

ASSERTIVENESS AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LIBRARIANS IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study examined assertiveness and job satisfaction among librarians in the university libraries in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. One research objective was formulated for this study. A questionnaire was constructed after consultation with related literature to ensure that relevant items were included. A self-constructed questionnaire entitled “Assertiveness and Job Satisfaction Scale (AJSS)” was designed by the researchers. The population of the study comprises all librarians in the university libraries in Niger Delta. A total of two hundred librarians responded from different university libraries in the Niger Delta. This represents 83% of university librarians in the Niger Delta. The responses were collated, analyzed using simple percentages and mean. The findings revealed that librarians are assertive when a user borrowed a book and is overdue, they are not scared to mention it, have the right to say I don’t know, are willing to speak up in a discussion and are openly critical of other ideas, opinions and behaviour.

Keywords: Assertiveness, job satisfaction, librarians, university, libraries, Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Introduction

University library is a vital component that develops teaching-learning and research activity which serves as a key factor to accomplish the aims and objectives of the university. Similarly, Mukhtar and Ibrahim (2022) avowed that the major aim of academic libraries is to provide the curricular educational needs of the students and the entire academic community, for example, supporting the teaching staff in the up-to-date materials required for their teaching jobs. Rendering of information materials at the right time and in the right format for library users can only be achieved when librarians manning these libraries are assertive. Assertiveness is the quality of being self-assured and confident without being aggressive. In

the field of psychology and psychotherapy, it is a learnable skill and mode of communication (Wikipedia, 2014).

According to Tannous (2015) assertiveness has a great and optimistic significance on one's confidence and this has withstood the test of time. Assertiveness is very obliging in knowing the extent to which knowledge, skills, performance and the aptitude to understand individuals are needed to improve the attitude of expertise in understanding institution proceedings. Dorland's Medical Dictionary (2012) describes assertiveness as a form of behaviour characterized by a confident assertion or affirmation of a statement without the need for proof. This affirms an individual's rights or points of view without either aggressively threatening the rights of another or assuming a position of authority or submission permitting another to disregard or deny one's rights or point of view. Khameneh (2014) stated that assertiveness skills include verbal and non-verbal behaviours' that help individuals to satisfy their needs without resorting to dishonesty or control of other people to defend their rights. Fulton (1997) opined that assertiveness is one tool that can be used to counteract bullying, amend stressful situations and increase empowerment.

Aggressive people do not respect the personal boundaries of others and thus are liable to harm others while trying to influence them. Hulbert (1990) opines that aggressive library administrators tend to: draw a quick conclusion about the causes of problems, ascribe blame without listening to the ideas of others, express dissatisfaction by using highly charged, provocative language, overreact to problems, insist on their point of view, refuse to seek others' opinions or accept others priorities, and avoid negotiation and compromise. An assertive person communicates assertively by incapacitating fear of speaking his or her mind or trying to influence others, but doing so in a way that respects the personal boundaries of

others. According to Khamenah (2014) assertiveness skills among library administrators (staff notification of decisions and occupational aspects) are related to users' satisfaction. Hulbert (1990) stated that one way that library administrators can be dealt with the problem, stressful situations and interpersonal conflicts is to practice assertive behavior and to encourage and even train other staff members in the techniques of assertive behaviour. Intuitively, it is easier to believe that librarians who are more satisfied with their job are likely to display high traits of assertiveness in the library. Moreso, studying assertiveness as correlates to job satisfaction among librarians is paramount. However, not much research has been done in the area of assertiveness as correlates to job satisfaction among librarians in Niger Delta, Nigeria. Therefore, this study is to seek the correlation between assertiveness and job satisfaction among librarians in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study is intended to answer the following sole research question:

1. What is the relationship between the librarians' assertiveness and job satisfaction in the university libraries in Niger Delta, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Assertiveness and job satisfaction of Librarians

According to Craighhead and Nemeroff (2002), Assertiveness Training ("AT") was introduced by Andrew Salter in 1961 and popularized by Joseph Wolpe. They further opined that Wolpe's believed that a person could not be both assertive and anxious at the same time, and thus being assertive would inhibit anxiety. Assertiveness is a psychology and psychotherapy concept originally explored and used by Joseph Wolpe in 1958 in his work

treating neurosis (Wolpe,1958). Craighhead and Nemeroff (2002) listed the following goals for assertiveness training which include:

- increased awareness of personal rights
- differentiate between non-assertiveness and assertiveness
- differentiation between passive–aggressiveness and aggressiveness
- learning both verbal and non-verbal assertiveness skills.

Similarly, Larijani, Aghajani, Baheiraei and Neiestanak (2010) defined assertiveness as a person feeling responsible for his emotions, beliefs and thoughts most honest, direct and appropriate expression. Assertiveness can also be defined as expressing ones needs, feelings and demands clearly without violating others’ rights (Pfeiffer, 2010). Anyone can be assertive without being forceful or rude rather it is stating clearly what you expect and insisting that your rights are considered. Assertiveness can be taught in society generally as a way to be social and easily establish communication with everybody. However, assertiveness is not just about establishing communication among individuals; to be assertive requires having a certain consciousness. An individual is not acting assertively if he is not respecting his own and others’ rights not expressed his demands appropriately or does a thing he does not want. Assertiveness means a person’s tendency to stand up and speak out for his interests and concerns, such as voicing opinions, making offers and concessions, and attempting to coerce or intimidate others (Ames and Flynn, 2007). Virkler (2009); Reid and Hammersley (2000) listed the following as characteristics exhibited by assertive people:

- they feel free to express their feelings, thoughts, and desires
- they are “also able to initiate and maintain comfortable relationships with other people
- they know their rights

- they have control over their anger. This does not mean that they repress these feelings; it means that they control anger and talk about it in a reasoned manner.
- assertive people are willing to compromise with others, rather than always wanting their way and tend to have good self-esteem
- assertive people enter friendships from an ‘I count my needs. I count your needs position.

However, Gass and Seiter (2003) stated that assertive librarians are not afraid to speak up, express their feelings, or take initiative.

Assertiveness is strongly associated with masculinity and with librarians (Gallois, 2004). Some librarians are less assertive because they never were assertive and also because they may have lost the confidence to use assertiveness skills (Furnham & Pendleton, 1983). Previous research shows that assertiveness affects job satisfaction in complex ways. For instance, Gul, Munir, Amin and Farooq (2012) in his study aimed to know the relationship among self-esteem, assertiveness and job satisfaction in an organization in Lahore city. Their findings revealed that a significant relationship exists between the employee’s self-esteem, assertiveness and job satisfaction. Yet, librarians with disabilities may have much to gain from learning assertiveness skills adapted for specific contexts (Hickson & Worrall, 2003; Orr & Rogers, 2003).

The assertive librarians speak tactfully, aware of the social context and the other person’s perspective, knows when to be direct or indirect, and acknowledges the communication partner’s positive behaviours when appropriate (Ryan, Bajorek, Beaman & Anas, 2005). Librarians with age-related impairments can use these skills selectively for self-advocacy and group advocacy (Gallois, 2004; Hickson & Worrall, 2003; Orr & Rogers,

2003). A series of person-perception studies have evaluated assertive responses in problematic situations by librarians (Hummert, Garstka, Ryan & Bonnesen, 2004). Further assertions stressed that assertive responses are rated as less polite than passive responses, but they succeed in increasing the perceptions of the inappropriateness of the patronizing conversational partner (Harwood, Ryans, Giles & Tysoski, 1997). Assertive librarians speak, evaluated as more competent than non-assertive peers in community settings (Hummert & Mazloff, 2001). Lin, Shiah, Chang, Lai, Wang and Chou (2004) conducted a study to evaluate the effect of an assertiveness training program on nursing and medical students assertiveness, self-esteem and interpersonal communication satisfaction. Data were collected before and after training. The study revealed that the assertiveness and self-esteem of the experimental group were significantly improved in nursing and medical students after assertiveness training, although interpersonal communication satisfaction of the experimental group was not significantly improved after the training program.

The practical benefits of librarians' job satisfaction have been observed by researcher such as Peng(2014), who have reported that librarians' motivation to voluntarily commence new duties in support of their organizations' overall effectiveness increases job performance along with their sense of job satisfaction. Even though direct assertiveness was not considered competent behaviour in the librarian context, the assertive resident was successful in refusing a request with minimal consequences (Ryan, Kennaley, Pratt & Shumovich, 2000).

According to Ames (2010), most of the librarians find themselves surrounded by others whose goals and interests are not perfectly aligned with their own;

and so each day in the organization, most of them face one or more versions of the same basic question: How hard should librarian push? When librarians assert themselves forcefully, they may get their way in some instrumental fashion, but they may fail to get along with their counterparts. He further buttress that when librarians forego pursuing their interests, they may get along with others, but their acquiescence may mean a failure to get their way.

Methodology

This study adopted *expost-facto* research design. The populace of the study consisted of all librarians two hundred and forty-five (245) from university libraries in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The Niger Delta comprises of six states (Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo and Rivers State) in Nigeria. The whole population 245 of librarians was used as sample of the study. This was as a result of the manageable size of the population. A questionnaire was the research instrument used to gather data for the study. The questionnaire is entitled: “Assertiveness and Job Satisfaction Scales (AJSS)”.

The instrument was administered to 17 respondents (Librarians) in the university of Ilorin, Kwara State and 13 librarians from Usman Dan Fadio Sokoto which is outside the scope of study. The items were tested for significance at 0.05 level of significance. The Cronbach alpha analysis showed the case processing summary reliability statistics; the computed values are: librarian assertiveness scale has alpha.80, $p = 0.05$ level of significance and the Librarian Job Satisfaction scale has alpha.85, $p = 0.05$ level of significance. To estimate the content and construct validity of the instrument, Principal Component Analysis (PCA), using the extraction method was used. All items with factor loadings matrix above.50 were selected into the scale or instrument. A total of 245 copies of the questionnaire were

administered, 204 duly completed copies were retrieved and found usable, giving a response rate of 83%. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and mean value. The demographic information of the respondents was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

Table 1: Population of the study and Questionnaire Response Rate.

S/N	Name of Institutions	State	Ownership	No Sample	No Returned	Percentage
1	University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.	Akwa Ibom	Federal	23	20	8.2
2	Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State.	Bayelsa	Federal	14	12	4.8
3	University of Calabar, Cross River state.	Cross River	Federal	16	12	4.8
4	Federal university of Petroleum Resources, Effurun, Delta State	Delta	Federal	14	12	4.8
5	University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.	Edo	Federal	20	18	7.3
6	University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.	Federal	Federal	22	22	9.0
Total				109	96	38.9
1	Akwa Ibom State University of Technology, Uyo, Akwa Ibom	Akwa Ibom	State	11	08	3.0
2	Niger Delta University, Yenagoa Bayelsa State.	Bayelsa	State	17	15	6.3
3	Cross River State University of Science and Technology, Calabar, Cross River.	Cross River	State	10	07	2.9
4	Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State.	Delta	State	16	12	5.0
5	Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma Edo State.	Edo	State	12	08	3.0
6	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Rivers State.	Rivers	State	08	05	2.0
7	Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Nkpolu Rivers State.	Rivers	State	07	07	2.9
Total				81	62	25.1
1	University of Africa, Tori-Orua,	Bayelsa	Private	06	06	2.5

	Bayelsa State.					
2	Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo, Delta State.	Delta	Private	03	03	1.3
3	Micheal and Cecilia Ibru University Agbase, Delta State.	Delta	Private	03	03	1.3
4	Novena University, Ogume, Delta State	Delta	Private	06	06	2.5
5	Western Delta University, Oghara, Delta State	Delta	Private	04	04	1.6
6	Igbenedion University Okada, Edo State.	Edo	Private	07	04	1.6
7	Wellspring University, Evbuobanosa, Edo State.	Edo	Private	04	03	1.3
8	Edo University Iyambo, Etsako West, Edo State.	Edo	Private	03	02	0.8
9	Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa, Edo State.	Edo	Private	06	04	1.6
10	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Edo State.	Edo	Private	13	11	4.6
Total				55	46	19.1

Findings and Discussion

The results of the study are presented according to the research question.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the librarians' assertiveness and job satisfaction in the university libraries in the Niger Delta, Nigeria?

The data in Table 2 are used to answer this research question.

Table 2 represents a simple percentage of the relationship between librarians' assertiveness and job satisfaction in the university libraries in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Table 2: Relationship between Librarians' assertiveness and job satisfaction in the university libraries in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

	Assertiveness of the librarians:	Always	Usually	Average	Sometimes	Means
1	When a person is highly unfair do you call it to their attention	60(29.4%)	60(29.4%)	45(22%)	39 (19%)	2.69

2	Do you find it difficult to make decisions	60(29.4%)	50(24.5%)	40(19.6%)	54(26.4%)	2.56
3	I believe I have a right to make my own arrangements and agreements, without being controlled or bullied by others	70(34.3%)	50(24.5%)	40(19.6%)	44(21.5%)	2.71
4	I believe I have the right to say “No” to requests from others	80(39.2%)	50(24.5%)	40(19.6%)	34(16%)	2.86
5	I believe I have the right to choose not to accept responsibility for others and their feelings and problem	90(44%)	40(19.6%)	35(17%)	39(19%)	2.8
6	I believe I have the right to make mistakes and to take responsibility for them	80(39.2%)	60(29.4%)	35(17%)	29(14.2%)	2.9
7	Are you openly critical of other idea, opinions, behaviour	90(44%)	50(24.5%)	30(14.7%)	34(16.6%)	2.96
8	Do you often avoid people or situations for fear of embarrassment	60(29.4%)	60(29.4%)	40(19.6%)	44(21.56%)	2.6
9	I believe I have the right to say I don’t know or I don’t understand	90(44%)	60(29.4%)	25(12.2%)	29(14.2%)	3.03
10	Are you willingness to speak up in a discussion or in a debate	90(44%)	50(24.5%)	30(14.7%)	34(16.6%)	2.96
11	If a user has borrowed a book and is overdue in returning it do you mention it	100(49%)	50(24.5%)	25(12.2%)	29(14.2%)	3.08
12	Are you scared if someone watches you at work	40(19.6%)	20(9.8%)	80(39.2%)	64(31.3%)	2.17
13	Do you generally express what you feel	95(46.5%)	45(22.05%)	40(19.6%)	24(11.7%)	3.03
Total means						2.79

Criterion means = 2.5

Table 2 reveals the relationship between librarians’ assertiveness and job satisfaction. The findings revealed that a majority of the respondents concur that if a user has borrowed a book and is overdue in returning it, they mention it, they believe that they have the right to say I don’t know or I don’t understand, they are willing to speak up in a discussion or in a debate and they are openly critical of other idea, opinions and behaviour. However, Table 2 reveals

that overall means (2.79) is higher than the criterion mean (2.5) which also indicated that librarian's assertiveness correlate job satisfaction as shown in Table 2.

The study revealed that a majority of respondents avowed that if a user has borrowed a book and is overdue in returning it, they mention it, they believe that they have the right to say I don't know or I don't understand, they are eager to speak up in a discussion or in a debate and they are openly critical of other idea, opinions and behaviour. This in line with Gass and Seiter (2003) stated that assertive librarians are not afraid to speak up, express their feelings, or take initiative.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that librarian's assertiveness has a major role to play in their job satisfaction. In discharging duties to patrons which comprises of non-teaching staff, teaching staff, students, researchers and among others. Librarian's being assertive is sure, Librarians do mention if a user borrowed a book and is overdue, they mention it, they are having the right to say I don't know or I don't understand, they are eager to speak up in a discussion, they have the right to choose not to accept responsibility for others and their feelings and problem and they have the right to say 'No' to request from others.

Recommendations

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

Since assertiveness is a requisite of job satisfaction, heads of university libraries, stakeholders of libraries and university management should be sending library staff on short term courses,

seminars, training on ‘assertiveness’. Funds should be allocated annually on assertive training by university management.

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