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Nurudeen Aderibigbe
aderibigbena@funaab.edu.ng

Chioma Monica CHIEMENEM
Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta Nigeria, chummsky@gmail.com

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CULTURAL ATTITUDES OF LIBRARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR READINESS FOR THE GLOBAL LIBRARY WORK ENVIRONMENT

CHIEMENEM, Chioma Monica

chummsky@gmail.com

ADERIBIGBE Nurudeen Adeniyi

aderibigbena@funaab.edu.ng

Federal University of Agriculture, Alabata

Abeokuta, Ogun State

Nigeria

Abstract

This study focuses on the cultural attitudes of library personnel with emphasis on their readiness for the global library work environment. It discusses the various attitudes exhibited by library personnel and how they affect their work in general. A total of 133 copies of questionnaire were administered on respondents selected from 3 libraries, out of which only 119 were returned with useful responses. The three libraries sampled were the libraries of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), University of Lagos (UNILAG) and the University of Ibadan (UI). The study revealed that the library personnel still exhibit some negative cultural attitudinal traits like speaking evil about other employees and/or spreading rumours and grapevine conversations, backbiting about the managers or co-workers, non-compliment of the good works of others but rather trying to pull them down by speaking negative words, lack of support for professional development and non-confidential attitudes towards organisational secrets. All these make library personnel ill-equipped for the global library work environment. The study further reveals that the global library work environment is characterised by movement from traditional to modern libraries, resource sharing (including inter-library loans), provision of library quality services, information literacy programmes, library promotion and marketing and adequate staff training. For the library personnel to be fully ready for the global library work environment, the paper suggests the treatment of co-workers with respect, while library managers should take time to observe and uncover the causes of negative attitudes in the workplace, including proper employee engagement. Change must start from the top as leaders serve as role models for the desired cultural attitudes from employees, while managers should share success with others and praise those who make things happen, among others.

Keywords: Culture, Attitude, Cultural attitudes, Library personnel, Global library work environment.

Introduction

Culture is one of the sources of attitudinal changes. Attitudes are more resistant to change as one gets older. This could explain the old saying that old habits die hard. The readiness of library personnel for global library practices depends to a large extent on their cultural attitudes.

The term ‘cultural attitude’ refers to a way or system of shared beliefs and values that actively affects the way a group of people conduct themselves in any given situation. It is the tendency for someone to react negatively or positively to something or an object. Furthermore, within the context of the workplace, it can be viewed as the behaviour of personnel in a work environment, especially towards new technologies. (Ogunbiyi 2016) posits that cultural attitude is often as a result of observational learning and experiences garnered from one’s environment.

The emergence of new practices in the field of librarianship has caused a lot of significant changes in most modern libraries. The proliferation of electronic resources and other Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into librarianship has made the current global library practices to be centered on it. As a result of this, cultural attitudes of library personnel have been forced to conform and align with these current practices in order to be relevant in the present ICT age and also effectively render their services to the public. Thus, the focus of this paper is to ascertain the extent to which attitudes of library personnel enhance their readiness for the global library work environment.

Statement of the Problem

Libraries globally have stood as the cornerstone of the society for centuries. This is evident not merely because of their functions of advancing knowledge and preserving books, but also as a result of the information demands of the society and the emergence of new technologies. These technological advancements have enabled the library to evolve into something new and more innovative.

Due to the influence of technologies on current library practices, the cultural attitudes of library personnel are being challenged to conform to the demands of the global library work environment. Hence this paper tries to explore the cultural attitudes of library personnel and their readiness for the global library work environment.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the cultural attitudes that are exhibited by library personnel in their work environments;
2. Review the global library practices in the library personnel’s work environments;
3. Examine the library personnel’s cultural attitudes and their readiness for the global library work environment; and

4. Identify ways of enhancing library personnel's cultural attitudes towards readiness for the global library work environment.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What are the cultural attitudes exhibited by library personnel in their places of work?
2. What are the current practices in the global library work environment?
3. What are library personnel's attitudes towards adopting global library practices?
4. What are the ways to enhance library personnel's readiness towards global library practices?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

Culture is generally defined as a people's way of life. (Cambridge 2017) defines culture as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time". (Kaila 2011) describes culture as norms, beliefs and values in its totality, which people's behaviours are modelled after. Hence, culture is the man-made aspect of the society which reflects people's way of life, their heritage and traditions.

Attitude, on the other hand, is the tendency for someone to react either in a negative or positive manner to something or an object. Hence, attitude is seen as a tendency to react positively or negatively. People's attitudes are as a result of the way they think and this shapes the way they relate with other people both at the workplace and in other places.

Cultural attitude in the context of this research work refers to the tendency for a person to react either in a negative or positive manner to someone or something based on the general customs and beliefs he or she has acquired as a way of life.

Library personnel can be described as the group of persons or people employed in a library. They consist of both the professionals and the para-professionals. Professionals are the librarians while para-professionals are the library officers. Library personnel also include the library assistants and other ICT support staff found in the library.

The global library work environment can be referred to as the current ideal physical geographical workplace where a library is situated and its services rendered to users, with the aid of new emerging information technologies.

2.2 Cultural Attitudes of Library Personnel

Many factors are responsible for the cultural attitudes of library personnel. Most often, it emanates from the administrative practices, values and personal traits of library managers or leaders. (Dubrin 2009) posits that the personality and vision of managers create a great impact on the cultural attitudes in the workplace. Cultural attitudes of library staff reflect both the conscious and the unconscious ideas, choices, preferences and behavioural patterns of top level managers. The culture in which a library operates helps in determining the kind of cultural attitudes exhibited by its personnel.

Personnel within an organisation imbibe organisational culture through socialisation, which entails the personnel understanding, the customs, norms and values paramount for adapting in an organisational environment. These attitudes take place mainly through learning by observation and imitation of other staff. Furthermore, the cultural attitudes are formed by personnel through the teachings they get from their leaders and heads. Studies by (Kohli & Faul 2005) showed that the social climate of a country plays an important role in shaping the cultural attitudes of people.

The right cultural attitudes in the workplace go a long way in increasing the quality of job productivity and make personnel more conscious of delivering high quality and productive services. A library environment that has positive cultural attitudes encourages behaviour that is creative and innovative. (Elias, Smith & Barney 2012) in their studies found out that a high attitude was prevalent among the younger personnel towards new global trends when compared to their older counterparts who exhibited a very low attitude towards global trends.

There are so many cultural attitudes exhibited by library personnel in the workplace. (Abag & Wasilu 2013) identified poor attitudes to work as a major cultural attitude exhibited by personnel. These attitudes include rumour-mongering, rudeness, laziness, tardiness, etc. (Reynolds 2007) identified interpersonal relationships, poor management, overwork and challenges of personal life as the core sources of employees' negative attitudes. Library personnel should not let attitudes like these direct their personality at work, for it can retard their growth in their workplace and make them misfits for the global library work environment.

When library managers are not trustworthy, library personnel tend to develop negative attitudes which inform their negative attitudes towards them. It is of utmost necessity that library personnel trust their managers in order to foster good relationship in a library environment. However,(Gruys, Stewart & Bowling 2010) advocate the introduction of employees' report of counterproductive work behavior of personnel, which will help organisations to tame negative cultural attitudes at work.

2.3 Current Practices in the Global Library Work Environment

The library worldwide is facing an information explosion age where information/knowledge is rapidly transiting from being in a repository to open access. Users or clientele no longer have much need of visiting a physical library to meet their information needs. All these are attributes of the advent of the Internet which avails people numerous resources online, anywhere they are.

With this, libraries have been forced to change their methods of collection development, storage and information dissemination.

(Ukachi 2010) remarked that libraries have devised new methods of adopting ICT in all their services: e.g. OPAC is replacing the card catalogue, thereby providing users with GUI (Graphical User Interface) features. Furthermore, there is now the provision of 24-hours, 7-days-a-week electronic databases, journals and other resources via the Internet to users.

The global library work environment is basically an electronic environment. This is so because the services currently being rendered by library personnel globally are centred on the use of ICT and the Internet.

(Ukachi 2010) highlighted services rendered in the global library environment to include e-publishing, user education, e-mail enquiry services, electronic redistribution, information repackaging, among others.

2.4 Cultural Attitudes towards the Global Library Work Environment

(Farrkas 2010) identifies cultural attitudes as the bane preventing staff from using their initiative in developing new skills and being ready for new technology. The study further highlighted some cultural attitudes that affect library personnel at work: controlling staff, managers who would not create time for subordinates to experiment with new technologies, and administrators who are deathly averse to risk.

There is the need for library personnel to assume various features and attitudes and also create new ways of library operations in order to fit into the global library environment. (Daniel 2012) suggests the need for library personnel to imbibe various characteristics and also create innovative ways of providing library services in order to remain relevant in the current global library work environment. The researcher further suggests the introduction of the business line approach to adequate information service delivery. This advocates for library personnel to be ready to equip themselves, both culturally and attitudinally, in order to make use of every opportunity that comes their way to showcase their ability and commitment to prevalent best practices in librarianship.

Library personnel should be more flexible in their methods of information deamination and service delivery. There should be a shift from their often rigid ways to more flexible and natural methods of carrying out their duties. They should be able to identify new platforms of opportunities and develop the right cultural attitudes to move analytically towards it. To achieve this, (DelGuidice 2011) advocates for attendance of professional conferences which further enhance employees' positive attitudes towards work. Furthermore, workshops and conferences were itemised as the best mediums for fostering networking, growth and renewal. In the same vein, (Sharma & Tolani (2010) canvassed for library personnel to be appropriately engaged in the workplace, which would boost their sense of self-worth and enthusiasm for their job.

(Foote 2014) posits that library personnel should not wait for changes to happen but rather look out for and embrace changes and furthermore share such changes with colleagues in the workplace.(Trifunović 2013) advocates for partnerships among libraries, most especially between digitised libraries, in order to push library personnel towards imbibing new technologies as well as equipping them to carry out their daily responsibilities effectively.(Mccook 2003) argues that the limitations faced by library personnel do not border only on new technologies but also centre on the advocacy of culture and attitudes of librarians towards such innovations. (Johnson 2010) found out in his studies that employees can adversely benefit from the expertise experiences of librarians and library exchange programmers in partnership with other developed libraries.

(Meinert 2017) opined that it is the responsibility of library managers to identify the root causes of attitudinal exhibitions of their personnel. Managers are advised not to assume but rather learn to listen. Furthermore, managers should bear in mind that the library personnel at times might not be the problem but rather the organisational culture itself. When personnel are difficult, a manager should try as much as possible to understand the reason for that attitude, give formal corrective measures if it warrants that. Employees should also be treated with respect and honesty at all times, for this will go a long way in making them build up positive cultural attitudes at work. (Daiz 2017) proposes that library managers should help subordinates create career paths or goals and map out plans to help them achieve such goals. This has been proven to help change the negative cultural attitudes of staff. The strength of an employee's job performance should be identified and channeled in the right area.

(Arkinson 2017) posits that leaders should be as transparent as possible and frequently ask for feedback, especially when new responsibilities and initiatives are given. Furthermore, criticisms should not be taken personally, but rather dwell more on facts which can be used to educate personnel in order to advance the goal of the organisation. (Frezier 2017) advises personnel to always reinforce the organisation's code of conduct whenever they see anyone at any level misbehave. (Black 2017) advocates for proper background scrutiny of intending personnel, a complete check of references, while attitudinal-based interviews should be conducted on them before employment.

(Sherry-Moore 2017) emphasised that managers should regularly communicate clearly and give substantive details when carrying out duties. (Schmalt 2007) admonishes library personnel against whining and complaining. They should rather be positive and go out and promote the cause of the library where they work. (Domian 2017) posits that managers should be patient with their subordinates and colleagues and also be sensitive to their attitudes because they do not know what such personnel are going through in their personal lives. However, managers in trying to do so, should but rather be emotional make them respond rationally.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a survey design approach. The questionnaire was the only instrument used to collect data from respondents. The study was carried out in three libraries in the following

institutions: Federal University of Agriculture (FUNAAB), Abeokuta, Ogun State; University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State; and University of Lagos (UNILAG), Lagos State. A complete enumeration of all the Librarians and Library officers of the various institutions was sampled. A total number of 133 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents and 119 copies were returned in usable form, with a return rate of 89.5%. The mean, standard deviation and frequency counts were used to analyse the data collected using the instrument. A benchmark mean of 2.50 was chosen for this research work.

DATA ANALYSIS

Results

Table 1: Institution distribution

Institution	Number
FUNAAB	33
UI	31
UNILAG	55

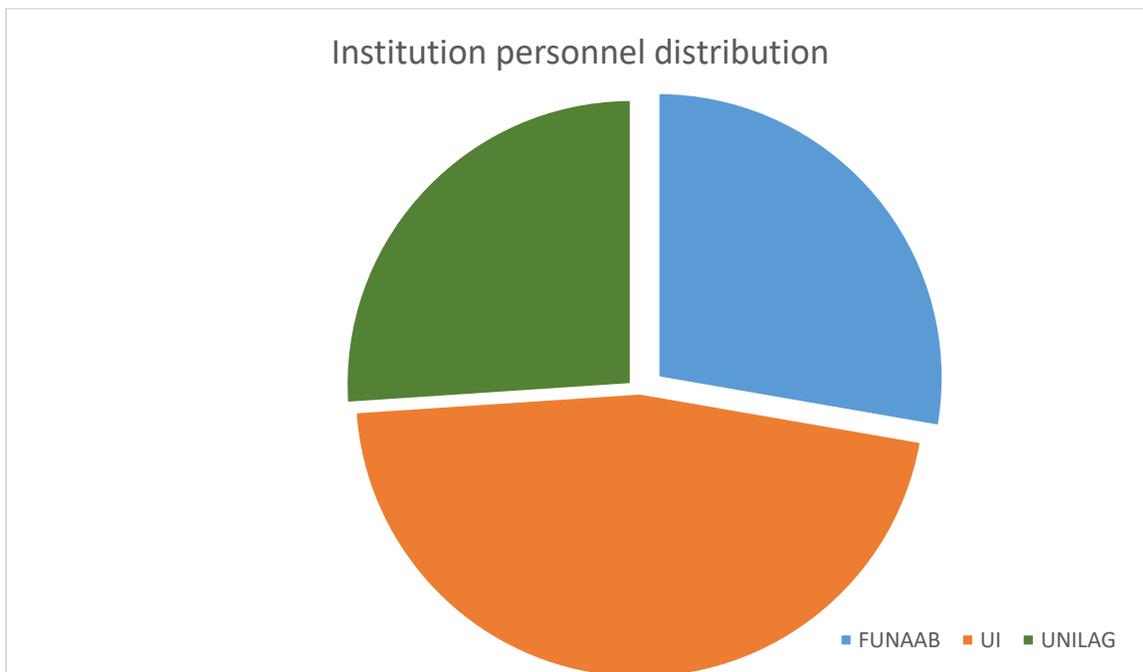


Table 2: Designation

Designation	Total number
Librarians	66
Library officers	53

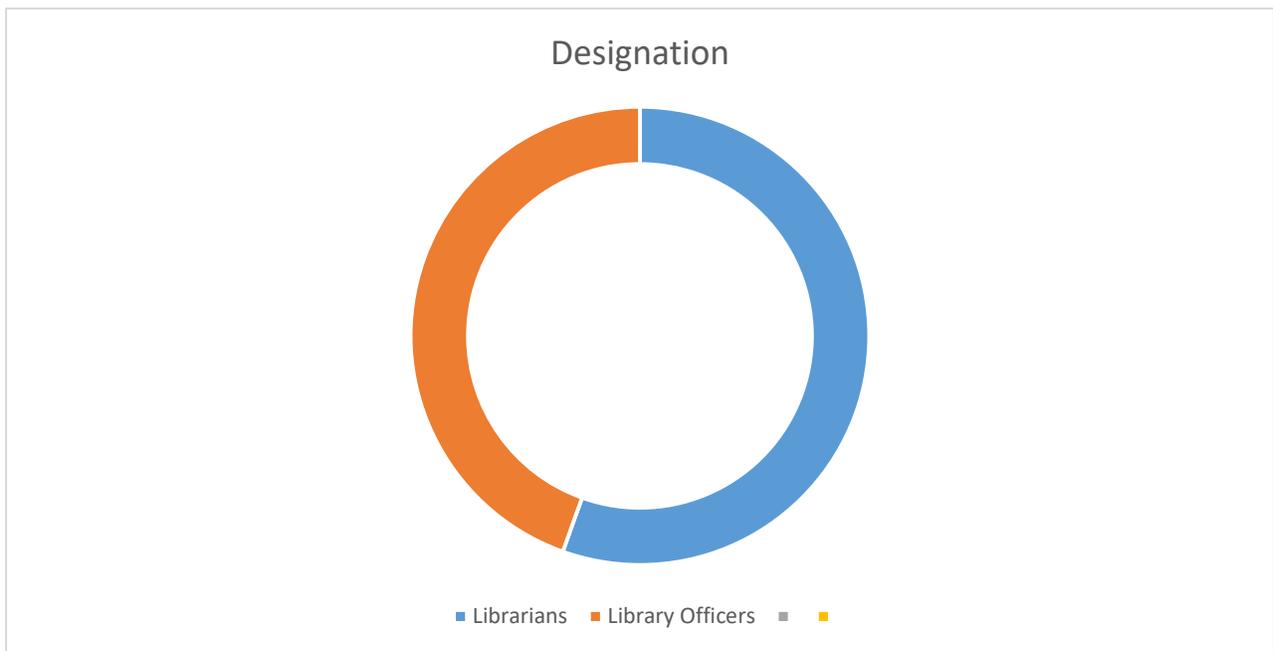


Table 3: Gender distribution

Gender	Number
Female	56
Male	63

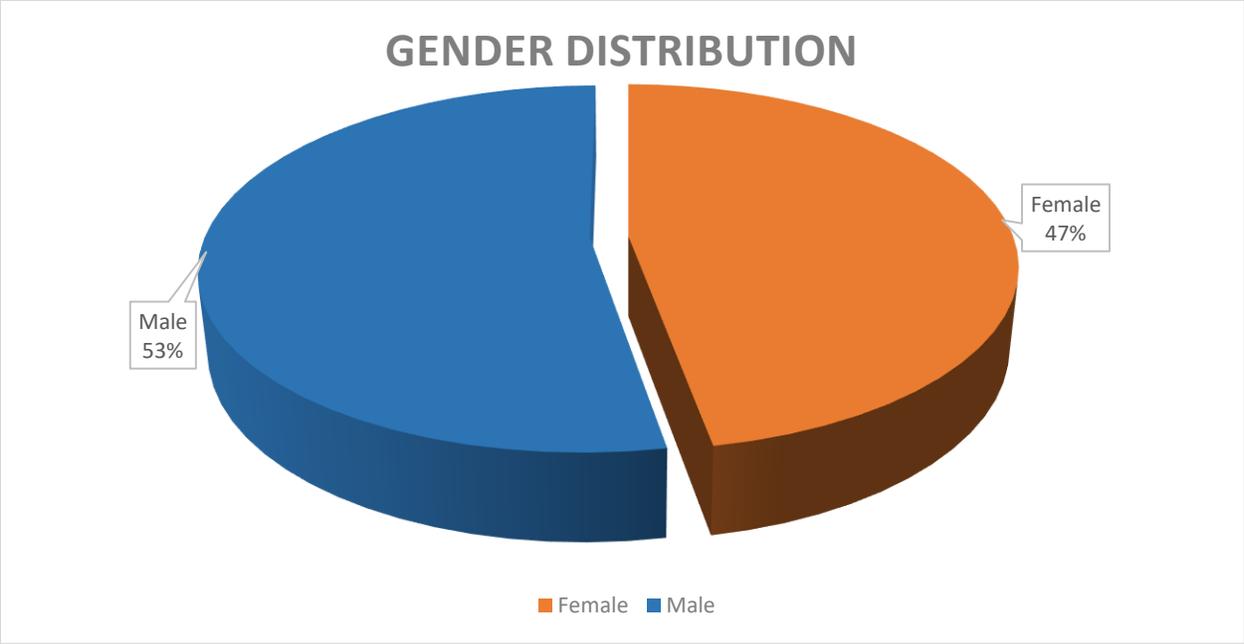


Table 4: Length of work experience

Length of years	Personnel
1 - 5	14
6 - 10	31
11 - 15	30
16 - 20	19
21 - 25	22
26 - 30	3

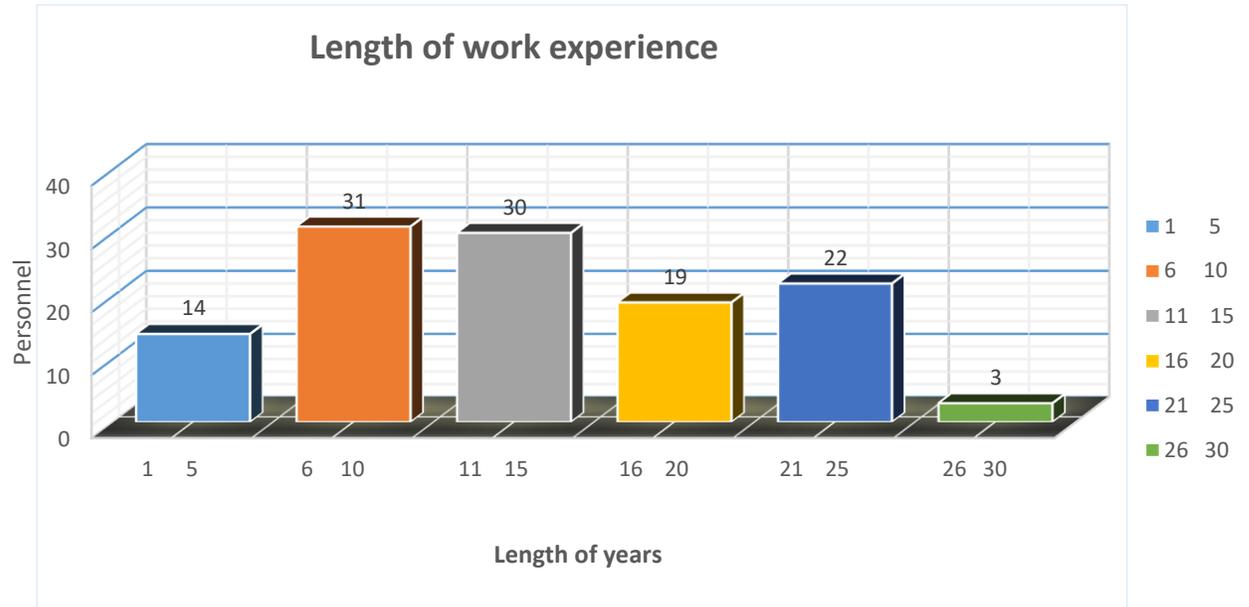


Table 5: Highest qualification

Qualification	Personnel
Diploma	13
HND	4
B.Sc./BA	27
MLS/MSc.	47
PhD	26
Others	2

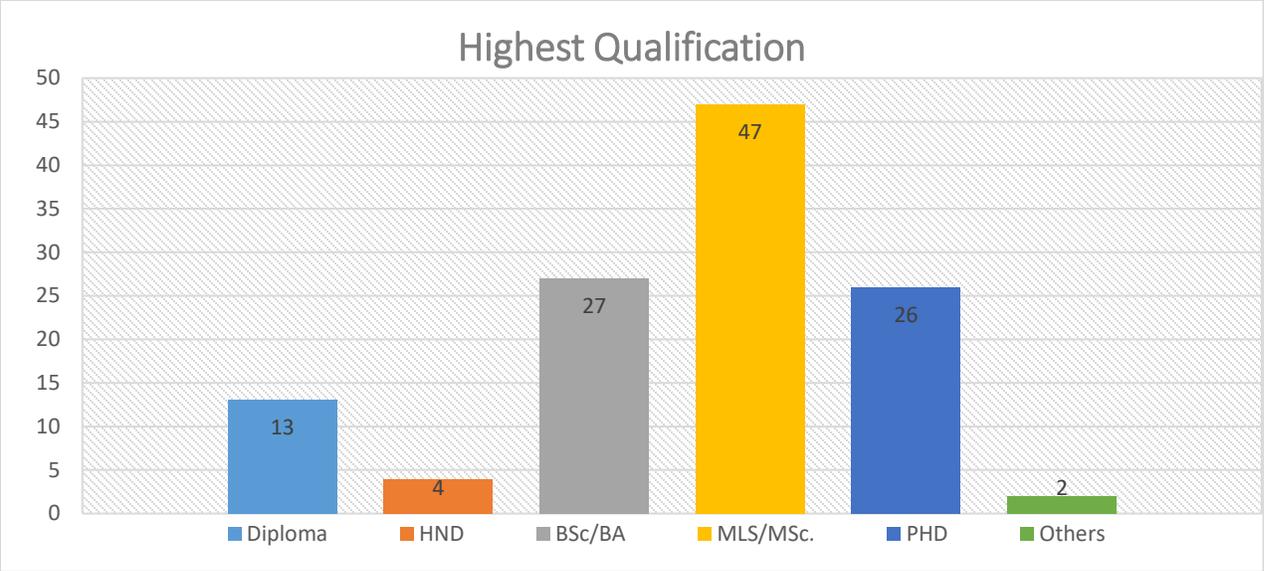


Table 6: Age distribution

Age range	Personnel
21 - 30	2
31 - 40	19
41 - 50	64
51 - 60	31
60 and above	3

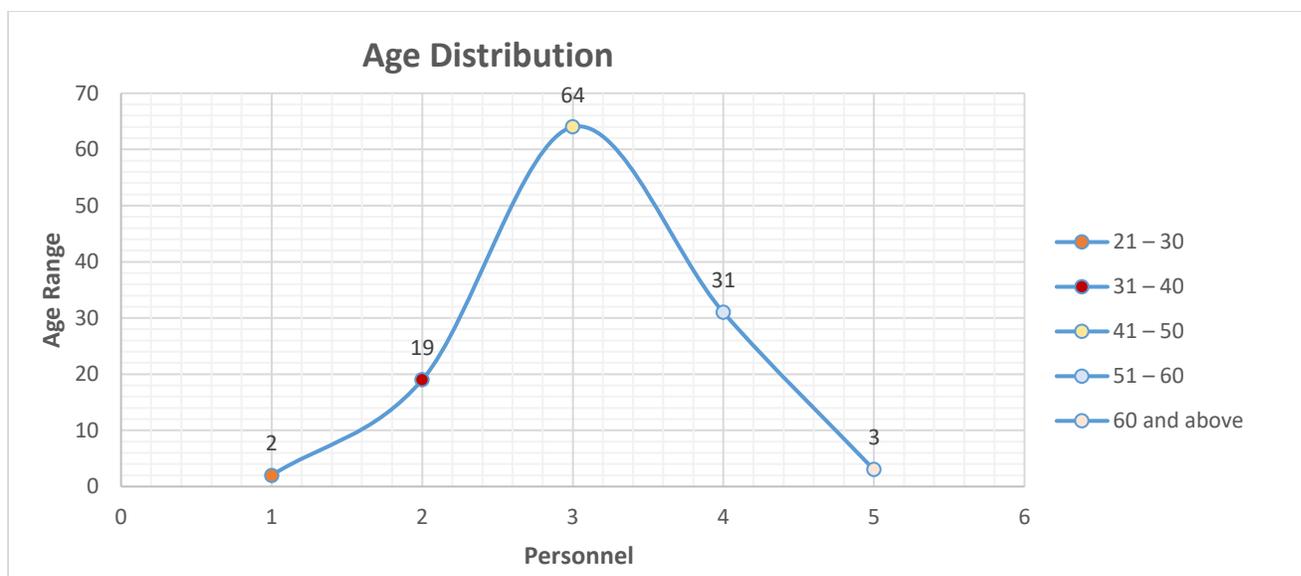


Table 7: Cultural attitudes exhibited by library personnel in the workplace

ITEM	F	X	SD	Decision
Personnel never accepting criticism	119	2.49	0.72	NVIM
Backbiting about the managers or co-workers	119	3.21	0.28	IM
Speaking evil about other employees and/or spreading rumours and grapevine conversations.	119	3.24	0.47	IM
Not being in line with organisational motives, rules and regulations	119	3.03	0.72	IM
Expressing one's views in a very rude manner	119	2.92	0.47	IM
Non-confidential attitudes towards organisational secrets	119	3.09	0.08	IM
Not owning up when a mistake is committed	119	2.96	0.41	IM
Exaggerating co-workers' mistakes in a team work	119	3.22	0.27	
Argumentative and rebellious, fighting for small things and poor in networking and socialisation	119	2.95	0.62	IM
Not complimenting the good works of others but rather trying to pull them down by speaking negatively about them	119	3.10	0.51	IM
Lack of support for professional development	119	3.09	0.58	IM

Denial of one's promotion, entitlement and other benefits attached to one's work	119	2.77	0.79	IM
Lack of supervisor's support	119	2.94	0.48	IM
Organisational policies are not obvious	119	2.29	0.67	NIM
Poor performance at work and poor quality of work	119	2.48	0.60	NVIM
Controlling Information Technology (IT) staff	119	2.66	0.56	IM
Library managers not giving subordinates opportunities to experiment with new technologies	119	2.95	0.55	IM

•Note VIM= Very Important; IM= Important; NIM= Not Important; NVIM= Not Very Important

Table 7 sought to know the kinds of cultural attitudes that are exhibited by library personnel in the workplace. The cultural attitudes accepted ranges from speaking evil about other employees and/or spreading rumours and grapevine conversations (3.24 ± 0.47), backbiting about the managers or co-workers (3.21 ± 0.28), non-compliment of good works of others but rather try to pull them down by speaking negatively about them (3.10 ± 0.51), lack of support for professional development (3.09 ± 0.58) to non-confidential attitudes towards organisational secrets. The implication is that library personnel still exhibit some negative cultural attitudes that negate their readiness for the global library environment. However, the table also reveals that attitudes such as personnel never accepting criticism (2.49 ± 0.72), organisational policies are not obvious (2.29 ± 0.67) and poor performance at work and poor quality of work constitute the cultural attitudes exhibited by library personnel at work. Very significant is speaking evil about other employees and/or spreading rumours and grapevine conversations.

Table 8: Readiness of library personnel for the global library environment

Response	Frequency	%
Certainly yes	38	32%
Probably yes	69	58%
Hard to say	7	5.9%
Probably not	4	3.4%
Certainly not	1	0.8%

Table 8 represents library personnel's assessment of their readiness for the global work environment. The table shows that library personnel's response for Probably Yes was 69 (58%);

followed by Certainly Yes, 38 (32%). Hard to Say, 7 (5.9%); Probably Not 4 (3.4%); and Certainly Not, 1 (0.8%) all recorded very low percentages.

Table 9: Best practices in the global library work environment

ITEM	F	X	SD	Decision
Movement from traditional to modern libraries	119	3.82	0.15	VIM
Online circulations services	119	3.62	0.24	VIM
Expectation of fast retrieval of information	119	3.59	0.24	VIM
Provision of library quality services	119	3.78	0.19	VIM
Library promotion and marketing	119	3.73	0.20	VIM
Self-services news and blog information	119	3.64	0.28	VIM
Collaboration and partnership	119	3.70	0.21	VIM
Social networking	119	3.61	0.24	VIM
Online access to library catalogues, databases and the Internet	119	3.68	0.22	VIM
Online/offline access to digital resources	119	3.70	0.23	VIM
Database searching electronic references	119	3.63	0.23	VIM
Resource sharing including inter-library loans	119	3.82	0.15	VIM
Information literacy programmes	119	3.76	0.18	VIM
User education in new technology	119	3.69	0.21	VIM
Migration to online full-text sources	119	3.71	0.21	VIM
Greater need for staff training	119	3.73	0.19	VIM
Increasing demand for libraries to demonstrate outcomes/impacts in areas of importance to institution.	119	3.66	0.22	VIM

- **Note VIM= Very Important; IM= Important; NIM= Not Important; NVIM= Not Very Important**

Table 9 above reveals that the global library environment is experiencing all the factors listed. The items were all perceived as very important features of the global library work environment. The following were highly rated: Movement from traditional to modern libraries (3.82 ± 0.15), resource sharing including inter-library loans (3.82 ± 0.15), provision of library quality services (3.78 ± 0.19), information literacy programmes (3.76 ± 0.18), library promotion and marketing (3.73 ± 0.20) and greater need for staff training (3.73 ± 0.19). The implication is that the global

library environment is undergoing a lot of professional changes and the cultural attitudes of library personnel have to conform to these changes.

Table 10: Ways of changing the cultural attitudes of library personnel towards readiness for the global library work environment

ITEM	F	X	SD	Decision*
Library managers should take time to observe and uncover the causes of negative attitudes in the workplace.	119	3.72	0.20	VIM
Change must start from the top as leaders serves as role models for the desired cultural attitudes of employees.	119	3.69	0.22	VIM
Policies and procedures must be created and implemented.	119	3.60	0.29	VIM
The hiring process of library personnel should be changed.	119	3.29	0.27	IM
Library personnel should consult rather than communicate.	119	3.60	0.29	VIM
Library managers should use the right metrics for evaluating library personnel performance.	119	3.66	0.23	VIM
Managers should share success with others and praise those who make them happen.	119	3.69	0.28	VIM
Humour should be encouraged in the workplace.	119	3.35	0.23	IM
Positive cultures should be propagated at work.	119	3.61	0.24	VIM
Coworkers should be treated with respect.	119	3.80	0.18	VIM
Employees should be properly engaged.	119	3.71	0.21	VIM
Library personnel should be given time to experiment with potential new initiatives.	119	3.60	0.24	VIM
Leaders at all levels should be selected into various positions based on their attitudes matching desired organisational cultural values.	119	3.55	0.30	VIM
Employees should be allowed to devote some of their work time to pet projects designed to benefit the library but outside of their specific duties.	119	3.32	0.22	IM
A reward system that reinforces the positive cultural attitudes of the library personnel should be instituted.	119	3.63	0.23	VIM

New training and development programmes that support the desired cultural attitudes should be invested in.	119	3.68	0.22	VIM
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•Note VIM= Very Important; IM= Important; NIM= Not Important; NVIM= Not Very Important

Table 10 presents respondents' opinions on ways the cultural attitudes of library personnel can be changed towards getting them ready for the global library work environment. The table reveals that majority of the respondents considered all the listed factors as ways that the cultural attitudes of library personnel could be geared towards the global library work environment. Factors such as treatment of coworkers with respect (3.80 ± 0.18), library managers should take time to observe and uncover the causes of negative attitudes in the workplace (3.72 ± 0.20), proper employee engagement (3.71 ± 0.21), change must start from the top as leaders serve as role models for the desired cultural attitudes of employees (3.69 ± 0.22), and managers should share success with others and praise those who make them happen (3.69 ± 0.28), among others, are revealed as major cultural attitudes that can enhance the readiness of library personnel for global work. This implies that for library personnel to be ready for the global library work environment, all the highlighted attitudes should be imbibed and practised.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study established that cultural attitude is a significant factor for library personnel's readiness for the global library work environment. It is further revealed that library personnel still exhibit some negative cultural attitudinal behaviours in the workplace, such as speaking ill of other employees and/or spreading rumours and grapevine conversations (3.24 ± 0.47), backbiting about their managers or co-workers (3.21 ± 0.28), not complimenting the good works of others but rather trying to pull them down by speaking negatively about them (3.10 ± 0.51), lack of support for professional development (3.09 ± 0.58), and non-confidential attitudes towards organisational secrets. Many studies reveal that the global library work environment is characterised by its movement from the traditional library to a library that uses technological advancement to carry out its services. The study also revealed that there is paucity in the literature on cultural attitudes of library personnel and their readiness for the global library work environment. Thus, this research work will fill the gap created by this paucity.

CONCLUSION

The extent of the readiness of library personnel for the global library work environment depends to a large extent on the right cultural attitudes. Furthermore, library personnel and managers should be ready to let go of some of the obsolete traditional library services still being offered in most Nigerian libraries, which tends to negate the current trends and practices in the global library environment.

Furthermore, it is well accepted that the acceptance of new technologies by library personnel in the global library work environment is primarily determined by the cultural attitudes of library personnel. For library personnel to develop the right cultural attitudes which will ensure their readiness for the global library work environment, library managers must see it as a core responsibility to create an enabling environment where staff will feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas, irrespective of where they find themselves in the organisational cadre. A risk-tolerant culture where managers and staff are not afraid to fail should be encouraged, for failure allows managers to make the most of such a situation. Enough time should be invested by librarians in research and personal development. If library personnel have to embrace new global library technologies and be ready for the global library work environment, this investment has to be paramount on every manager's priority list.

This study is limited due to the fact that the study focused on the cultural attitudes of library personnel and their readiness for the global library work environment in selected libraries in the south-west; therefore, the result may not be generalised to other libraries that were not used in the study. For this reason, the research paper suggests that a further study be carried out to validate the results of its findings with other libraries in Nigeria.

Irrespective of the limitation of the study, the result gives important reasons why library personnel exhibit some cultural attitudes in the workplace. More so, the empirical analysis of this research work contributes to the knowledge in the field of librarianship. The findings of this study are of importance to librarians/library personnel, library management and library users. Its analysis is comprehensive on library personnel's cultural attitudes in relation to their readiness for the global work environment. Upon this, this paper expands and advances the frontier of knowledge in the area of cultural attitudes of library personnel in relation to their readiness for the global library work environment. A practical support document is provided as a result of this study, which provides an opportunity for libraries to adopt the right cultural attitudes in the work environment.

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