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Extent of Involvement of Planning and Coordination Practices For Conflict Management in College Of Education Libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent of involvement of planning and coordination practices for conflict management in college of education libraries in south-east and south-south Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was employed in the study while two research questions were answered. The population and sample of 528 members of colleges of education library staff in South East and South-South, Nigeria was used for the study using a non-randomized purposive sampling method. A structured questionnaire titled Planning and Coordination Practices for Conflict Management in Libraries Questionnaire (PCPCMLQ) was used for the study. The instrument was face and content validated through consultation with three Veteran Researchers in Library and Information Science, Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation from University of Nigeria Nsukka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to obtain a reliability co-efficient, $r = 0.88$, which confirmed the instrument is consistent in its measurement. Mean, \bar{X} , and Standard deviation, SD. The results revealed among others that, to a high extent, coordination is carried out as a conflict management practice to enhance service delivery in college of education libraries. It was concluded that effectively harnessing the potentials of planning and coordination practices for conflict management will no doubt lead to enhanced service delivery in college libraries. The study recommended for adequate planning and coordination practices for conflict management that will enhance service delivery in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Planning, Coordination, Service Delivery, College Library

Introduction

Conflict exists in all works of life, irrespective of size, location and purpose of the organization. Based on this reality, organisations around the world, including libraries, consider it an obligation to fine-tune remedies to conflicts through conflict management efforts. Conflict management is considered as an instrument for effective service delivery. Ifidon and Ifidon (2007) defined conflict management as the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. According to him, the aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting. He goes further to assert that properly managed conflict can improve library service outcome.

Conflict management minimizes the negative outcomes of conflict and promotes the positive outcomes of conflict with the goal of improving dissemination of information in colleges of education libraries. Conflict management as a matter of fact is important in the sense that properly managed conflict increases learning by increasing the number of reference questions asked. It encourages library staff to challenge the status quo of conflict management strategies. Ekpo (2016) posited that conflict management involves the reduction, elimination or termination of all forms and types of conflict within the colleges of education libraries. Conflict is something to be managed constructively, so as to achieve positive change, development, understanding, friendship, progress, peace, communication, and love as all these would in turn enhance service delivery in the colleges of education libraries.

Conflict management entails engaging some practices and strategies that are considered to be effective in achieving expected results. These practices of management consists of various functions, such as planning, organizing, coordinating, funding, staffing, evaluation and control, aimed at achieving enhanced service delivery in the college libraries. Based on this, Oyeshola

(2005) considered these management practices as the techniques of utilizing planning and coordination towards achieving harmony for enhanced service delivery in the college libraries. He also sees the basic ingredient of management variables as decision on course of action, by obtaining the necessary physical resources, enlisting others to assist in the performance of requisite tasks, and seeing that the job is properly accomplished. Without the managerial practices of planning and coordination, conflict management in colleges of education would be ineffective.

Planning is one of the management variables which has to do with setting goals for the college library. It involves the determination of the activities to be performed within a specified period and the funding implications of each (Ifidon & Ifidon, 2007). In the view of Krautter (2013), planning is a systematic effort to organize the future performance of human beings, money or goods and services within some identified constraints of time span. Thus, for effective conflict management in colleges of education libraries, effective planning has to be constituted, and this is usually done based on five major components, namely: formation of vision; mission statement; goals and objectives, environmental scanning strategy; and policy statements (Irene, 2014). As soon as the planning function is carried out in colleges of education libraries, the activities of different units and departments need to be harmonized and coordinated to avoid conflicts in carrying out their designated roles.

It is very important to harmonize the different departments and functions of the library if the entire library must achieve and progress smoothly towards its goals of unleashing its resources to the library users. This important activity is achieved by means of coordination, which James (2013) considered as a management function that is closely linked to the managerial variable of coordination. Coordination represents the process of integrating all the parts and functions of an organization in order to enhance smooth and mutual operation towards

the attainment of organizational goals (Krautter, 2013). The different sections of a college of education library like the circulation, acquisition, reference, serial, bindery, cataloguing and classification which make up the college library, perform different but interrelated functions, none of which, alone is sufficient to enable the college achieve its aims and objectives. The adoption of coordination as a conflict management practices in the college libraries will help to enhance services without conflicts among units and departments.

However, it is regrettable that despite all that may have been put in place to ensure a conflict-free work environment, conflicts are still prevalent in college of education libraries. This is owing to the fact that planning and coordination practices in the libraries appear to be failing to accomplish its purpose in addressing the issues of conflicts. Thus, this calls for the need to investigate the extent to which planning and coordination practices are being deployed for the purpose of managing conflicts to ensure enhanced service delivery in the various colleges of education libraries in South-East and South-South of Nigeria. Consequent upon this, the fundamental problem of this study are centered on finding the extent to which planning is carried out for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria, and the extent to which co-ordination is carried out for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to analyse the extent of involvement of planning and coordination practices for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria. The specific purpose was to determine the extent to which:

1. Planning is carried out for conflict management for enhanced service delivery in college of education libraries in south East and south South zones in Nigeria.

2. Co-ordination is carried out for conflict management for enhanced service delivery in college of education libraries in south East and south South zones in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is planning carried out for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?
2. To what extent is co-ordination carried out for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Method

The procedures adopted in carrying out this study are discussed under the following headings: research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, administration of the instrument, and method of data analysis.

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design. It is a design often used when a researcher intends to elicit responses from a relatively large number of respondents by administering pertinent instruments for collecting primary data on a portion of the population known as sample (Orji, Mando & Ajaegbo, 2017). This research design is appropriate for the study because it seeks to administer questionnaire on the sample/population of respondents with regards to planning and coordination practices for conflict management for enhanced service delivery in college of education libraries in south East and south South zones in Nigeria.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

The entire population of 528 members of colleges of education library staff in South East and South-South, Nigeria was used as sample for the study. The sample was drawn using a non-randomized purposive sampling method, which guarantees a researcher the liberty to decide on sample size to use for a study based on his discretion.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument that was used for data collection is a structured questionnaire titled Planning and Coordination Practices for Conflict Management in Libraries Questionnaire (PCPCMLQ). The instrument is divided into two parts namely, part A and part B. Part A collected personal data of the Library Staff. Part B was made up of 10 items which is built into two clusters. The questionnaire response type is a 4 point rating scale, and in each section, respondents was required to tick (√) in appropriate columns, in order to indicate for each item their honest rating. The rating scale were Strongly Agree (4); Agree (3); Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) for the clusters.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was face and content validated through consultation with three Veteran Researchers in Library and Information Science, Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation from University of Nigeria Nsukka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. They were given draft copies of the instrument together with the title of the purpose of the study and research questions. All the inputs of the validators incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was pilot-tested for reliability in South-South geo-political zone of the country. It was administered on 25 Librarians and 10 Para professionals of both the public colleges of education in the geo-political zone. The administration was carried out by test-retest technique, using an interval of one month. Pearson's product moment was used to obtain coefficient of reliability ($r = 0.88$) which confirmed the instrument's consistency in measuring what it is expected to measure.

Administration of the Instrument

The researcher administered the instrument with the help of five assistants. The assistants were colleagues of the researcher, who hold post-graduate qualifications in Library and Information Science from Universities in Nigeria, and have many publications in reputable local and foreign journals. They are vastly experienced in research works, although they were still briefed by the researcher on what is to do. The administration of PCPCMLQ was done by hand, for both distribution and collection, to minimize chances of loss. A total of five hundred and twenty eight copies of PCPCMLQ were distributed and retrieved.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained for the study was analyzed using descriptive measures, particularly: Mean, \bar{X} , and Standard deviation, SD. These two descriptive measures were used to analyse all the responses relating to the research questions. Thus, any items with Mean, \bar{X} , values ranging from 2.50 and above was accepted. On the other hand, any item with Mean, \bar{X} , value that is less than 2.50 was not accepted.

Results

This section dealt with presentation of results from the analysis of data. It is presented in tables, and in line with research questions.

Research Question 1: To what extent is planning carried out for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean responses of the extent to which planning is carried out for Conflict Management in College of Education Libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Sn		Geographical Zone				Overall		R	D
		SE		SS		Mean	SD		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Planning is carried out in projecting the capacity and nature of the library in relation to targeted users so as to enhance service delivery	3.59	.74	3.60	.66	3.59	.70	1 st	VHE
2	Planning is carried out in ensuring that the required manpower at college libraries are projected so as to enhance service delivery	3.54	.90	3.59	.84	3.56	.87	2 nd	VHE
3	Planning is carried out in ensuring that expected funds are to be judiciously used to curtail, misappropriation and embezzlement, thereby enhancing service delivery	3.02	.92	3.12	.89	3.06	.90	3 rd	HE
4	Planning is carried out in making provisions for possible challenges that may arise in the college libraries as well as strategies to overcome it so as to enhance service delivery	2.96	.98	3.01	.99	2.98	.98	4 th	HE
5	Planning is carried out in ensuring that the required library equipment, are envisioned so as to enhance service delivery	2.56	1.13	2.55	1.07	2.56	1.10	5 th	HE
Cluster mean		3.13	.90	3.17	.79	3.15	.91		HE

Key: Very High extent =VHE; High Extent =HE; Low Extent =LE; Very low Extent =VLE, R=Rank; d= Decision; SS =South South; SE= South East.

The mean responses as presented on Table 1 indicated that to a very high extent planning is carried out in projecting the capacity and nature of the library in relation to targeted

users so as to enhance ($\bar{X}=3.59$, $SD=.70$) and planning is carried out in ensuring that the required manpower at college libraries are projected so as to enhance service delivery ($\bar{X}=3.56$, $SD=.87$). The Table also shows that the respondents indicated that to a high extent planning is carried out in ensuring that expected funds are to be judiciously used to curtail, misappropriation and embezzlement, thereby enhancing service delivery ($\bar{X}=3.06$, $SD=.90$); planning is carried out in making provisions for possible challenges that may arise in the college libraries as well as strategies to overcome it so as to enhance service delivery ($\bar{X}=2.98$, $SD=.98$) and planning is carried out in ensuring that the required library equipment, are envisioned so as to enhance service delivery ($\bar{X}=2.56$, $SD=1.10$)

Also, the overall mean showed that planning is carried out in ensuring that the required library equipment, are envisioned so as to enhance service delivery ($\bar{X}=3.15$, $SD=1.10$) is ranked highest, while planning is carried out in projecting the capacity and nature of the library in relation to targeted users so as to enhance ($\bar{X}=3.59$, $SD=.70$) is ranked lowest as regards to planning is carried out in projecting the capacity and nature of the library in relation to targeted users so as to enhance ($\bar{X}=3.59$, $SD=.70$). Finally the overall mean score of 3.15 shows that the level of planning is carries out in projecting the capacity and nature of the library in relation to targeted users so as to enhance is to high extent.

Looking at the two geographical zone in the study, it is observed that south South respondents have a greater mean ($\bar{X}=3.17$, $SD=.19$) as against the south East respondents with ($\bar{X}=3.10$, $SD=.90$), indicating that greater planning is carried out as conflict management is carried out in south South than in south East.

Research Question 2: To what extent is co-ordination carried out for conflict management in college of education libraries in South-East and South-South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean responses of the extent to which coordination is carried out for Conflict Management in College of Education Libraries in South-East and South-South Nigeria.

Sn	Geographical Zone	Overall	R	D
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		SE		SS		Mean	SD	Rank	Decision
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
1	Coordination is carried out to ensure no department or unit of the library is to work contrary to specified activities so as ensure enhanced service delivery	3.57	.77	3.51	.73	3.57	.77	1 st	VHE
2	Coordination is carried out to ensure pursuit of same goal by all library staff members so as to achieve effective service delivery	3.54	.78	3.46	.84	3.54	.78	2 nd	VHE
3	Coordination is carried out to foster team spirit among library workers so as to achieve enhanced service delivery	3.25	.85	3.23	.88	3.25	.85	3 rd	HE
4	Coordination is carried out to eliminate unnecessary rivalry among library workers and library users by creating sense of cooperation and tolerance which aid service delivery	3.16	.93	3.17	.88	3.16	.93	4 th	HE
5	Coordination is carried out to unify the activities of different departments of the library for enhanced service delivery	3.08	.86	3.11	.94	3.08	.86	5 th	HE
Cluster mean		3.32	.75	3.30	.85	3.32	.84		HE

Key: Very High extent =VHE; High Extent =HE; Low Extent =LE; Very low Extent =VLE, R=Rank; d= Decision; SS =South South; SE= South East.

The mean responses as presented on Table 2 indicated that to a very high extent coordination is carried out to ensure no department or unit of the library is to work contrary to specified activities so as ensure enhanced service delivery (\bar{X} =3.57, SD=.77) and coordination is carried out to ensure pursuit of same goal by all library staff members so as to achieve effective service delivery (\bar{X} =3.54, SD=.78). the table also shows that the respondents indicated that to a high extent coordination is carried out to foster team spirit among library workers so as to achieve enhanced service delivery (\bar{X} =3.25, SD=.85); coordination is carried out to eliminate unnecessary rivalry among library workers and library users by creating sense of cooperation and tolerance which aid service delivery (\bar{X} =3.16, SD=.97) and coordination is

carried out to unify the activities of different departments of the library for enhanced service delivery (\bar{X} =3.08, SD=.86).

Also, the overall mean showed that coordination is carried out to ensure no department or unit of the library is to work contrary to specified activities so as ensure enhanced service delivery (\bar{X} =3.57, SD=.77) is ranked highest, while coordination is carried out to unify the activities of different departments of the library for enhanced service delivery (\bar{X} =3.08, SD=.86) is ranked lowest. Finally the overall mean score of 3.32 shows that the level of extent coordination is carried out as a conflict management practice to enhance service delivery in college of education libraries is to high extent. Looking at the two geographical zone in the study, it is observed that South East respondents have a greater mean (\bar{X} =3.32, SD=.75) as against the South South respondents with (\bar{X} =3.00, SD=.85), indicating that greater coordination is carried out as conflict management is carried out in south East than in south South, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this research were discussed based on the research questions. It is discussed under the following subheadings:

Planning Practices for Conflict Management for enhanced Service Delivery in College of Education Libraries.

The results from table 1 above revealed that planning is being carried out at a very high extent in projecting the capacity and nature of the library in relation to targeted users and ensuring that the required manpower at college libraries are projected for effective service delivery. It shows that at a high extent, planning is carried out in planning is carried out in ensuring that expected funds are to be judiciously used to curtail, misappropriation and embezzlement, making provisions for possible challenges that may arise in the college libraries

as well as strategies to overcome it so as to enhance service delivery and ensuring that the required library equipment are envisioned so as to enhance service delivery. The findings is in agreement with Irene (2014) who pointed out that planning is the most fundamental function for managing conflicts in college libraries because every other conflict management functions rest upon strategic planning for combating uprisings in libraries.

Also, in tandem, Ucha and Sunday (2014) observed that planning is a systematic effort to harness the future performance of human and material resources of college libraries for enhanced service delivery. Thus, a library that has a carefully articulated systematic planning process stands to benefit more than one that has not. It was revealed in the literature that the prevalent conflict in library administration, particularly in developing countries, is connected to planning inadequacies. Hence, planning should be given more attention in college libraries.

Co-ordination Practices for Conflict Management for enhanced Service Delivery in College of Education Libraries.

The findings on table 2 above revealed that to very high extent coordination is carried out to ensure no department or unit of the library is to work contrary to specified activities and to ensure pursuit of same goal by all library staff members so as to achieve effective service delivery. Also to a high extent coordination is carried out to foster team spirit among library workers; to eliminate unnecessary rivalry among library workers and library users by creating sense of cooperation and tolerance and to unify the activities of different departments of the library for enhanced service delivery.

In line with the findings, Krautter (2013) asserted that coordination motivate staff to work more efficiently towards increasing the group's service delivery. Supporting this, Ugwuanyi, and Idoko, (2012) added that coordination provides a well-defined process of distribution of duties for handling organisational disagreements. Coordination therefore

encourages knowledgeable specialist to provide advice and assistance to the librarian, and the entire management staff of the library for effective conflict management in the library.

Conclusion

College libraries like every other organisations are prone to conflict which has the possibility of degenerating into major crisis. It can hinder progress in the college libraries, especially if individuals resorted to unfriendly behaviours. The unfriendly behaviours often lead to disintegration of groups, premature resignation from office and relocation to greener pastures. In this same way conflict in colleges of education libraries will disrupt services rendered by librarians to the college communities. Therefore, conflict management through the practices of planning and coordination are necessary to avoid the unwanted issues of conflicts. Effectively harnessing the potentials of planning and coordination practices for conflict management will no doubt lead to enhanced service delivery in college libraries.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were put forward as a way to address and avoid escalation of conflicts in college of education libraries in South East and South South, Nigeria:

1. College management should strategically plan on the best ways to start circulating the idea that adequate planning is indispensable in handling conflict. They may liaise with mass media to sensitize the library workers and visitors to the libraries on how planning as a conflict management practice can help to avert possible conflicts in the library.
2. College management should ensure that Library staff are well informed on how best to coordinate and direct visitors to sections of the library for which they have visited the library. The good manner in which these users are directed will help them form good

opinions that they consider important, and help to avert any foreseeable conflict between librarians and the visitors to the library.

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