinds. It is no longer an all comers' affairs, but one that requires that rigid standard be set for those entering into the profession. Fundamentally, the library is made up of the building; books (information materials like print and non- print), and most importantly the brain. The brain entails the staff or personnel who organize the operations of the library. A library can have an excellent collection of documents, plenty of online resources and a magnificent building, but if it does not have a competent workforce (staff), it will lose its relevance; because the complicated services which a modern library renders do not organize and run 'themselves' but must be modified, improved and extended in the light of changing conditions (Uzuegbu & Arua, 2012). The key, therefore, to successful library services rests on having reliable, honest, informed and skillful persons in both major and intermediate positions.

According to the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (2014), for effective and efficient service delivery, it is required that the academic library be staffed with a mix of the relevant personnel, which include academic librarians (i.e. professionals), library officers (para-professionals), and support staff. Whichever category, the quality of persons recruited to render library services determines to a great extent, the quality of output and satisfaction given to clientele. As a result, the selection of library personnel becomes a matter of foremost concern to librarians and information managers.

Jagath (2005) opines that, a library's strength is generally determined on the bases of its resource collection, equipment, staff, technology, investment capability, and the managerial process. Nnadozie (2007) observes that, "the staff is the most important possession of any library. This is because the staff provides the managerial, technical, professional and other support services". The author further maintains that, the planning of library services, organization of resources and coordination of routine activities rest on the shoulders of the staff. Thus, the achievement of set goals of any library depends to a large extent, on the calibre of staff.

In order to provide information products and services that will meet the expectations of the users, there is need for committed, competent, educated and motivated library staff. To this end, staff recruitment in university libraries is a goal that is not only indispensable, but one that should be pursued with principles subsumed in certain variables that point to the employees' competence and eligibility. However, the process of recruiting university library staff has overtime been influenced by various factors. Researchers such as Onwubiko, (2004); Nwachukwu, (2006); and Uzuegbu and Arua, (2012) have identified educational qualifications, experience, age, research and publications, membership of relevant professional bodies, marital status, locality, referee reports, passion, minimum salary, gender, religion, ethnicity, ICT skills as potent variables considered in recruitment of staff in today's technology driven university libraries. In all these, academic qualification and work experience formed the focus of this study in two Federal university libraries in South West, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Acquiring high quality and talented personnel is critical to the success of any university library. As the job market becomes increasingly competitive and more saturated with available skills growing more diverse, recruiters have become more selective in their choices. This is because, poor recruitment decisions can produce long-term negative effects. In recent times, it has been

observed that internal and external advertisements for librarians in university libraries in Nigeria lay emphasis on the variables of educational qualification; work experience; research and publication; membership to relevant professional bodies and referee reports as essential components of curriculum vitae accompanying application letters for employment into their libraries. But no one knows to what extent each of these variables influences the suitability or otherwise of applicants for employment as sometimes they seem to be mere window dressing or ‘fulfillment of all righteousness’. More so, not only that the views of practicing librarians in the context of what, or to what extent some of these variables should be considered during recruitments are scarcely known, review of empirical studies show that there is a paucity of literature on the influence of job recruitment variables on employment of staff in federal universities in South West zone of Nigeria. It therefore becomes imperative to ask; how do the selected job recruitment variables of academic qualification and work experience influence employment of library staff in the selected Federal university libraries in South-West Nigeria? This study was an attempt at finding plausible answer to this question, thereby filling the obvious gap that exists in literature on the subject of employment and recruitment variables in the university libraries under study.

Objectives of the study

1. To determine the influence of academic qualification on employment of staff in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan.
2. To examine the influence of work experience on employment of staff in HOL, OAU, Ile-Ife and KDL, UI.

Null hypotheses

- Ho1: There is no significant influence of academic qualification on employment of staff in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, and Kenneth Dike Library.
- Ho2: There is no significant influence of work experience on employment of staff in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, and Kenneth Dike Library.

Review of related literature

Academic qualifications and employment of university library staff

There have been various studies with various results on the nature of relationship between prospective employees’ qualifications and their employment in organizations. Nnadozie (2007), notes that library work is no more an all comers’ affair because of the rapid growth and complexity of the profession, but one that requires that rigid standard be set for those entering the profession. Accordingly, Singh (2014) opines that, libraries need the services of professionally qualified librarians for proper administration of the system. Hence, educational qualifications of librarians influence the organizational health of libraries. Higher academic and professional qualification leads to better library management and ultimately better library services”. Specifically, Nnadozie (2016), observes that because of the complexity of university librarianship, its professional manpower is required to possess specific educational qualifications in addition to other professional certifications.

Given that the function of an academic librarian is essentially academic in nature, Lawal (2002) believes that, employees should be properly qualified academically and otherwise to be able to cope with the intellectual demands of their jobs. Supporting this assertion, Onwibiko (2004) submits that, recruitment and assimilation into libraries should be based on merit spearheaded by academic qualification. Accordingly, Ifidon and Ifidon (2007), recommend that, “applicants to be selected for library work must have adequate professional qualification in librarianship which should be supported by adequate experience. They must be intellectually sound and be imbued with love for knowledge”. Hence, they believe that the minimum academic and professional qualifications, which are clearly spelt out by the LRCN are mandatory requirements for those being interviewed for appointment in libraries (depending on the level of appointment) to determine their employability.

According to the LRCN (2014), which is the regulating body for librarianship in Nigeria, a prospective librarian must have been trained and awarded a minimum of bachelor degree in library and information science from a recognized library school and be certified by the body. Academic qualification according to Onwubiko (2004), should never be compromised during recruitment of prospective librarians by university libraries. Job recruitment variables in university libraries have been the focus of some empirical investigations within and outside Nigeria. The result of the study by Amadi (2012) on the influence of academic qualification and work experience on employment of library staff in University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT) and Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) shows that, the two institutions attach great importance to academic qualification and work experience. The respondents further attested that the three variables played a significant role during their employment process and that their institutions are currently practicing the same trend. Similarly, other empirical investigations on this subject by Tewell (2012); Uzuegbu and Arua (2012); Akhilish and Prerana (2016) indicate a high positive influence of academic qualification on employment of library staff.

Although, much as academic qualifications alone may not guarantee total and quality job delivery, it gives an employee a sound and solid platform and serves as a threshold for explosive performance, all other things being equal. Hence, LIS professionals are expected to be academics of higher order with competence to work in a hypertext, networked and digital environment.

Work experience and employment of university library staff

Work experience comprises years of exposure to work, skills or abilities acquired and general contribution to knowledge within a given period of time. It entails skills gained through being actively involved in or exposed to something over a period of time. Philosophically, experience is knowledge acquired through the series of engagements and not through abstract reasoning. Shaffril and Uli (2010) observe that, work experience is a significant factor in employment, noting that the use of experienced manpower yields good work performance. They claim that the more experienced an applicant is, the higher work performance he has, hence the centrality of the place of experience in determining the employability of a candidate. According to Akhilesh and Prerana (2016), employability skills are transferable core skill groups that represent essential functions and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitude required by the 21st century workplace. Employability skills are necessary for career success at all levels and for job and service industries. Irrespective of their fields, employers of labour always look for

competent, best qualified, skilled, experienced and suitable employee for their organizations. The Library and Information sector is not an exception to this.

Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) opine that, experience is one of the mandatory requirements for those being interviewed for appointments into university libraries. They further maintain that the needfulness of money in library operations notwithstanding, the centrality of the place of experienced librarians cannot be compared with any other resource of the library. In its prominence and placement, the university library conveys its integral role in supporting universities' core missions of research, teaching, town cum gown collaboration and education. The attainment of the lofty expectations from university libraries require that, the services of blended and experienced librarians are secured (Uzuegbu & Arua, 2012). There is a positive role of experience during recruitment of prospective employees which cannot be over-emphasized. It helps in developing skills in communication and team work as well as helps a young person to decide if a work area is likely to be what they want or not.

One of the most valuable benefits of work experience is that of placing a prospective employee in a real-life situation, as this gives him/her the opportunity to work with people for whom the job is their full-time occupation. It is worthy to note that requirements for experience during recruitments in libraries must be based on relevance to library operations. Hence, such experience must have been obtained while working in a library or similar organization.

According to Ekere and Ugwu (2011), the higher the work experience, the more satisfaction librarians derive from their job. It then follows that for one to stay put in a job for so long, would confirm the value of the job and at the same time would moderate the satisfaction of the worker. It goes to show the satisfaction of the acquaintance, adaptation and convenience of the worker, unlike the worker with shorter working experience. Hence, work experience is a factor that can influence employment and job satisfaction in university libraries in Nigeria. Evidently, the experience one gathers during work over years is bound to help librarians overcome associated challenges in future. More so, Singh (2014) describes experienced staff as an indispensable asset of any university library.

Methodology

The ex-post facto research design was adopted for this study. This design was chosen because the event that generated data for this study took place in the past prior to the conduct of the research. The population of the study consisted 65 and 78 librarians and library officers in HOL, OAU, Ile-Ife and KDL, UI respectively totaling 143. A structured questionnaire titled "influence of academic qualification and work experience on employment of library staff questionnaire (IAQWEELSQ)" was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was developed using four-point rating scale responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by three validators who are senior lecturers in the department of Educational technology/Library Science at the University of Uyo and further subjected to a reliability test in which an internal consistent coefficient of 0.865 was obtained. Data generated were analysed using the mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation; while t-test and ANOVA were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance.

Decision rule: In testing the hypothesis, where the calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value, it was concluded that there is no significant influence between the variables and

the null hypothesis was accepted. On the other hand, where the calculated t-value was greater than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating a significant influence between the variables tested.

The instrument was a four-point rating scale; therefore, the response set is given below:

Strongly agree – 3.50 – 4.0; Agree – 2.50 – 3.49; Disagree – 2.0 – 2.49; Strongly disagree – 1.0 – 1.99.

On a four-point rating scale, the average mean response of cut-off mean is 2.50, thus, Mean response below 2.50 was deemed unacceptable while Mean responses of 2.50 and above were taken as agreed and as such accepted.

Data analysis and result

Table 1: Summary of the respondents’ mean scores on influence of academic qualification employment of staff in HOL and KDL

S/N	Qualification in libraries	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev	Remarks
1.	Only qualified applicants should be employed.	134	3.78	1.19	SA
2.	Certificates should be verified before employment.	134	3.98	1.10	A
3.	Importance should be attached to academic qualifications.	134	3.04	1.07	SA
4.	Librarians are to be certified by the LRCN before employment.	134	3.06	1.00	A
5.	I am qualified for my post.	134	3.80	0.40	SA
	Grand Mean		3.53	0.95	SA

* SA = Strongly agreed, A = Agreed

Table 1 shows the item by item analysis of the influence of qualification on employment of staff in the federal university libraries. The result shows that all the items have mean responses above 2.50 the cut off Mean. The result also shows that the grand Mean of all the items is 3.53; this indicates that academic qualification has a strong positive influence on employment of staff in federal university libraries under study.

Table 2: Summary of the respondents’ mean scores on influence of work experience on employment of staff in HOL and KDL

S/N	Experience (in years) and Employment	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev	Remarks
1.	1-5 years	27	2.89	1.02	A
2.	6-10 years	40	3.18	0.93	A
3.	11-15 years	35	3.29	0.46	A
4.	16-20 years	21	3.43	0.88	A
5.	21 and above	11	3.70	0.48	SA
	Grand Mean	134	3.30	0.76	SA

Table 2 above shows the summary of respondents on the influence of experience on employment of staff in federal university libraries. The result shows that librarians with

experiences above 21 years had a mean response of 3.70 and they thought experience should be considered during employment. This was followed by those with 16-20 years of experience. However, those with fewer years of experience were less inclined to consider experience as a very essential variable that will influence employment of library staff. This is shown in the result by the lower Mean (\bar{x}) responses for 1-5 years (2.89) and 6-10 years (3.18). However, the grand Mean shows a mean response of 3.30 indicating that work experience does have an influence on employment of staff in the two libraries.

Testing the null hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of academic qualification on employment of staff in HOL, and KDL.

Table 3: Summary of significant test of influence of academic qualification on employment of staff in HOL and KDL

Group	N	\bar{x}	Std. Dev.	Df.	Tcal.	Tcrit.	Decision
Academic Qualification	134	3.53	0.95				
Employment of staff	134	3.20	0.88	132	3.058	1.96	Reject H ₀

**Tcal – calculated test-value, Tcrit- critical test value*

Table 3 above shows the summary of the t-test analysis for the significant test for influence of qualification on employment of staff in federal university libraries in South-West Nigeria. The result shows that the grand Mean for qualification is 3.53 while the Mean for Employment of staff is 3.20. The result shows a calculated t-value of 3.058. At 132 degree of freedom and .05 alpha level, the critical value is 1.96. Since the tcal is greater than the tcrit alpha level, the critical value is 1.96. Since the tcal is greater than the tcrit, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus, there is a significant influence of qualification on employment of staff in federal university libraries under study.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant influence of work experience on employment of staff in HOL and KDL.

Table 4: Summary of significant test of influence of experience on employment of staff in HOL and KDL

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	Fcal	Fcrit
Between Groups	7.589	4	1.897	2.534	2.462
Within Groups	96.561	129	.749		
Total	104.149	133			

Table 4 presents the summary of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test for influence of experience on employment of staff in federal university libraries in South-West Nigeria. The years of experience ranged from 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16 -20 and above 20 years. The result shows that the Fcal is 2.534. At 4 and 12 above 20 years. The result shows that the Fcal is 2.534. At 4 and 129 degrees of freedom and .05 alpha level, the Fcrit is .462. Since the Fcal is greater than the Fcrit, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is retained, thus, there is a significant influence of work experience on employment of staff in the libraries.

Discussion of the findings

The result of the analysis on influence of qualification on employment of staff in university libraries indicated that qualification has a significant influence on employment of staff in the university libraries under study. This influence may be attributed to the fact that the nature of services offered by university libraries requires a high level of intellectual capacity and academic competence. It can also be linked to the recognition that, effective library service delivery in university libraries would only be a mirage unless competent and well qualified individuals are hired to execute library functions. The finding of this study is in line with Lawal (2002), who believes that employees should be properly qualified academically and otherwise to be able to cope with the intellectual demands of academic librarianship.

The findings from the result on the influence of work experience on employment of university library staff revealed that there is a significant influence of work experience on employment of staff in the libraries under study. This result may be linked to the desire of university library managers to hire applicants that have had good understanding of how the library system works and are ready to bring that experience to bear; rather than experimenting with fresh minds. The finding of this study is in tandem with Amadi (2012), who investigated the influence of experience on employment of library staff in UNIPORT and RSUST, in which the respondents attested that previous work experience played a major role during their recruitment and maintained that their institutions were still practicing the same trend.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that, the variables of academic qualification, work experience influence employment of staff in the two federal university libraries studied. In all, the considerations given to the selected variables in the recruitment exercises of the libraries under study have been unveiled and the identified gap that existed in literature equally filled.

Recommendations

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

1. In view of the stiff competition in the labour market, prospective employees should endeavour to acquire the requisite qualifications and work experience in order to broaden their chances of securing employment in federal university libraries.
2. University library managers should institute continuous in-house training mechanism and other staff development programmes to retrain newly recruited staff before deployment.

References

- Akhilesh, K. S. Y., & Prerana, D. B. (2016). Employment opportunities in LIS field: a content analysis of positions advertised. *Annals of Library and Information Studies*, 63(1), 53-58.
- Amadi, D. C. (2012). Employment of library staff in university of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Science and Technology libraries. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 2(1), 67-74.
- Ekere, J. N., & Ugwu, C. I. (2011). Influence of age, gender and working experience on librarians' job satisfaction in university libraries in Nigeria. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*. 2(1), 45-54.
- Ifidon, S. E., & Ifidon, E. I. (2007). *New directions in African library management*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- Jagath, J. G. C. (2005). An approach to marketing in special and academic libraries of Sri Lanka: a survey with emphasis on services provided to the clientele. Retrieved from eprints.rclis.org/6731/1/artpradeea.pdf.
- Lawal, O. O. (2002). *The library profession in Nigeria*. Calabar: The University of Calabar Press.
- Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) (2014). *Minimum standard and guidelines for academic libraries in Nigeria*. Retrieved from www.lrcn.gov.ng.
- Nnadozie, C. O. (2007). *Foundations of library practice*. Owerri: Springfield Publishers.
- Nnadozie, C.O. (2016). Interaction between librarians' ICT skills and faculty members' satisfaction with information delivery in university libraries. *Middlebelt Journal of Library and Information Science*, 14 (16), 55-68.
- Nwachukwu, C. C. (2006). *Management theory and practice*. Onitsha, Nigeria: Africana First Publishers.
- Onwubiko, C. P. C. (2004). *Fundamentals of management in libraries*. Owerri: CREMB Publishers.
- Shaffril, H., & Uli, J. (2010). The influence of socio-demographic factors on work performance among employees of government agriculture agencies in Malaysia. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 3(10), 459-469.
- Singh, K. P. (2014). *Preparation and training of library staff*. New Delhi: Random Publications.
- Tewell, B.C. (2012). Employment opportunities for new academic librarians: accessing the availability of entry level jobs. *Portal Librarians and the Academy*, 12(1), 407-423.
- Uzuegbu, C. P., & Arua, U. (2012). *Recruitment variables in the employment of library and information professionals in academic and research libraries in Nigeria*. Proceedings of the maiden conference of Nigerian Library Association, Abia State chapter, on personnel issues in the 21st century librarianship, held in 2012 at National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike, Abia State.