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High Performance Work Systems and Job Performance: The Influence of Professional Mentoring a Case of University Libraries in Nigeria

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HIGH PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS AND JOB PERFORMANCE: THE INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL MENTORING A CASE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the functioning approach of high performance work system (HPWS) through professional mentoring on librarians' job performance. The paper explores Spangenberg's integrated model of performance. The AMO theory formula P=f (A, M, O) was used to explain the commonality on the influence of professional development on job performance.

The study adopted survey research method using Z-test and regression analysis to estimate relationship in the variables. The population of the study consists of 174 librarians from 10 university libraries of federal and state owned universities in South-East zones of Nigeria. The questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. A total of 174 questionnaires were distributed and 152 were returned giving a response rate of 87%.The Z-test and regression analysis were used to answer the research question at 0.05 level of significance. Finding shows construct of professional mentoring, that impacted on the high performance work system of librarians based on the calculated Z-test mean value of 2.96, includes: expanding knowledge of strategic aspect of your job (mean = 3.88); developing necessary knowledge, skill and ability to do your work (mean = 3.73); Improve team goals and strengthen work connection (mean = 3.71) and overall significant influence of professional mentoring on job performance (F-cal = 60.21; $P<0.05$). The research concludes that high performance work system achieved through professional mentoring communicates necessary change, positive work attitude and culture for high manpowered workforce that enable growth for university libraries to gain competitive advantage in the knowledge-based economy.

Keyword(s): Professional Mentoring, Job Productivity, Librarian Performance, Job Performance, Job Productivity, High Performance Work System, Performance Evaluation, Performance Measurement, Performance Improvement

INTRODUCTION

Owing to the fact that human beings are key resources in libraries that must be nurtured for productivity, guide and direction are important consideration. High performance work systems approach is inevitable for high job performance. The concept of high performance work system (HPWS) was first used by Huselid (1995) in emphasizing the imperatives to develop more efficient organizational structures and practices among both academics and practitioners on behavioral competitive strategies that rely on core competencies and capabilities among employees for effective productivity. It is also described as high involvement work systems, human resource management practices and high commitment work systems (Zhu, Liu and Chen, 2018). On a general note, HPWS refers to a set of organizational practices aimed at enhancing staff skills, commitment and productivity, thereby transferring human resource capital into a sustainable competitive advantage (Pak and Kim, 2016). Mentoring is one functional aspect of high performance work systems mechanism to achieve employee performance. Professional mentoring is a personal relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate that emphasizes on teaching, learning and facilitating improved performance and development (Golian-Lui, 2003; Bonnette, 2004; Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, 2008). It aims at improving organisational working relationship, value, culture and philosophy (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005). The functions of a professional mentoring programme is not only to develop the individual learning ability on the basis of differentiation but to increase the performance level of a group or teams' career (Kay and Wallace, 2009 and 2010),

thus, integrate their performance with the policies of the organizational goals and objectives (Allen and O'Brien, 2006).

 Professional mentorship is not a new concept in librarianship but has recently been emphasized in academic libraries as there is growing need for high job performance standard. The value of high performance work systems is defined through effective job input, productivity, evaluation and feedback (Luthans, 1998). This has contributed to the need and desire for university libraries and librarians in Nigeria to compete comparatively with other libraries of the world in job effectiveness and efficiency. While the National Universities Commission (NUC) (2020), over the years highlights the need for performance and effective performance evaluation for high job productivity in Nigerian universities. Obhineli (2013) observes that there is a low work morale of academic staff, which has eluded job performance in educational institutions in Nigeria. This has created a gap in productivity output thus, the need to establish contributory factors to high job performance. Somvir (2012) observed that patrons complain the decline in prompt services delivered by some academic librarians who appear tactless and hardly cope with their job-related problems. Nwalo (2013) reports a low job performance of librarians, Popoola (2005) confirms that employers have complained of the low quality of performance of librarians. However, observation and previous studies reported that librarians have not been meeting the expected level of job performance in the academic libraries Nwokike and Unegbu (2019). A situation where librarians working in university libraries in south-east, Nigeria have inadequate professional mentoring, knowledge, skills and abilities might incapacitate them from doing their work efficiently and effectively especially in the 21st information age where library services are evolving fast in the use

of information and communication technology (ICT) in service delivery. The need for high performance work system such as professional mentoring programme to acquire more knowledge and skills for high job productivity cannot be over emphasized.

However, the gap in this review which the current study intends to address is in terms of identifying the constructs of professional mentoring that influences job performance of librarians in university libraries in the entire south-east zone of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the influence of professional mentoring on job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

The specific objectives are to:

i.   determine how exposure to knowledge, skill and ability influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

ii. find out how team goals and strengthened work connections influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

iii. investigate how knowledge of strategic aspect of the job influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

iv. ascertain how social and technical relationship influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

v.   investigate how a decentralized plan about job task influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

vi. determine how clarity of decision, designing of job task influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

vii. determine how networking and collaboration at workplace influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria;

viii. determine how successive planning influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria; and

xi. determine the joint influence of professional mentoring on job performance systems among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were answered:

i. How does exposure to knowledge, skill and ability influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

ii. How does team goals and strengthened work connection influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

iii. How does knowledge of strategic aspect of the job influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

iv. How does social and technical relationship influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

v. How does decentralized plan about job task influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

vi. How does the clarity of decision, designing of job task influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

vii. How does networking and collaboration at workplace influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

viii.   How does successive planning influence job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

xi.   What is the joint influence of professional mentoring on job performance among librarians in university libraries in the South-East Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentoring is the act or process of creating the opportunity to make mentees become better on the job (Oladimeji and Olatunji, 2020). Allen (2007) says mentoring is a system of semi-structured guidance where one person or a group of people share their knowledge, skills, and experience to assist others in progressing in their own lives and careers. Oladimeji and Olatunji (2020:34) describe professional mentoring as a powerful learning tool to acquire competencies and professional experience, the potential for increased visibility, networking opportunities, and the development of professional skills, self-confidence and organizational culture.

Mentoring in libraries have been described as a viable window for effective managerial management of employees' capabilities, competencies, time and talent as well as tool for preparing leadership roles and job performance. Njoku (2017) emphasizes mentoring as a foremost approach for acquisition of skills and competencies necessary for job productivity in the academic libraries. Also in another study Njoku (2018) identifies mentoring as one of the constructs of job performance.

Job performance as identified by Ogunrewo and Ngema (2013) is the result or outcome of attitudes and behaviours employees engage in while performing their job task over a specific period of time. Cook, Hunsaker and Coffey (997) describe job performance as behaviour that has been evaluated or measured as to its contribution to organisational goals. Job performance is determined during performance appraisal, measurement,

review or evaluation with the employer taking into account factors such as organisational skills and productivity to analyse each employee on an individual basis.

High performance work systems (HPWSs) can be used globally to good work result. It is an employee creativity that leads to superior organizational performance. Tang, Yu, Cooke, Chen (2017) A high performance work system is designed to enhance employees ability, knowledge, innovation and creativity (Boxall and Macky, 2009) and also inspire motivation, skill, competence and motivation in organizational sustainable advantage (Guthrie, 2001), which includes professional training such as mentoring programme. Professional mentoring linked with organisational strategy has a positive relationship between job performance and human development practices (Katzenback, 1998). According to Chang, Jia, Takeuchi and Cai (2014) and Chiang, Hsu and Shih (2015) high performance work system promotes information and skill exchange among employees generating new, innovative and creative ideas. Engaging librarians in conceiving, planning, designing, implementing and evaluating workplace processes enhance productivity and better performance. This is because findings shows that when employees are empowered to have the necessary knowledge, training, and development related to their job task they are more productive. Katzenback (2000) in a study found a significant relationship between job performance and a system of staff development practices.

Recently, some private sector and government sector organizations have placed new focus on HPWS, as new studies and understandings have identified the key processes and team dynamics necessary to create all-around quantum performance improvements. An organisation may have employees with appropriate instruments and equipment, yet productivity may fall below expected standards. The missing factor is the lack of adequate skills and knowledge which are acquired through training and mentoring processes (Alabi, 2011).

In Nigeria and other developing countries of the world, sustainable high job performance can be accomplished through adequate, effective and qualitative mentoring and

evaluation. Stressing further, (Ajidahun. 2007) maintains that human resource development cannot be over emphasized as the educational institution especially the universities cannot offer effective services without the professional competence of its workforce considering the need for libraries to compete favourably in this digital age, libraries have no option other than to foster professional development opportunities for its employees. This development has made it imperative that librarians do not have to rely on their qualifications for performance but seek continuous learning and development so as to be immersed in the environment of globalisation and new technologies in search of productivity, competitiveness and to gain comparative advantage (Ufere, 2009).

In a model which presents performance management as an integrative system involving the organisational and employees framework Spangenberg (1994) explicitly represents version of subtypes are found as illustrated in **table 2.1.** See Spangenberg's integrated model of performance.

Table 2.1: Spangenberg's Integrated Model of Performance

Organisation	Process/function	Team/individual
1. Performance Planning		
• Vision • Mission • Strategy • Organisational goals set and communicated	• Goals for key processes liked to organisational and customer needs	• Team mission, goals, values and performance strategies defined • Individual goals, responsibilities, and work-planning aligned with process/function goals
2. Design		
• Organisation design ensures structure	• Process design facilitates efficient goal achievement	• Teams are formed to achieve process/function goals • Job design ensures process requirements reflected in jobs

supports strategy		logically constructed in ergonomically sound environment.
3. Managing Performance and Improvement		
• Continual organisation development and change efforts • Functional goals (in support of organisational goals managed, reviewed and adapted quarterly • Sufficient resources allocated • Interfaces between functions managed	• Appropriate sub-goals set; process performance managed and regularly reviewed • Sufficient resources allocated • Interfaces between process steps managed	• Active team-building efforts, feedback, co-ordination and adjustment • Development individual understanding and skills, providing feedback • Sufficient resources allocated
4. Reviewing Performance		
• Annual review and input into strategic planning	• Annual review	• Annual review
5. Rewarding Performance		
• Financial performance of organisation	• Function rewards commensurate with value of organisational performance and functions contribution	• Rewards commensurate with value of organisation performance, and: for team-function an team contribution; for individual–function/team performance and individual contribution

Source: *Spangenberg, H. (1994). Understanding and implementing performance management. Cape Town: Juda.*

Performance management involves planning, evaluation and feedback. Bredup (1995)

asserts that it entails the unification of organisation's overall goals by linking the work of

each individual employee or manager to the overall mission of the work unit (Costello, 1994). Organisational performance according to Williams (2002) is a multidimensional concept which is measured in terms of output that is (results and outcome), profit, internal processes and procedures, organisational structures, employee attitudes and organisational responsiveness to environment.

Performance management systems consist of the activities to change (improve) employee performance and thereby organisational performance (DeNisi, 2000). Performance management is a two-way approach consisting of the individual and the organisation. At the organisational level, performance management overseas organisational performance and compares present performance with organisation performance goals. While at the individual level, individual employees can prove to be a valuable performance management process for the organisation (Seiden, Ingraham and Jacobson, 2001). Fundamentally, organisations establish performance management systems to meet the three broad purposes: strategic, administrative and developmental Neo, 2010). The developmental purpose which this work is centred on, provides improvement initially at the level of the individual employee and ultimately at the level of the organisation (DeNisi and Pritchard, 2006). This is why; Bevan and Thompson (1991) maintain that the main purpose of performance management is to facilitate the integration of various components of human resource activities (including training and career development) to the objectives of the organisation and ensuring sufficient co-ordination between them for overall organisational effectiveness.

THEORITICAL CONCEPT

The AMO theory formula P=f (A, M, O) as set out by Bailey, Berg and Sandy (2001) and Boxall and Purcell (2000) focus on the importance of taking into account variables at the individual level like employees' skills and competences (A= abilities), their motivation s(M= motivation) and their opportunity to participate (=O). The theory highlights that within the framework, employees capabilities sets the upper limit of performance, motivation and influences the degree to which capability is turned into action and opportunity refers to enhancing avenue for the capability of employees to be expressed and the removal of barriers that may prevent workers from utilizing their capacity for labour (Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Macky and Boxall, 2007).

AMO theory presents a certain commonality on the influence of staff development on job performance. The theory maintains that employees or human resources are manageable and developmental. Hence, provides the basis for developing human resources system that attends to employees' skill requirements and the quality of their job. In order words, the organisations can (a) increase the value of its employee through development (for example skills training, general training, mentoring; and (b) influence employee behaviour in the desired direction in terms of 'best practices' or 'best-fit practices' that ultimately result in sustained competitive advantage of the organisation (Paauwe and Boselie, 2003).

Regarding to the theory about how mentoring and job performance are linked, it is acknowledged that there is a positive mechanism through which professional mentoring influences job performance. AMO theory proposes that high level training and development processes provide employees with the desired knowledge and abilities required for high job performance. The knowledge and abilities provided by development

processes together with the organisation generate sustained competitive advantage through enhancing skills and human capital (Barney, 1991). This theory explains how performance functions from individual employees' perspective to organisational productivity. Therefore, it is important for staff development processes to be linked to organisational strategy. However, for this to be effective it has to be paired with reliable and valid formal and informal programmes such as mentoring to develop the workforce, therefore, increasing the chances of high job performance such as high standard of library service delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the survey method of research. The population of study consists of entire 174 librarians from 10 university libraries in south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The questionnaire as instrument of data collection were framed based on the four-point Likert scales to obtain responses rating 1-4 from librarians on their levels of job performance. The data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to 174 librarians respondents of which 152 (87 %) questionnaire were filled and returned. The Z-test and regression analysis were used to answer the research question at 0.05 level of significance.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data for the study has been obtained from librarians through questionnaires. The data presented are both qualitative and quantitative.

Table 1: Z-Test Analysis of Professional Mentoring Impact on Job Performance Among Librarians

S.No	Description	Mean	Std Dev	Obs	t-value	Prob	Decision
	Impact of professional mentoring on high performance work system						
(i)	Develop necessary knowledge, skill and ability to do your work	3.73	0.53	152	51.600	<0.0001	*Significant
(ii)	Unite your social and technical relationship	3.62	0.50	152	33.260	<0.0001	*Significant
(iii)	Expand knowledge of strategic aspect of your job	3.88	0.45	152	68.445	<0.0001	*Significant
(iv)	Gain more clarity of decision, designing of job task	2.20	0.80	152	-7.389	1.0000	Not Significant
(v)	Improve networking and collaboration at workplace	3.60	0.50	152	2.650	0.0042	*Significant
(vi)	Attract relevant influence on successive planning	2.30	0.74	152	-6.140	1.0000	Not Significant
(vii)	Develop a decentralized plan about your job	3.02	0.45	152	11.651	<0.0001	*Significant
(viii)	Improve team goals and strengthen work connection	3.71	0.52	152	62.852	<0.0001	*Significant
(ix)	**Professional mentoring on job performance**	**2.87**	**0.59**	**152**	**14.122**	**<0.0001**	**Significant**

*=Significant at 2.96 mean value.

Table 1 show that professional mentoring positively impacted on the job performance of librarians in university libraries in south-east zone of Nigeria, based on the calculated z-test mean value of 2.96 and probability value of 0.0001. They are: expanding knowledge

of strategic aspect of your job (mean = 3.88); developing necessary knowledge, skill and ability to do your work (mean = 3.73); Improve team goals and strengthen work connection (mean = 3.71); Unite your social and technical relationship (mean = 3.62).

Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis of the Impact of Professional Mentoring on Job Performance of Librarians

Number of Observations	Degree of Freedom (DF)	Sum of Squares	F-Value	R-Square	T-Value	Probability Ratio (PR)
152	1	21.52418	60.21	0. 11. 52 (11.52%)	8.11	0.0001

Table 2 shows that at 5% level of significance and one degree of freedom the F-calculated value was 60.21 and table value of 8.11 with a significance probability value of 0.0001 which is less than 0.05. It shows that there is significant impact of professional mentoring on the job performance of librarians.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings show that professional mentoring has a positive significant impact on job performance of librarians in university libraries in south-east zone of Nigeria (60.21; $P<0.05$).This result confirms that professional mentoring impacts on performance work systems of librarians by expanding knowledge of strategic aspect of job, developing necessary knowledge, skill and ability to work, expanding knowledge of strategic aspect of your job, improve team goals and strengthen work connection and unite your social and technical relationship. It implies that librarians who had the opportunity of being mentored by experts in librarianship had better performance on their jobs than those who did not (**See Table 2**). This finding establishes the result of research by Ingersoll and

Kralik (2004) and Tanoli (2016) position that, professional mentoring enhance librarians skill, capability, extend their interest and commitment on the job thus, high productivity. And also establishes the study by Mohammed, Akor, Alhassan and Abdullahi (2017) that training influences job performance of librarians in university libraries in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The competencies required for high job performance is gained through guided practice or experience than by education. Evidence shows that high performance work system achieved through professional mentoring is a road map that helps libraries train, develop, and manage employees for high job productivity. University libraries with higher level of mentoring opportunities tend to update librarians on skills, knowledge, competences and adjust to work strategies to satisfy the patrons' information needs. However, university libraries that constantly encourage professional mentoring as an on-going learning activity on site or off site has high manpowered workforce that enable growth to gain competitive advantage in the knowledge economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Professional mentoring should be encouraged to bridge the gap between theory and practice especially in Nigerian university library schools where library training is more theoretical than practice.
- The divide between traditional to digital demands continuous learning approach achieved through mentoring to communicate necessary change, positive work attitude, value and culture.
- University libraries should set plan and guide that has clear process of selecting mentors and mentees with similar job interest and a match making mechanism that connects professional networking at work place in groups or among peers outside the institution for a broader mentoring opportunities.

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