

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

8-20-2021

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN ONDO AND EKITI STATES, NIGERIA

Clement Ajidahun
jideajidahun@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>

Digital Commons
Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Network
Ajidahun, Clement, "PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN ONDO AND EKITI STATES, NIGERIA" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6208.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6208>

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN ONDO AND EKITI STATES, NIGERIA

Abstract

The study investigates the management of Library personnel in the university libraries in Nigeria to determine the prevalent offences committed by library staff, sanctions imposed, and the effects of the offences on the staff. A total of 150 copies of a questionnaire were sent to all categories of library staff in the three University Libraries in Nigeria. Only 100 members of staff in the libraries completed and returned their questionnaires that were used for the study. Result shows that lateness to work, absence from work without permission and sleeping on duty are the dominant offences committed by library staff for which they were sanctioned. Besides, transportation, personal problems and inadequate finance were the major reasons why the offences were committed, while query, warning and transfer to another duty post were the common sanctions imposed. Result also shows that the sanctions had both positive and negative effects on the respondents. Recommendations that can enhance the management of library staff in the university libraries in Nigeria are provided.

Keywords: Personnel Management, Administration, University Library, Discipline, Monitoring, Nigeria.

Introduction

Personnel management, as a discipline in the social sciences, has been a fertile area of research for social scientists, business administrators, educational managers because its role in the fulfilment of the organization's goals is indispensable. Management experts and social psychologists delve on array of issues that can impact positively on the success of any organization. According to Merchant (1982), Schermerhorn (1984), Stoner and Freeman (1992), and Robbins and Coulter (2009), such issues include organizational goals and objectives, leadership styles, personnel recruitment, training, discipline, planning, leading, organizing, controlling or evaluation as core areas of personnel management. The challenges arising from poor management that can inhibit organizational productivity include employer-employee rift, poor infrastructure, inadequate reward system, finance, and lack of motivation among others. Social psychologists are deeply concerned about the attitudinal behaviours of personnel in the organization because their roles are central to the fulfilment of its goals.

The university library is an academic arm of the university established to provide academic support for teaching. According to Effah (1998), "of all the academic support units, the library may be said to be the most directly related to the central mission of the university which has remained teaching, research and service." Its overall aim is to support the university in the fulfilment of its vision as a citadel for learning. Besides, the university library is one of the parameters used by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in the accreditation of university programmes. According to Ajidahun (2019), the NUC measures the "quality, the quantity and the currency of library holdings." For the library to function optimally and perform

its academic responsibilities creditably, its human and material resources must be adequately managed.

University library staff can be categorized as follows:

1. Academic and professional staff: Librarians with professional and academic qualifications.
2. Non-academic/professional staff: Library Officers with or without professional qualifications.
3. Non-professional junior staff: Library Assistants with SSCE and non-professional qualifications
4. Secretarial staff: Secretaries, Typists, Data Entry Clerks.
5. Office Assistants: Cleaners, messengers.
6. Drivers:

The responsibilities of both the professional and non-professional staff in the university library are inimitable. For instance, while the professional librarians catalogue and classify library books, the non-professional members of staff are involved in the stacking and shelving of the books among other duties. When books are not properly shelved, information retrieval becomes problematic and library users become frustrated. Adequate supervision is, therefore, necessary for all categories of library staff or else the library will become a rancorous information system. For instance, supervision is necessary especially in the following areas of library duties among others:

1. Bibliographic description of library materials.
2. The classification and cataloguing of library books using the professional bibliographic tools.
3. The supervision of the porters and the shelving of books by the Library Assistants and the security of library books and equipment.
4. Supervision of the Library Books Received Voucher for the auditing of newly acquired library books.
5. Supervision of the Goods Received Voucher for the auditing of the newly acquired library equipment.
6. Preparation of the LPO for the purchase of library materials.
7. Supervision of the Circulation Section, which includes the opening and closing of the University Library, preparation of duty roster for staff, loan services for library users, security of library materials, provision of library education to library users, ensuring accessibility to library materials and maintenance of law and order by library users.
8. Provision of reading space for library users.
9. Monitoring of students to reduce theft and mutilation of library materials.
10. The virtual library to ensure the security of the computer equipment and the provision of electricity and adequate internet services among others.

Staff indiscipline will hamper the provision of adequate library services. Having worked in all the units and sections of the university library for over two decades as a supervisor at the managerial level, the following have been observed as common deviant attitudes and behaviours of library staff:

1. Wrong classification and cataloguing of library books. For instance, the librarian who wrongly and ignorantly classifies a book that is meant for PR class and puts it in PQ or a book that is meant for QR is put in QD and the Head of that unit hardly goes on unscheduled supervision.
2. Laziness of cataloguers in cataloguing library books. This denies users from having access to current library materials on time.
3. The Library Assistants who ought to shelve the library books come late to work and in some cases, they might not come to work without any prior permission and any notification.
4. The library porters who should ensure the security of library books sleep on duty.
5. The librarian who should prepare the duty roster for the staff on afternoon duty forgets to do it.
6. Insubordination and negligence of duty.
7. Aiding and abetting students to steal library books.
8. The supervisor on weekend duty fails to report for duty and nobody is there to supervise the junior members of staff who are around.
9. Refusal to come for weekend duties because the university fails to pay the junior staff Saturday duty/over time allowance because of inadequate finance.
10. When University Librarian, who is the overall boss, is either autocratic or nonchalant and insouciant.

The implications of all this are unimaginable and inconceivable. This study is, therefore, an attempt to assess the various disciplinary problems encountered in the university libraries in Ondo and Ekiti States and the challenges faced by these institutions.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The following three university libraries located in Ondo and Ekiti States were used for the study: Federal University of Technology Library, Akure, Nigeria, Adekunle Ajasin University Library, Akungba Akoko, Nigeria and the Ekiti State Ado Ekiti Library, Nigeria. The universities were chosen because they were the oldest in both states. Therefore, they would have more issues of discipline than the newer universities. A total of 150 copies of a questionnaire entitled: "Management of Library Staff in Nigerian Universities" were sent to the librarians and para-professionals including the library officers in each of the university libraries. Only 100 members of staff in the three university libraries completed and returned their questionnaires that were used for the study. Simple percentage was used for the calculation of the study.

Analysis of the Study

Table 1: OFFENCES COMMITTED

N= 100

No	Offences	Yes	%	No	%
1	Lateness to work	34	34	56	56
2.	Absence from work without permission	19	19	81	81
3.	Sleeping on duty.	15	15	85	85
4.	Selling of goods and articles at work.	6	6	94	95
5.	Inefficiency at work	6	6	94	94
6.	Insubordination/Refusal to carry out official instructions.	6	6	84	84
7.	Drinking on duty.	5	5	95	95
8.	Telling lies.	3	3	97	97
9.	Lack of productivity.	2	2	98	98
10.	Fighting.	2	2	98	98
11.	Sexually related offences.	2	2	98	98
12.	Stealing of office property.	1	1	99	99
13.	Others				

Table 1 above shows the analysis of the offences committed by the respondents. The analysis shows that 34% of the respondents committed lateness to work, 19% committed absence from work without permission while 15% committed sleeping on duty. This implies that, lateness to work, absence from work without permission and sleeping on duty are the dominant and common offences committed by library staff. In most establishments, these are serious acts of misconducts which should attract serious sanctions. This is because when staff members commit these offences regularly, the immediate and long-time effects on the establishment are very debilitating. For instance, there will be inefficiency, low productivity and gross indiscipline if the situation is not arrested on time. Fighting, stealing and sexually related offences are not significant.

Table 2: OFFENCES SANCTIONED FOR

N= 100

No	Offences	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Lateness to work.	31	31	49	49
2.	Absence from work without permission.	15	15	85	85
3.	Sleeping on duty.	8	8	92	92
4.	Inefficiency at work.	7	7	93	93
5.	Insubordination/Refusal to carry out official instructions.	6	6	56	56
6.	Telling lies	4	4	96	96
7.	Lack of productivity.	4	4	86	86
8.	Drinking on duty.	4	4	86	86
9.	Sexually related offences.	2	2	98	98
10.	Stealing of office property.	1	1	99	99
11.	Fighting.	1	1	99	99
12.	Selling of goods and articles at work.	1	1	99	99
13.	Others	3	3	97	97

Table 2 above shows the analysis of the offences for which the respondents were sanctioned. The analysis shows that 31% of the respondents were sanctioned for lateness to work, 15% were sanctioned for absence from work without permission while 8% were sanctioned for sleeping on duty, while 7% were sanctioned for work inefficiency and 6% of the respondents were sanctioned for insubordination. This implies that the three dominant offences committed by the staff were lateness to work, absence from work without permission and sleeping on duty attracted sanctions. This analysis also implies that the three dominant offences were sanctioned because of their debilitating effects on the institutions.

Table 3: REASONS FOR OFFENCES COMMITTED

N=100

No	Reasons for Offences Committed	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Lack of means of transportation.	12	12	59	59
2.	Personal problems	11	11	62	62
3.	Inadequate finance	10	10	64	64
4.	The non-conducive working environment	9	9	61	61
5.	The wicked and harsh nature of my boss.	8	8	67	67
6.	Health problems	8	8	66	66
7.	Lack of motivation by my employer.	7	7	65	65
8.	Lack of interest in the job.	6	6	68	68
9.	The misunderstanding nature of my boss.	6	6	66	66
10.	Family problems	3	3	70	70
11.	Marital problems.	3	3	71	71
12.	Because, I am lazy.	1	1	71	71
13.	Spiritual problems	1	1	72	72
14.	Because, I am naturally stubborn, proud and touchy.	-		72	72
15.	Because, I am older than my boss.	-	-	72	72
16.	Others	-	-	71	71

Table 3 above shows the analysis of the reasons given by the staff why the offences were committed. The analysis shows that 12% of the respondents gave lack of means of transportation for committing the offences, 11% indicated personal problems, 10% designated inadequate finance, 9% indicated non-conducive working environment and 8% showed the wicked nature of the boss and health problems. This implies that lack of transportation, personal problems, inadequate finance and poor working environment were the major reasons while the employees committed the offences.

Table 4: SANCTIONS IMPOSED

N=100

S/N	Sanctions	Yes	%	No	%
1	A verbal query	13	13	63	63
2	A written query	12	12	54	54
3	A verbal warning/reprimand	9	9	64	64
4	A written warning/reprimand	6	6	62	62
5	Stoppage of annual increment	1	1	70	70
6	Denial of promotion	6	6	68	68
7	Demotion/Downgrading	-	-	72	72
8	Denial of confirmation of appointment.	3	3	68	68
9	Transfer to another duty post	8	8	69	69
10	Suspension from duty	1	1	72	72
11	Advised to resign	-	-	71	71
12	Advised to retire	-	-	72	72
13	Termination of appointment	-	-	72	72
14	Arrest and prosecution	-	-	72	72
15	Others	-	-	70	70

Table 4 above shows the analysis of the sanctions imposed by the employers on the erring employees. The analysis shows that 13% of the respondents indicated verbal query, 12% designated written query, 9% indicated verbal warning and 8% showed transfer to another duty post as the common sanctions imposed by the employers. The analysis also shows that advised to resign or retire, termination of appointment and arrest and prosecution of staff were not adopted as sanctions by the employers to discipline their staff.

Table 5: POSITIVE EFFECTS OF SANCTIONS IMPOSED

N=100

S/N	Positive Effects	Yes	%	No	%
1.	The sanctions helped me to identify my weakness.	14	14	54	54
2.	The sanctions helped me to reflect on my mistakes.	14	14	52	52
3.	The sanctions helped me to be more disciplined.	13	13	54	54
4.	The sanctions helped me to sit up and be more effective.	13	13	51	51
5.	The sanctions have enhanced my productivity at work.	12	12	59	59
6.	Such sanctions do more good than harm.	12	12	50	50
7.	My employer is justified by imposing those sanctions on me.	9	9	60	60

8.	The sanctions have removed my ego/pride.	-	-	69	69
----	--	---	---	----	----

Table 5 above shows the analysis of the positive effects of the sanctioned imposed on the staff. The analysis shows that 14% of the respondents indicated that the sanctions imposed helped them to identify their weaknesses, 14% also indicated that the sanctions helped them to reflect on their mistakes, 13% showed that the sanctions helped them to be more disciplined and to be more effective while 12% of the respondents indicated that the sanctions enhanced their productivity at work and therefore the sanctions were good for them. The analysis shows that the sanctions did have positive effects on the ego of the respondents.

Table 6: NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SANCTIONS IMPOSED

N=100

S/N	Negative Effects	Yes	%	No	%
1.	The sanctions do more harm than good.	12	12	88	88
2.	The sanctions have strained my relationship with my boss.	11	11	89	89
3.	The sanctions are not commensurate with my offences.	10	10	90	90
4.	The sanctions make me to see the Establishment/Employer as wicked.	10	10	80	80
5.	The sanctions make me to see my boss as a tyrant.	9	9	81	81
6.	The sanctions have demoralized or discouraged me.	8	8	83	83
7.	The sanctions have toughened and hardened my heart.	8	8	82	82
8.	The sanctions have made my productivity and commitment at work to decline.	5	5	95	95

Table 6 above shows the analysis of the negative effects of the sanctions imposed on the staff. The analysis shows that 12% of the respondents indicated that the sanctions imposed did more harm than good, 11% indicated that the sanctions have strained the relationship between the boss and the subordinate, 10 % showed that the sanctions imposed are not commensurate with their offences and also that the sanctions make them see their employers as vicious and brutal while 9% indicated that the sanctions make them see their bosses as tyrants. The analysis further shows that 8% of the respondents indicated that the sanctions have discouraged and hardened their hearts. This implies that the sanctions imposed by the employers to discipline the erring staff impacted negatively on the employees.

Implications of the Findings

The result of this study shows that lateness to work, absence from work without permission and sleeping on duty are the dominant and common offences committed by library staff for which they were sanctioned. This implies that library members of staff, irrespective of their status, are prone to lateness to work, absence from duty without permission and sleeping on duty which is an indication of either redundancy or idleness. All these have grave consequences on the establishment. According to Assad (2017), tardiness leads to productivity loss, negative morale, customer dissatisfaction and management problems. Carver (2019) identifies harassment and bullying, depression, stress, burnout, family obligations and lack of engagement as common causes of absenteeism from workplace which can be legitimate or not. However, he opines that absence from work without authorisation can impact negatively on the finance of the institution. Other elements include diminishing performance, and reduced productivity.

On the other hand, sleeping on duty is globally seen as a gross misconduct like tardiness and absenteeism without permission. Any of these offences can attract suspension from duty or even loss of job. According to *Global Disciplinary Policy and Procedures*. (2018), offences such as poor timekeeping and unauthorised absences, which constitute gross misconducts, can attract dismissal. Sanctioning erring staff for these offences is good managerial approach. The pervasiveness of these dominant offences can jeopardise the vision of the university and deplete its productive capacity.

The study further shows that lack of means of transportation, personal problems and inadequate finance are the major reasons why the offences were committed by the library staff. This implies that poverty and personal glitches are major causes of indiscipline in public institutions. Implicitly, therefore, socio-economic status is a determinant of indiscipline. Employees who have good means of transportation, adequate finance and less personal problems are likely to be more disciplined and efficient at work than those who do not have good means of transportation, adequate finance and with personal problems. If employees are not financially and emotionally stable, job performance will obviously be hampered. This is supported by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory which proposed that every level of need of a person must be satisfied before moving to the next level of needs. For instance, the physiological needs of an employee such as food, transportation, shelter must be satisfied before his needs for self-actualisation can be met. Thus is well captured by Robbins and Coulter (2009).

Besides, poor working environment affects the behavioural conducts of employees in the libraries studied. Some of the inadequacies in the academic libraries in Nigeria include inadequate electricity supply, inadequate staff, inadequate office furniture and equipment such as computer systems, filing cabinets, office imprest, poor reward system etc. Poor working environment can dampen the morale and the productivity of employees according to (Gie (2000), Sedarmayanti (2001) and Ahyari (2002). By implication, indiscipline will become endemic in the system.

This research also implies that employers combine both verbal and written queries as disciplinary measures for handling erring employees although verbal queries are slightly more prevalent than written queries. This could be because when written queries are issued, they are formal and therefore, copies of such queries are sent to the staff file and the Personnel files which may be used against the staff during the promotion period. For instance, at Adekunle Ajasin University and Ekiti State University, a member of staff shall forfeit his/her annual increment if he/she has a query in his/her files during the promotional year.

Hence, the resort to verbal query and transfer to another duty post are used more often than stoppage of annual increment, suspension from duty, termination of appointment etc. When a member of staff is problematic, it is more convenient for the boss to give him/her a verbal query and ask that he/she be redeployed to another duty post instead of allowing the staff to go through the full disciplinary process which may lead to the suspension or termination of appointment although according to the *Rules and Regulations Governing the Conditions of Service of Senior Staff of Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko*, “A Head of Department may query and warn a member of staff orally for minor shortcomings. If that does not achieve the desired results, the Head of Department may formally query the employee for shortcomings.” Obviously, the study shows that employers use the escapist or soft-landing strategy as a disciplinary measure for curbing unruly staff.

The study further reveals that the sanctions imposed had both positive and negative effects on the erring members of staff. While some of them acknowledged their mistakes and misdemeanours, others became emotional and allowed the sanctions to strain their relationships with their bosses. The sanctions further made them to perceive their bosses as vicious and vindictive. The implication of all this is that official sanctions may sometimes be counterproductive as humans may not accept them in good faith. This is in tandem with a Yoruba proverb that says “We do not come back from the court and remain as friends” and another proverb that says “A parent’s request for her child to be flogged as a form of discipline is not honest.” Besides, according to Robbins and Coulter (2009), habit, uncertainty and personal problems are some of the reasons why employees resist change in any organisation. Hence, indiscipline becomes endemic and sanctions become inevitable with the attendant challenges.

Recommendations:

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The recruitment of staff must be based exclusively on merit or else the system will continue to battle with indiscipline.
2. The university autonomy, as advocated for and countenanced in the 2009 FGN-ASUU agreement, should be respected. This will reduce the unnecessary government interference and undue politicisation of the university system.
3. In order to promote efficiency and productivity in the workplace, members of staff who violate the code of conducts for employees should be sanctioned in accordance with the provisions of the establishment’s rules and regulations.
4. Fair hearing and the rule of the law, as specified in the enabling law of the establishment, must be followed dispassionately without any bias and any form of prejudice or discrimination.
5. Adequate work environment must be provided to motivate members of staff.
6. Heads of department/unit must provide good leadership for their subordinates. They must be seen to be above aboard in all things. They must show understanding and have listening ears.
7. Heads of department or unit that err must also be sanctioned accordingly to caution oppressive and mischievous bosses who prey on their vulnerable subordinates.
8. The reward system in the university system must be reactivated or rebranded so that the good members of staff are adequately rewarded, while the bad ones are sanctioned appropriately.

9. Regular staff training must be revisited. Library staff should be allowed and encouraged to attend workshops, upgrade their academic qualifications, and attend professional conferences that can enhance their jobs. Adequate finance must be provided to motivate them to attend these workshops and conferences while study leave and good understanding with their bosses are all they need to acquire additional qualifications.
10. The university system must provide adequate and robust welfare packages for its staff. Staff salaries must be paid regularly. Members of staff who are qualified for promotion should be promoted on time. Staff should also have access to building loans, furniture loans and car loan without much encumbrances and bureaucracies.
11. Copies of the university manual on university culture, staff discipline and the general rules governing staff employment should be given to every staff on appointment.
12. The university must provide counselling and health services where members of staff can examine their physical and mental health regularly. Not all members of staff enjoy good health. Some may be psychopathic or schizophrenic with a lot of disorders that may not be known to the establishments. Some are single parents, divorcees, waiting mothers, drug addicts and orphans among other traumatic challenges. Some come to work and transfer their family aggressions unto their bosses at work. Those who have family and psychological problems may need a good counsellor for the administration of appropriate therapies, and those having medical issues can be attended to by the appropriate health professionals. Adequate health talks must be given occasionally by the university to enlighten the staff.

Conclusion

Personnel management in the university libraries studied in this research shows the employer-employee relations and behavioural dispositions to discipline and infractions like in any organisation. Since the university library is the nerve centre of academics, its place in the realisation of the goals and objectives cannot be easily over-emphasised. Apparently, the library staff, as shown in this study, demonstrated some levels of indiscipline which can hamper the academic goals of the university. For instance, the indiscipline of staff may lead to inadequate user satisfaction especially when the information needs of the users are not met timely and adequately. Lateness to work, absence from work without permission and sleeping on duty can impact negatively on the information needs of library clientele. The need for the university library to provide good leadership and adequate staff supervision is not negotiable. This is in addition to the provision of enabling work environment that can stimulate staff to work. This will help in the realisation of the university's overall vision as an academic and intellectual industry.

References

Adekunle Ajasin University. 2013. *Rules and Regulations Governing the Conditions of Service*

of Senior Staff. Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Agreement Between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), October, 2009.

Ahyari, Agus, 2002, Manajemen Produksi (Perencanaan Sistem Produksi), Buku II, Cetakan ke 3, Yogyakarta : Penerbit BPF.

Ajidahun, C.O. 2019. "Accreditation of Academic Programmes in Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria: A Librarian's Perspective." *Mousaion: South African Journal of Information Studies*. 37.4, 1-11.

Assad, Anna. 2017. "The Effects of Being Late for Work on Employers." www.careertrend.com July 5.

Effah, Paul. 1998. "The Training and Development of Academic Librarians in Ghana." *Library Management*. 19.1. 37-41.

Maslow, Abraham. 1954. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: McGraw.

Merchant, K.A. 1982. "The Control Function of Management," *Sloan Management Review*, Summer. 43-55.

Carver, Cassandra. "The Impact of Absenteeism in the Workplace. Astron Solutions. Web Based *Global Disciplinary Policy and Procedures*. 2018 February. www.sightsavers.org

Talent Management Employee Retention. www.astronsolutions.net

Gie, Liang. 2000. *Administrasi Perkantoran Modern*. Yogyakarta: Liberty

Sedarmayanti, 2001. *Sumber Daya Manusia dan Produktivitas Kerja*. Mandar Maju, Bandung.

Robbins, S.T. and Coulter, M. 2009. *Management*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Schermerhorn, J.R. Jr. 1984. *Management for Productivity*. New York: John Wiley.

Stoner, J.A.F. and Freeman, R.E. 1992. *Management*. NJ: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.