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# Evaluating the Job Performance of Librarians in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

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## **Evaluating the Job Performance of Librarians in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.**

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### **Abstract**

*Job performance consists of a set of employees' behaviours that are perceived to be in agreement with organizational goals that can be measured, monitored and assessed as an achievement at an individual level. The librarian's job performance is that aspect of work behaviour that is of relevance to the library's success. This paper presents findings from a self-rating questionnaire on the levels of job performance of librarians in universities in one region of Nigeria. The study was carried out using a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from 210 respondents in 21 universities based on total enumeration. Data was analyzed and presented in tables. Anchored on the eight factor model of job performance, the study found that the level of job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria was high (Mean= 3.03, SD=0.67). The study concluded that contrary to prior studies, librarians' level of job performance was high. It recommended that librarians should get regular training or acquire new skills in their job, so that they would be able to meet the demands of the challenging library work environment.*

**Keywords: Job Performance, Librarians, Universities, South-East, Nigeria.**

**Word count: 5269**

### **Introduction**

In academic communities, the librarians are responsible for the operation and management of libraries. They serve the academic community by providing information services to staff, students and other users who come into the library. Their job involves directing, planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, budgeting and evaluating the library's operations. They are also expected to apply expert knowledge in solving job-related problems as well as turn out research output. However, observation and previous studies reported that librarians have not been meeting the expected level of job performance in the academic libraries. Scholars have pointed to the fact that the job performances of librarians in the Nigerian universities have not been meeting the set levels of expectation in certain tasks. Utor (2003) and Popoola (2005) both confirmed that employers have complained of the low quality of performance of librarians. Akor (2009) found the job performance of librarians to be at a low level in the North Central zone of

Nigeria. In terms of publications output, Amusa, Iyoro and Olabisi (2013) as well as Babalola and Nwalo (2013) reported a low job performance of librarians. Likewise, Akor (2014) found the job performance of librarians to be low. Somvir (2012) observed that patrons complain at the decline in prompt services delivered by some academic librarians who appear tactless and hardly cope with their job-related problems.

Reduced efficiency in services of the library, decline in prompt services and the misuse of resources as well as low turnout of research output are evidences of the librarians' low level of job performances. The evidence of low job performance of librarians cuts across academic environments in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria including the South-East. This situation, if allowed to persist may impinge negatively on the overall effectiveness of university libraries and academic culture of Nigerian universities (Nwosu, Ugwuegbu & Okeke, 2013). Literature showed that expectations of performance on a job are predicted by work-related behaviours of employees. It identified that library management appraise work-related behaviours of employees in the library to ensure these are well managed. It is these work-related behaviours that turn into tangible job performances needed to meet the goals and objectives of the library. Presently, it is not clear if the librarians in the Nigerian universities have found a pragmatic means of improving their work-related behaviours to ensure effective performance on their job. This prompted the current evaluation of the level of job performance of librarians in universities in the South-East, Nigeria using the eight factor model of job performance proposed by Campbell, Mc-cloy, Oppler and Sager (1993).

### **Research Questions**

The study will attempt to ascertain the level of job performance of librarians in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria using the eight factor model of job performance proposed by Campbell, Mc-cloy, Oppler and Sager (1993). The research questions were asked:

1. What is the level of job specific task performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of non job specific task performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
3. What is the level of communication of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?

4. What is the level of demonstrating effort of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
5. What is the level of personal discipline of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
6. What is the level of peer/team performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
7. What is the level of supervision/leadership of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
8. What is the level of management/administration of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria?
9. Identify barriers to job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

Although several works have been done on the construct of job performance, this study followed the line of argument of Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager (1993) in assessing the librarian's level of job performance. Among the acknowledged works on job performance, Campbell (1990) and Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager (1993) depicted job performance as an individual level variable. That is, performance is an individual's conduct. These studies argued that performance is not results or outcomes rather results are the after effect of an individual's performance. An eight factor model of performance that captured dimensions of job performance existent to a greater or lesser extent across all jobs was explained based on factor analytic research. Campbell et al (1993) integrated these various dimensions of job performance into a comprehensive model. The study came out with eight indicators of measuring job performance: job specific task proficiency, non job specific task proficiency, written and demonstrating effort, oral communication, maintaining personal discipline and team performance, facilitating peer supervision or leadership and management or administration. These eight indicators represent rank order factors that are well-designed for describing job performance in any occupational domain. Any intricate factor may have to be simplified and adapted to become appropriate to the library working environment. These factors were operationalized as follows:

1. **Job-specific task proficiency** includes those behaviours that a librarian undertakes as part of his job. It relates to the librarian's capacity to perform the core substantive or technical tasks central to the job.
2. **Non-Job-Specific task proficiency** includes those behaviours which a librarian is required to undertake which do not pertain only to a particular job. It relates to the librarian's capacity to perform task or execute performance behaviour that are not specific to their particular jobs.
3. **Written and non written communication task proficiency** relates to a librarian's proficiency in writing and speaking, independent of the correctness of the subject. Librarians make formal or informal, oral or written presentations to various other library employees while carrying out their different jobs.
4. **Demonstrating effort** relates to the consistency of a librarian's effort, the frequency with which librarians would expend extra effort when required, the willingness to keep working under adverse conditions. This shows the degree to which librarians commit themselves to job tasks. A librarian's performance can be measured in terms of effort, on a day to day basis, or where there are unusual situations.
5. **Maintaining personal discipline** relates to the extent to which a librarian avoids negative behaviour such as excessive absenteeism, alcohol or substance abuse and rules or rules infractions.
6. **Facilitating peer and team performance** relates to the extent to which librarians support peers. In the library, employees work closely or are highly interdependent, thus performance includes the degree to which a librarian helps out his or her colleagues. This includes giving advice, coaching, helping peers with problems, helping to keep a work group directed and acting as a role model for peer and the work group.
7. **Supervision/Leadership** relates to showing proficiency at influencing the performance of subordinate through face to face interpersonal interaction and influence. The librarian would be responsible for meting out rewards and punishments as seen under face to face performance. Library jobs have supervisory or leadership components.

8. **Management/Administration** relates to behaviour directed at articulating for the unit, organizing people and resources, monitoring progress, help to solve problems that might prevent goal accomplishment, controlling expenses, obtaining additional resources and dealing with other units in the library.

Scholars like Muchinsky and Culbertson (2013) described job performance as a set of workers' behaviour that can be measured, monitored and assessed as an achievement at individual level. It consists of those behaviours that are perceived to be in agreement with the organizational goals. Job performance is of interest to the organisation because of the importance of high productivity in the workplace (Ofoegbu & Joseph, 2013). To Bullock (2013) job performance is behaviour or plainly stated what people do at work to get an expected value. In other words, an employer's behaviour may be distinguished as helping or hindering an organisation, but the outcomes of employees' behaviour are rarely measured so their value is merely expected. Thus, job performance is seen to express the extent to which an individual fulfills the responsibilities specified in the job description. This includes the fulfillment of the duties and delivery of the activities required by a job role. The librarian's performance is hinged on their level of job performance in the library (Anyaegebu, Obiozor & Aghauche, 2015). This can be regarded as a major contribution to the success of services in the library department of any university.

The librarian's performance is that aspect of work behaviour that is of relevance to the library's success (Amusa, Iyoro & Ajani, 2013). According to Okpe (2012), academic librarians are involved in the day to day management of the academic institutions' learning resources along with teaching, giving instructions to users and carrying out daily administrative duties to ensure an encouraging learning and teaching environment. Saka and Haruna (2013) categorized the jobs performed in the library into cataloguing and classification of materials, provision of reference services, charging and discharging materials to users, among others. Each job performed by the librarian has its responsibilities. Some responsibilities in an academic library include online selection, ordering and acquisition, automated circulation of information resources, preparing online public access catalogue, provision of online reference services, and digitization of information resources.

The American Library Association (ALA) pointed out that some responsibilities of librarians are to meet and serve the library's user community; to think analytically, to develop new or revised systems, procedures, and work flow; to exercise initiative and independent judgment; to have knowledge of computers, the internet, and commercially available library software; to prepare comprehensive reports; and present ideas clearly and concisely in written and oral form. Librarians are also responsible for making administrative decisions, interpreting policies, and supervising staff; motivating, establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with associates, supervisors, volunteers, other community agencies and the public. Librarians need knowledge of the philosophy and techniques of library management; the ability to organize job duties and work independently; demonstrated knowledge of library materials and resources; creativity to develop and implement library programs and services; to communicate both orally and in writing and employ management techniques effectively in directing, planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, budgeting, and evaluating the library's operation (American Library Association, 2006).

Overtime, studies have ascertained varying levels of job performance among librarians. Amusa, Iyoro and Ajani (2013) investigated the librarians' job performance in public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Their study revealed a fair job performance with variables such as professional practice, contribution to the overall development of the library, ability to attend swiftly to clients' request as well as meeting minimum requirements for promotion. Oyewole and Popoola (2013) investigated the level of job performance of library personnel in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. The results showed that the mean score for job performance of library personnel was  $X=55.68$ ,  $SD=5.25$  indicating moderate level of job performance.

Saka and Salman (2014) investigated the level of job performance of library personnel in universities in North-Central, Nigeria. Findings showed a mean score of 3.00 which indicated a moderate level of job performance of library personnel in universities in North-Central, Nigeria. Their study described the notable barriers of academic librarians' job performance to include lack of appropriate reward for expanded new roles, lack of status, lack of recognition, social security, social facilities, promotion, wages, social services and physical working conditions. A survey of university libraries in Ankara found out that academic librarians' low job performance is caused by poor physical working conditions, non-recognition with the work conducted, not

obtaining respect with the job conducted, job security, promotion, wages, social status and social services (Saka & Salman, 2014).

In terms of publications output, Amusa, Iyoro and Olabisi (2013) and Babalola and Nwalo (2013) reported a low job performance of librarians. Babalola and Nwalo investigated job performance as part of the productivity of the librarians in colleges of education in Nigeria. Their study revealed that librarians were less productive in terms of publication output. Likewise, Akor (2009, 2014) found that the job performance of librarians in Benue State, Nigeria, was at a low level. Nwosu, Ugwuegbu and Okeke (2013) argued that the librarians' poor job performance, if allowed to continue, may affect the academic culture of Nigerian Universities. Other studies like Utor (2003) and Popoola (2005) both confirmed that employers had complained of the low quality of performance of librarians in Nigeria. The job performance of an individual librarian is very important because one operation in the library is connected to another (Popoola, 2013).

## **Methodology**

The survey research design of cross-sectional type was used in this study. The purpose of using this research design was to predict the level of job performance of librarians at the time of study. The entire population of 210 librarians working in these universities was used. The instrument, a questionnaire was designed using self-rated format to obtain opinions from librarians on their levels of job performance. Scholars like Mabe and West (1982) presented a theoretical basis for testing a set of factors that may moderate the relationship between self-rating and other relevant criteria. In the study, students, managerial and proletarian samples rated their individual performance in areas of scholastic ability, technical or physical skill, intelligence, and job performance. The study tested the validity of self-ratings; analyzing the correlation between self-rating and criterion measures of performance such as objective tests, grades, peer or supervisor ratings as well as job turnover and obtained an estimated validity for self-rating of  $r=.31$  (Mabe & West, 1982).

On this basis, self-ratings were combined with supervisor ratings to ascertain the validity of self-rating job performance instrument in this study ( $r=.95$ ). The use of supervisor ratings as a criterion to assess the validity of self-ratings is because supervisors are the most reliable source for rating performance. This would clarify differences of opinion between supervisors and

subordinates (Matisidiso, 2009; Mann & Ismaila, 2012; Parker, 2014) as well as help the librarians to improve their job performance (Merril et al, 2013; Rolfo, Eklun & Jancke, 2018).

## Analysis and Presentation

### Research Questions 1 to 8

**Table 1: Job Performance of Librarians in Universities**

Item	VH (%)	H (%)	L (%)	VL(%)	Mean(M)	SD	GMean(SD)
<b>Job specific task performance</b>							
Performing library routine	65(32)	108(53.2)	29(14.3)	1(0.5)	3.17	0.68	<b>3.11(0.66)</b>
Attending to information requests	46(22.7)	120(59.1)	37(18.2)	-	3.04	0.64	
<b>Non job specific task performance</b>							
Meeting of approved goals	61(30)	104(51.2)	38(18.7)	-	3.11	0.69	<b>2.98(0.68)</b>
Providing input to growth of the library	33(16.3)	107(52.7)	63(31)	-	2.85	0.67	
<b>Communication</b>							
Using communication skills	51(25.1)	130(64)	22(10.8)	-	3.14	0.58	<b>3.02 (0.68)</b>
Using information tools and technologies	44(21.7)	102(50.2)	49(24.1)	8(3.9)	2.90	0.78	
<b>Demonstrating effort</b>							
Creativity and diligent at work	80(39.4)	89(43.8)	34(16.7)	-	3.23	0.72	<b>3.07 (0.75)</b>
Performing competently under pressure	51(25.1)	81(39.9)	71(35)	-	2.90	0.77	
<b>Personal discipline</b>							
Performing work schedule on time	51(25.1)	99(48.8)	49(24.1)	4(2.0)	2.97	0.76	<b>3.09(0.77)</b>
Regularity to work	85(41.9)	75(36.9)	43(21.2)	-	3.21	0.77	
<b>Peer/team performance</b>							
Working with others	61(30)	126(62.1)	16(7.9)	-	3.22	0.58	<b>3.17 (0.63)</b>
Providing assistance	60(29.6)	106(52.2)	37(18.2)	-	3.11	0.68	
<b>Supervision/leadership</b>							
Assessing work performed by others	12(5.9)	127(62.6)	64(31.5)	-	2.74	0.56	<b>2.93(0.60)</b>
Working with minimum supervision	55(27.1)	118(58.1)	30(14.8)	-	3.12	0.64	
<b>Management/administration</b>							
Coordinating ability	22(10.8)	155(76.4)	26(12.8)	-	2.98	0.49	<b>2.89 (0.59)</b>
Anticipating and proffering solutions to problems	22(10.8)	127(62.6)	45(22.2)	9(4.4)	2.80	0.68	
<b>Overall Weighted Mean (M)</b>							<b>3.03 (0.67)</b>

**KEY:** VH=Very High, H=High, L=Low, VL= Very Low \*\*\*Decision Rule if mean is  $\leq 1.49$  = Very Low; 1.5 to 2.49 = Low; 2.5 to 3.49 = High; 3.5 to 4= Very High. F (%) = Frequency (percentage)

Table 1 shows the various levels of job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria based on Campbell et al (1993) eight factor model. It shows that the overall level of job performance was high (*Ave Weighted M*= 3.03, *SD*=0.67). Altogether items measured under job performance had mean scores that were above 2.5 but lower than 3.5 which imply that the scaled items appear within the range of high.

On research question, findings revealed that librarians had a high level of job specific task performance ( $M= 3.11$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ). This implies that the librarians effectively carry out routine tasks such as cataloguing, managing collections, referencing among others.

On research question two, findings showed that the librarians indicated they had a high level of non-job specific task performance ( $M= 2.98$ ,  $SD=0.68$ ) although the mean score was a little above 2.5. This suggests that the librarians considered it a less important part of their job to contribute to the growth of the library.

Findings on the third research question revealed that librarians had high levels of communication skills ( $M= 3.02$ ,  $SD=0.68$ ). This implies that the librarians felt there was effective communication between supervisors and subordinates as well as library users.

Findings on the fourth research question revealed that librarians' performance level was high in demonstrating effort ( $M= 3.07$ ,  $SD=0.75$ ) by being creative, diligent at work and performing competently under pressure. This implies that in the face of deadlines, the librarians still carried out their job effectively.

The findings of the fifth research question revealed that librarians' performance level was high in personal discipline ( $M = 3.09$ ,  $SD= 3.09$ ). This implies that the librarians were regular and do their work on time.

Findings on the sixth research question revealed that librarians' performance level was high in team performance. Team performance accounted for the highest level of librarians' performance ( $M= 3.17$ ,  $SD= 0.63$ ). This high level of team performance suggests that the librarians exhibit sportsmanship on their jobs as they work well with colleagues.

The findings of the seventh research question revealed that librarians' performance level was high in leadership ( $M= 2.93$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ) although the mean score was a little above 2.5. Table 2 showed that majority of the respondents were Senior Librarians ( $n=55$ , 27.1%), followed by Assistant Librarians ( $n=36$ , 17.7%), Principal Librarians ( $n=35$ , 17.2%), Librarian I ( $n=16$ , 7.9%) and Librarian II ( $n=15$ , 7.4%). This implied that many of the librarians held job status of senior librarian, principal librarian and deputy librarian meant for experienced members of the profession in supervisory positions like departmental heads, sectional heads and unit heads.

Findings suggest that some librarians may not be putting in their best in their jobs when supervising and appear not to like supervision.

The findings on the eight research question revealed that on management, the librarians' job performance level was high ( $M= 2.89, SD=0.59$ ) although this mean score was little above 2.5. A good number of librarians held positions like departmental heads, sectional heads and unit heads which are part of their library management. The findings suggest that the librarians were weak in anticipating and proffering solutions to problems and need skill training to improve their coordinating abilities.

In all, these findings imply that librarians believe that they were good in terms of performing their job as they indicated their level of job performance was high.

**Table 2: Job status of respondents**

Job Status			
	University Librarian	21	10.3
	Deputy Librarian	25	12.3
	Principal Librarian	35	17.2
	Senior Librarian	55	27.1
	Librarian I	16	7.9
	Librarian II	15	7.4
	Assistant Librarian	36	17.7

### **Research Question 9: What are the barriers to job performance of librarians in university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?**

**Table 3: Barriers to job performance in the library**

Barriers	Yes F(%)	No F(%)
Lack of acknowledgement for work done	169(83.3)	34(16.7)
Lack of staff training on skills to provide quality service	169(83.3)	34(16.7)
Lack of coaching and mentoring	169(83.3)	34(16.7)
Work overload due to shortage of staff	167(82.3)	36(17.7)
Poor remuneration and promotion	162(79.8)	41(20.2)
Lack of contingent rewards and wages	161(79.3)	42(20.7)
Lack of commitment to career and capacity development	158(77.8)	45(22.2)
Poor security and social facilities	156(76.8)	47(23.2)
Poor services and physical working conditions	155(76.4)	48(23.6)
Lack of recognition and status	148(72.9)	55(27.1)
Lack of feedback on performance	147(72.4)	56(27.6)
Lack of tools	142(70)	61(30)
Poor succession planning	132(65)	71(35)
Poor communication between managers and subordinates	125(61.6)	78(38.4)
Unchallenging jobs	84(41.4)	119(58.6)

**Key: F (%) = Frequency (percentage)**

Table 3 shows the barriers to job performance of librarians in South-East university libraries. Some of the most significant barriers to librarians' job performance are lack of acknowledgement for work done ( $n=169$ , 83.3%), lack of staff training on skills to provide quality service ( $n=169$ , 83.3%), lack of coaching and mentoring ( $n=169$ , 83.3%), work overload due to shortage of staff ( $n=167$ , 82.3%), poor remuneration and promotion ( $n=162$ , 79.8%), among others.

Librarians indicated the lack of supervisors' acknowledgment of their work as a barrier to their job performance. This implies that when supervisors do not acknowledge task performed by librarians, the librarians do not feel motivated to put in their best in their jobs. Also when librarians do not get regular training or acquire new skills in their job, they would not be able to meet the demands of the challenging work environment. The fact that librarians indicated workload due to shortage of staff as one of the barriers denotes that librarians were stretched to carry out more jobs because the library did not employ sufficient employees and this affects their job performance. Furthermore, the librarians indicated that unchallenging jobs was not a barrier that affected their job performance. This implied that the work of librarians was challenging.

### **Discussion of findings**

Job performance indicators of this study were developed based on the eight factor model of Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager (1993). The findings showed that the librarians' job performance were at a high level ( $Mean = 3.03$  on a 5 point scale). In terms of performing job specific tasks, findings revealed librarians had a high level of job performance ( $Mean = 3.11$ ). This implies that the librarians were effective in carrying out tasks such as cataloguing, managing collection, referencing among others. On non job specific task performance, librarians had a high level of job performance ( $Mean = 2.98$ ) suggesting that librarians considered it a less important part of their job to contribute to the growth of the library even though they meet approved goals. In using communication skills, librarians had a high level of job performance ( $Mean = 3.02$ ). Another finding revealed that librarians' performance level was high in demonstrating effort ( $Mean = 3.07$ ) by being creative, diligent at work and performing competently under pressure. This implies that in the face of deadlines, the librarians still carried

out their job effectively. In terms of personal discipline (*Mean* = 3.09) and teamwork (*Mean* = 3.17), librarians' performance level was high.

Findings revealed that librarians' performance level was high in providing leadership (*Mean* = 2.93). Many of the librarians held job status of senior librarian, principal librarian and deputy librarian meant for experienced members of the profession in supervisory positions like departmental heads, sectional heads and unit heads. Findings suggest that some librarians may not be putting in their best in their jobs when supervising and appear not like supervision. Scholars like Idiegbeyan-Ose and Idahosa (2011) argue that for an employee to perform well, he must receive feedback on what he is doing well and be told which areas that need improvement. But findings showed that librarians preferred to work with minimum supervision and are weak in assessing the work performed by others. Bello and Mansor (2013) identified some leading abilities that enhance the job performance to include ability to plan, ability to establish or maintain effective work relationship with colleagues and other library staff as well as their ability to lead the research into new techniques that could aid job performance.

A good number of librarians held positions like departmental heads, sectional heads and unit heads which are part of their library management. Although the findings revealed that librarians' performance level was high in providing management (*Mean* = 2.89), it suggests that the librarians were weak in anticipating and proffering solutions to problems and need skill training to improve their coordinating abilities. The overall findings on the level of job performance showed that the librarians' job performance were at a high level unlike studies of Amusa, Iyoro and Ajani (2013), Oyewole and Popoola (2011) and Nwosu and Ugwuegbu (2013) that placed the level of job performance of librarians at a moderate level.

The result showed the barriers to job performance for librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria to include lack of staff training on skills to provide quality service (n=169); lack of commitment to career and capacity development (n=158); poor succession planning (n=132); lack of coaching and mentoring (n=169); lack of recognition and status (n=148); poor security and social facilities (n=156); poor remuneration and promotion (n=162); poor services and physical working conditions (n=155); work overload which may be due to shortage of staff (n=147); lack of feedback on performance (n=147); lack of recognition for work done (n=169);

lack of contingent rewards (n=161); lack of tools (n=142); poor communication between managers and subordinates (n=125) and lack of staff development required for skills to provide quality service (n=169).

When librarians indicated the lack of supervisors' acknowledgment of their work as a barrier to their job performance, this implies that they do not feel motivated to put in their best in their jobs. Also when librarians do not get regular training or acquire new skills in their job, they would not be able to meet the demands of the challenging work environment. The fact that librarians indicated workload due to shortage of staff as one of the barriers denotes that librarians were stretched to carry out more jobs because the library did not employ sufficient employees and affects their job performance. Furthermore, the librarians indicated that unchallenging jobs was not a barrier that affected their job performance. This implied that the work of librarians was challenging. The findings on the barriers to job performance of librarians corroborates the findings in prior studies of Akor (2009); Ugwu (2009); Gbaje and Ukachi (2011); Ojedokun and Okafor (2011); Saka and Salman (2014) and Amune (2014).

## **Conclusion**

A conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of this study is that the level of job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria was high. The finding on job specific task performance revealed that the librarians were effective in carrying out tasks such as cataloguing, managing collection, referencing among others. Another finding of the study suggests that the librarians were weak in anticipating and proffering solutions to problems indicating the need for skill training to improve their coordinating abilities. Therefore the study recommends that the librarians should get regular training or acquire new skills in their job, they so that they would be able to meet the demands of the challenging work environment.

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