

INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE OF STAFFING ON AUTOMATION OF LIBRARIES IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of management principle of staffing on automation of libraries in Federal universities in southeast, Nigeria. To guide the study, one objective, and one research question were used while one hypothesis was formulated to be tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 378 which comprised academic and non-academic librarians. The entire population was used for the study hence no sampling. Validated copies of the questionnaire were tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha, and the reliability coefficient for the two variables was returned at an average of $r_\alpha = 0.83$ confirming their reliability. The 378 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants one from each university. 375 were returned and 368 were correctly completed and used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean frequency count and standard deviation. The mean was used for answering the research question while inferential statistics of the t-test were used for testing the hypothesis. The result showed a mean of 2.80 high extents of responses by the respondents agreeing that the management principle of staffing influences automation of university libraries in the South East. The conclusion was drawn that the management principle of staffing influence the automation of academic libraries in federal universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Keywords: Automation, Libraries, Management, Staffing, Federal Universities

Introduction

The goal of the Library is centred on information acquisition, processing, preservation, storage, and dissemination most efficiently and effectively suitable to the user. Hence, its culture has the flexibility to change information packaging and services. Information services offered by the library to the general public have a great volume of contribution to their output in the labour market, it also empowers educational sectors, particularly universities. According to Aina, (2003), as early men grew in knowledge, they began to record their knowledge which transited from clay tablets to papyrus to printing and these days to electronic media. Having these accumulated information materials, it becomes crucial to conserve them and also make them available for consultations, hence the establishment of a library. A library can be said to be a place where information materials are organized, processed, organized, stored and made available to the targeted user to meet their varying information needs (Ishola & Obadare, 2014), the place where the materials are kept for consultation (Akande, 2008), and are indispensable (Aina, 2003). Information needs could be teaching, learning, research as well as recreational. There are different kinds of libraries, and the academic library is one of them. Academic libraries are established in tertiary institutions which include: Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, polytechnics and universities. These academic libraries offer all-around information services for academic excellence. Each Academic library serves the mission of its parent institution, they play important role in supporting teaching, learning and research in all subjects/ disciplines offered by the institution (Jubb & Green, 2007, Bajpai & Madhusudham, 2019; Oduwale 2002; Ajibero, 2004). An academic environment without a library is tantamount to a person without a brain. It is pertinent to discover whether academic libraries are indeed living

up to their expectations (Perera, 2014 in Ishola & Odadare, 2014).

Library automation having assumed a great deal of importance in libraries from the mid-1960s, has become a formidable platform for academic libraries to serve their user public effectively (Amekuede, 2013). Consequently, a lot of studies have been conducted to examine how far university libraries are automating their routines and services, as well as how potential impediments to successful library automation projects are being curtailed (Akande, 2014; Oyetola and Afolabi 2014; Nwakuo and Nwakuo, 2014; Emezie and Nwaohiri, 2014). But, despite this effort, the state of automation of academic libraries in Nigeria, particularly in the South Eastern part of Nigeria, seems unappreciable. Most university libraries, even in the regularly-funded federal institutions, have the culture of acquiring and displaying computer sets without Internet connectivity and or local area networks (LAN) linked to them, let alone running on one or more library management software (Anunobi and Okonkwo, 2008). Yet, no one knows what could be responsible for this sluggish or disinterested approach of university libraries to automate their routines and service. The type of academic library which is the concern of this research is university libraries, precisely, University libraries in federal universities in the South East.

Statement of the problem

The importance of library automation has been underscored in librarianship literature and having assumed a great deal of importance in libraries from the mid-1960s, it has become a formidable platform for academic libraries to serve their user public effectively (Amekuede, 2013). Researchers' preliminary investigation and informal discussion with staff of some university libraries show that the management principle of staffing is essential for automation exercises though it has some

challenges. The challenges include unskilled manpower, infrastructure, finance and so on (Anunobi and Okonkwo, 2008). From the available literature, there is not yet a study on the influence of management principles of staffing on automation of libraries in federal universities in southeast Nigeria. This is the concern that made the researchers embark on this study titled “influence of management principles of staffing on automation of libraries in federal universities in South East Nigeria”.

Purpose of the study

To access the influence management principle of staffing on automation of libraries in federal universities in the south-east, Nigeria

Research question

How does management principle of staffing influence the automation of libraries in federal universities in southeast, Nigeria?

Hypotheses for the study

The null hypotheses used for the study states that there is no significant influence between the mean responses of academic and non-academic librarians on how management principle of staffing influences the automation of libraries in federal Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Management according to Kasf and Ensezuiegh (2003) and Terry (2000) is a process consisting of planning, organizing, actualizing and controlling performance to determine and accomplish the objectives by the use of people and resources. Management is considered as a ‘process or a systematic way of doing things. Taylor (1911) in Onyenachi (2012), the father of scientific management, defined management as an art of knowing what is to be done and seeing that it is done in the best possible manner. Massie and Douglas (1973) in Onyenachi (2016) see management as

the process by which a cooperative group directs actions toward common goals. Fayol (1917) and Onyenachi (2015) regarded as the father of modern management defined management as forecasting, planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling activities of others. Sisk (2000) communicates that management is the coordination of all resources through the process of planning, organizing, directing and controlling to attain stated goals. McFarland and Amy (2009) opine that management is the process by which managers create, direct, maintain and operate purposive organization, through systematic coordination and cooperative human efforts. Kumball (2006) comments that management is a process of working with and through others to achieve the organizational objective in a changing environment. According to Moyo and Maguranyanga, (2006), Agboola, (2000) and Nwachukwu (2000), motivating people at work is part of the integral management process. The current authors see management as central to any organization if the organization will fulfil their purpose by effectively and efficiently using its limited human and material resources.

Staffing is an indispensable management principle because the management of any kind depends on staff capability for a positive result. All the physical resources needed by any organization to achieve its objectives cannot be complete without staff to control such facilities. Physical facilities include buildings, furniture, machines etc. Automation which is the focus of this research centres on the use of computers and their accessories, internet software databases etc in handling the routine library operations electronically instead of manually. That equipment, internet, and other physical facilities needed foto to achieve automation cannot handle themselves. Except staff/personnel/human being does it. Hence no human being no automation. Idi (2017) insists that library automation and the efficiency of service provision can only be

achieved through regular staff development. The training and retraining of librarians in the necessary ICT skill are compulsory for the benefit of automation of library services (Smarmola, 2011; Uddin, 2009; Iheaturu, 2004 & Adeleke, 2017).

Lawal (2014) in American Library Association (2014) submits that the general problems in library automation are handling of the situation by the untrained professionals who need to develop skills for the process and the reluctance on approving by the authority concerned. Library automation is much essential to increase the efficiency of the library staff. Nzotta (2006), opines that library staff needs the training to accommodate the latest modern developments in the areas of library automation and computer application in libraries to facilitate effective service. According to Metzger (2002), staff training must not be limited to librarians but also to non-librarians staff.

Fabunni (2004) is of the view that the library profession and the library schools must move with the times and embrace modern information technologies. Only then will library schools be able to provide the necessary professional training skills and competencies that librarians need to function in an automated library environment. Staff training is an integral part of vocation or career development and is becoming a global and pervasive phenomenon in any establishment. The absence of training spells doom for such an institution and its presence determines the success of any library automation (Nok, 2006 & Nkanu, 2008). Training of staff enhances productivity. The academic library in their services, especially in automated services, cannot afford to allow its staff to degenerate in the acquisition of knowledge, and the knowledge already acquired cannot be allowed to diminish because society cannot afford to jettison the role of the library and librarians in the socio-

cultural and educational development of the nation. Ajidahum (2007) agrees that training of staff enhances productivity, according to him, education and training are generally indicated as the most important direct means of upgrading the human intellect and skills for productive employment.

Staff training improves automation services and therefore promotes management efficiency in automation. Fatuji (2004) and Sisk (2000) agree that training programs should be directed toward improving efficiency and work performance. Akpan (2001) states that staff training reduces costs rather than recruiting new staff as well as facilitates, human resources reserve, faster decision making, continuity of improvement in employee morale, availability for future personnel needs of the organization, personal growth and organizational stability. There are various training techniques that library staff can be exposed to. Onuoha (2011) is of the view that training should take the form of continuing education, industrial attachment, formal education programs leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees, on-the-job learning from experienced colleagues, coaching and special projects and off-the-job lectures, seminars, discussions and instructions of various types.

Staffing is very important in the automation of university library because starting from the acquisition of the electrical devices needed for the automation to the installation of the devices, retrospective conversion, service delivery and maintenance requires qualified staff (Adeleke, 20017 & Oketuji, 2001). These make staffing one of the significant management principles of automation of university libraries.

Library automation is the application of computer software in the handling of the services in the library instead of manual application (Lamkhogen, 2014). The author further explained that automation implies the

use of automatic data processing equipment such as a computer or other labour-saving devices". In the words of the current researcher, library automation can be defined as a technology which concerns, performing a process using programmed commands combined with automatic feedback control to ensure prompt execution of the instructions. According to Rajput and Guatam (2010), academic library automation reduces the work stress of library staff and helps in getting information quicker. Thus the justification for automation must be logical and convincing. Automation to a greater extent can reduce the pressure on the library workload of library staff. It also shelters from work stress and fatigue. Automation requires that library staff must be competent users of ICT facilities, must become active users of the internet, be capable to use the emerging technologies to network their resources and be active managers of change (Asogwa and Onwoubiko; Fabunmi, 2004 & Kargbo, 2007).

Emezie and Nwaohiri (2014) contribute that library automation is seen as the vehicle that will drive the academic library to the next level. In line with this, they further state that, as more people engage in new forms of learning, such as e-learning and distance education, a centralized, automated circulation-control system enables libraries to fulfil their functions to this group. Dhaka (2012) opines that library automation in the 21st century is an interrelated system, sharing resources through modern and innovative networking and making certain impartial access to a broad range of information and users. Automation has modified the definition of librarians and libraries; it provides the practising librarian with the skill and knowledge needed to make intelligent decisions. Adegboire (2010) sees library automation as the application of information technologies in libraries. Automation is the recital of a procedure, a string of operations or a process by self-activating, self-controlling.

According to Lamkhogen, (2014) automation means that the resulting system is capable of operating without human intervention. Automation is a process of using machinery for easy working and saving human power and time (Edwin and Pwadura, 2014; Aghadiuno, Agbo and Onyekweodiri, 2015; Bruno, 2010). Rajput and Gautam (2010) describe library automation as the creation of database and information retrieval, computerized library network and use of telecommunication for information needs and careful handling and systematical planning. According to Rajput and Guatam (2010), library automation involves the creation of database and information retrieval devices, a computerized library network and the use of telecommunication for information needs and careful handling and systematical staffing. Staffing is an important part of library automation.

Methodology The research was conducted at Federal universities in southeast, Nigeria. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 378 which comprised academic and non-academic librarians. The entire population was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a self-constructed questionnaire. It was sub-divided into two parts which are personal data of the respondents and items on management principles of staffing on library automation. Validated copies of the questionnaire were tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha, and the reliability coefficient was returned at an average of $r_\alpha = 0.83$ confirming its reliability. The 378 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents through the help of research assistants one from each university.. 375 were returned and 368 were correctly completed and used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean frequency count and standard deviation. The mean was used for answering the research question while inferential

statistics of the t-test were used for testing the hypothesis.

Analysis and Presentation of Findings

Research question

How does the management principle of staffing influence the automation of university libraries in federal universities in the southeast, of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean responses on the influence of management principle of staffing on automation of university libraries in the south-east, Nigeria.

Item Statement		N	Mean	Standard
Deviation	Remark			
1. My library has an automation librarian who is overseeing the Automation Project High Extent		368	3.00	3.2
2. My library has some designated staff recruited for my library's Automation Project High Extent		368	3.00	3.2
3. Without training library staff on automation, automation of my Library will not be achievable High Extent		368	2.90	3.00
4. Library automation can only be successfully implemented in my library through contracted firms High Extent	368	2.80	3.10	
5. Library automation works in my library without library's staff Involvement Low Extent		368	2.30	3.90
6. My library's staff cannot automate my library on their own without external or contracted assistance High Extent		368	2.60	3.70
7. My library staff install and configure automation hardware and software High Extent		368	2.56	2.70
8. My library contracts its automation hardware and software Configuration High Extent		368	2.70	2.90
9. My library's staff are not capable of managing automation				

project High Extent	368	3.00	3.40
10. The automation project of my library is managed by staff High Extent	368	3.00	2.62
Aggregate mean and Standard Deviation High Extent		2.80	3.00

Table 1 above shows the mean analysis of responses given to the items concerning the influence management principle of staffing on automation of university libraries in federal universities in the south-east, of Nigeria. The analyzed data showed high extent responses of the respondents to 9 items out of the ten items as they influence automation of their libraries. This was because the mean responses of the respondents of the 9 items ranged from 2.56 – 3.00, which is above the 2.50 mean criterion of a 4-point rating scale average mean of 2.80. As the standard deviation of these items ranged from 2.62- 3.40 with an average SD = 3.00 showing a close range of the means from the scores. This implies that staffing influences the automation of university libraries as such staffing contributes significantly to the ineffectiveness of full

automation in these federal university libraries.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis formulated for the study was tested using a t-test statistical tool at 0.05 alpha level and 366 degrees of freedom (df).

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the mean rating responses of academic and non-academic librarians on how staffing influences the automation of university libraries in federal Universities in the southeast, Nigeria.

The above hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at a 0.05 level of significance at 366 degrees of freedom, the result is presented in Table 2

Table 2: t-test analysis of responses of academic and non-academic librarians on how staffing influences the automation of university libraries

Group	Number	Mean	SdDf	t-Cal	t-Tab	Decision
Academic	135	2.67	0.83	366	2.44	1.65
Non-Academic	233	2.80	0.90			

SD = The standard deviation

Df = The degree of freedom

t-cal = t-calculated value

t-tabulated or critical value (value from the Table)

From Table 2, the result shows there is a significant difference between the mean rating

responses of academic and non-academic librarians on the influence of staffing on the automation of university libraries in the south-

east, of Nigeria the hypothesis was accepted because the t- calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value at 0.05 level of significant at 366 degrees of freedom (df) giving as $2.44 < 1.65$. This implies that both academic librarians' and non-academic librarians' responses to the influence of staffing on the automation of university libraries are high.

Summary of the study

The research design adopted for the study was a descriptive survey design. The population was 378 being all academic and non-academic library staff of Federal University Libraries in South East Nigeria, the entire population was used for the research hence no sampling. The researcher developed a questionnaire tagged "Influence of Management Principles on Automation of University Libraries Questionnaire" (IMPAULQ) to gather data for the study. It has 10 items. It was structured in 4 point scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Very Low Extent (VLE), and Low Extent (LE) assigned 1 point as options for the items. The validity and reliability of the instrument were ascertained, and the copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher to the respondents with the help of research assistants. 368 copies which were correctly completed were used for analysis. The researcher used descriptive statistics of mean frequency count for the research questions while inferential statistics of t-test was used to analyze test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant level and 366 degrees of freedom. The result of the findings showed that the construct of the management principle of staffing was found to have a significant influence on the automation of the federal university library in southeast, Nigeria.

Recommendation

Librarians should always employ qualified and enough staff, because staffing is one of the

significant lifespans in the automation of their libraries along selection and implementation of automation systems (information and communication technology) that support the mission and priorities of the institution for efficient, effective and sustainable service delivery to patrons.

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