



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

Impact of Conference Attendance on Job Performance of Professional Librarians of Tertiary Institutions in Imo State, Nigeria

Scholastica A. J. Chukwu

Librarian, ICT Unit of the Library, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria

Abstract:

Professional Librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State Nigeria are believed not to have any impact on their job performance through conference attendance. To ascertain if conference attendance impacts their job performance formsthe bases for this survey. The survey research method was adopted to study a population of 86 professional librarians from tertiary institutions in Imo State. Structured questionnaire were used to collect information used for the analysis. Information was provided for the Librarians to determine their level of agreement and the result shows that conference attendance impacts professional librarians in their job performance through helping them maintain greater focus towards my job. It helps them achieve their work goals. It helps them stay up to date with new processes and procedures relating to their job. It helps them to enjoy teamwork rather than achieving results alone. It gives them the ability to utilize more wealth of professional expertise and experience in performing their duties. It makes them diversify their knowledge. It acquaints them with what obtains in sister organization. It makes them want to achieve tasks goals. The paper concludes that conference attendance impacts job performance of professional librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State.

Keywords: *Impact, conference, job, motivation, performance, librarians*

1. Introduction

Productivity in any organization is determined by the quality of personnel and how the team can develop them, and this has to do with the concept of motivation. Management can motivate staff to perform efficiently through promotion, increase in salaries and wages and staff development among others of which conference attendance is one of them.

Conference attendance advances the professionalization of staff by providing valuable opportunities to keep current on various tools necessary to perform day- to- day job responsibilities, to be knowledgeable of industries ideal, to learn new tips and methods and to build an informed network of colleagues. Conference attendance according to Eke (2011) affords librarians the opportunity of learning about professional issues and brainstorm with colleagues and elites to keep abreast of the latest trend. Doyle (2015) highlighted the benefits of conference attendance to high networking value, strengthening team building, enhancing current and future challenges in the profession. Conference attendance can improve job performance of librarians particularly those in the academic libraries.

Job performance assesses whether a person performs a job well. It is the act of doing a job. Job performance is a means to reach a goal or set of targets within a job, role or organization but not the actual consequences of the acts performed within a job (Campbell, 1990). He further affirms that job performance is not a single action but rather a complex activity. Fulfillment in a job is strictly a behavior and a separate entity from the outcomes of a particular job which relates to success and productivity.

1.1. Problem Statement

Conference attendance advances the professionalization of staff by providing valuable opportunities to keep current on various tools necessary to perform day- to- day job responsibilities. It is believed that conference attendance affords professionals of which librarians are part of the opportunity of learning about professional issues and brainstorm with colleagues and elites to keep abreast of the latest trend. Be that as it may, this assumption may not apply to librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State as regards job performance as available research such as Eke, (2011), and Saka and Haruna (2013) apply to librarian's professional development, information for all and job performance among personnel in branch libraries. Hence any assumption on the impact of conference attendance on the job performance of librarians in higher institutions of learning in Imo State remains speculative and guesswork. This is the focus of this study.

1.2. Objectives

To determine the impact of conference attendance on the job performance of librarians in Imo State.

2. Review of Literature

Conferences are an organized plan in which the participants seek to develop knowledge and understanding and obtain a considerable amount of oral participation (Ahuja, 2009). The conference as a means of staff development whether local, national or international encourages staff development, improves relationships among libraries, opens a new horizon in the profession and helps to recognize the interdependence of knowledge and information (Ifidon and Ifidon, 2007).

According to Lutz (2005), conference attendance needs to be transformational, not just informational. Conference attendance is less about what happens on site and more about what happens on the attendee's job. It should transform thinking, actions, behaviors, and attitudes. It ultimately about improving the participant's job performance. Librarians attend conferences to improve their primary education, gain new concepts and get specializations that are relevant to the needs of the workplace. Khanna (2001) posits that attending conferences whether face-to-face or e-conferencing fulfills part of the library responsibility for staff training and development, broadening their attitudes and permits their exposure to new ideas and events through both formal and informal discussions with other professional colleagues.

Job performance is the ability to carry out statutory functions based on the field of specialization or areas of development as well as organizations objectives. Villamova, Austin, and Borman (2005) see job performance as that aspect of work behavior domain that is relevant to the job and teams success. Job performed in libraries includes cataloging, classification of materials, provision of reference services, charging and discharging of materials to users to mention but a few. Job performance in the library geared towards meeting not only the user's information needs but also it is a basis for promotion (Saka and Haruna, 2013).

Job performance is one of the most critical factors that most organizations should consider to focus. Oswald et al. (2007) and Appelbaun et al. (2008) argued that job performance is the most important dependent variable and also the most basic construct in industrial-organizational psychology research and practice. Job performance is categorized into various essential factors that need further explanation based on the definition of job performance by Otto et al. (2012). It involved something that people do and reflected the action that individual takes.

3. Methodology

The survey research design was applied in this study. The population of the study is 86 professional librarians of the five tertiary institutions under investigation. The questionnaire was used in the collection of data for the research while Mean values and standard deviation were used in analyzing the research questions.

3.1. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Out of the 86 questionnaires distributed, 75 were returned showing a response rate of 87.2% while 11 copies (12.8%) were not returned.

Conference attendance as shown in Table 1 relates to job performance in nine main areas. These are that it helps them maintain greater focus towards my job (3.28). It helps them achieve their work goals (3.23). It helps them stay up to date with new processes and procedures relating to their job (4.46). It helps them to enjoy teamwork rather than achieving results alone (3.34). It gives them the ability to utilize more wealth of professional expertise and experience in performing their duties (3.33). It makes them diversify their knowledge (3.26); It makes me add more value to my library (3.37). It acquaints them with what obtains in sister organization (3.38). It makes them want to achieve tasks goals (3.32). However, the study found out that conference attendance does not impact their job performance in performing their job more satisfactorily; It does not make them develop more courage to deal with their job challenges; It does not make them stop truancy to duty; It does not make them prominent from the crowd and it does not make them more attractive to clients as their mean scores are below the significant mean value of 3.22.

S/N	Impact of conference attendance on job performance	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean Score	S.D
A	It makes me perform my job more satisfactorily	15	54	6	0	75	3.12	24.295
B	It helps me maintain greater focus towards my job	21	54	0	0	75	3.28	25.5
C	It helps me achieve my work goals	25	42	8	0	75	3.23	18.679
D	It helps me stay up to date with new processes and procedures relating to my job	28	45	2	0	75	4.46	21.654
E	It helps me to enjoy teamwork rather than achieving results alone	26	49	0	0	75	3.34	23.60
F	It makes me develop more courage to deal with my job challenges	20	50	5	0	75	3.2	22.5
G	It makes me stop truancy to duty	4	25	33	13	75	2.26	12.816
H	It gives me the ability to utilize more wealth of professional expertise and experience in performing my duties	25	50	0	0	75	3.33	23.936
I	It makes me diversify my knowledge	20	55	0	0	75	3.26	25.940
J	It makes me add more value to my library	28	47	0	0	75	3.37	22.998
K	It acquaints me with what obtains in sister organization	29	46	0	0	75	3.38	22.735
L	It makes me want to achieve tasks goals	21	54	0	0	75	3.32	25.5
M	It makes me prominent from the crowd	7	40	23	5	75	2.65	16.296
N	It makes me more attractive to clients.	13	49	13	0	75	3.0	21.077
Significant Mean score								3.22

Table 1: Mean values of the impact of conference attendance on librarian's job performance in tertiary institutions in Imo State

4. Conclusion

This study has established conference attendance a motivational force for job performance for professional librarians in tertiary institutions in Imo State Nigeria. Evidence has shown that conference attendance aids librarians in performing their job as findings have been demonstrated that it helps them maintain greater focus towards my job. It helps them achieve my work goals. It helps them stay up to date with new processes and procedures relating to my job. It helps them to enjoy teamwork rather than achieving results alone. It gives them the ability to utilize more wealth of professional expertise and experience in performing my duties. It makes them diversify my knowledge. It acquaints them with what obtains in sister organization. It makes them want to achieve tasks goals. It makes them want to achieve tasks goals. The result of the finding agrees with the report of Khanna (2001) who posits that attending conferences whether face-to-face or e-conferencing fulfills part of the library responsibility for staff training and development, broadening their attitudes and permits their exposure to new ideas and events through both formal and informal discussions with other professional colleagues.

5. References

- i. Ahuja, K.K. (2009). *Industrial management and organizational behavior*. New Delhi: Khanna Publishers.
- ii. Appelbaum, S. H., Marchionni, A., and Fernandez, A. (2008). The Multitasking Paradox: Perceptions, Problems, and Strategies. *Management Decision*, 46 (9), 1313-1325. Retrieved from <https://interruptions.net/literature/Appelbaum-ManagementDecision08.pdf>
- iii. Campbell, J. P. (1990) 'Modeling the Performance Prediction Problem in Industrial and Organizational Psychology,' in M. D. Dunnette and L. M. Hough (Eds), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press. Vol. 1: pp. 687-732.
- iv. Doyle, M. (2005). How to justify Conference attendance. Retrieved from www.writingassist.com/resource/article.date
- v. Eke, H.N. (2011). An empirical study of the impact of Nigerian Library Association Conference attendance on librarian's professional development in information for all. *Compendium of papers presented at Nigerian Library Association 49th annual national conference/ AGM held at Awka, from 10– 15 July*, 116-130.
- vi. Ifidon, S.E. and Ifidon, E.I. (2007). *African Library Management*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- vii. Khanna, J.K. (2001). *Handbook of Library Administration*. New Delhi: Crest Publishing House.
- viii. Lutz, D. (2015). Real conference learning means an attendee's job performance will improve. Retrieved from www.iccaworld.org/nips/story.
- ix. Oswald F. L., Hambrick D. Z., and Jones L. A. (2007). Keeping all the plates spinning: Understanding and predicting multitasking performance. In Jonassen D. H. (Ed.), *Learning to solve complex scientific problems*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum 77-84
- x. Otto, S. C., Wahl, K. R., Lefort, C. C. and Frei, W. H. P. (2012). Exploring the Impact of Multitasking in the Workplace. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 3(4), 154-162.
- xi. Saka, K.A and Haruna, B. (2013). Relationship between staff development and job performance among personnel in branch libraries, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 4(5), 9-17. Retrieved from <http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/654/0>
- xii. Villanova, P, Austin, J.T. and Borman, W. (2005) Job performance. *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management*. 2nd edition, vol. 5, Cartwright, C. (Eds), United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 208-209. In Austin, J.T. et al. (1991)