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Job Recruitment Variables and Employment of Library Staff in Federal University of Technology (FUTO) and Imo State University (IMSU), Owerri, Libraries, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigated job recruitment variables and employment of library staff in Federal University of Technology and Imo State University, Owerri libraries. The study was guided by four research questions and three hypotheses. The survey design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised of 133 staff of the institutions. The rating scale was used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics comprising of mean and standard deviation. The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The major findings were that qualification, experience, age, salary and state of origin are considered to a high extent in the recruitment of library staff; experience to a high extent influence employment of library staff in the university libraries; qualification does not to a high extent influence employment of library staff in the university libraries; and age does not to a high extent influence employment of library staff in the university libraries. The researchers recommended that: modality should be set by library employers to accommodate fresh graduates of LIS in the employment quota, membership of professional bodies should be emphasized as it will encourage participation in Nigerian Library Association which will help in the growth of the association and much emphasis should not be led on age since it does not have influence on the recruitment of library staff. It has been observed that when emphasis is led on age. it leads to falsification of age.

Introduction

A university library is the “laboratory” that serves the varying needs of the academic community of a university. Simply put, a university library means a place where rich, timely and unfailing educational and research materials are preserved and made accessible to students, lecturers and other categories of researchers in the university communities (Nikki & Yusuf, 2008). A university library is a service institution which revolves around the availability of stock, users and staff. The quality of its service depends on the quality and quantity of staff (Ansari, 2003). To this effect, employing a man or a woman to work in the university library is a goal that is not only indispensable but also pursued in principles subsumed in certain variables which points on the employees’ competency. These variables are called job recruitment variables.

Job recruitment variables have been viewed in various ways, researchers have identified age, educational qualification, years of experience, passion and geographical location as potential recruitment variables. According to Lloyd (2007), other variables include: marital status, and sex. Beile and Adams (2000) observe that languages spoken and minimum salaries are also variables considered before employment of staff in an academic institution. In addition, Mishra, (2009) says that acquiring Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills is a potent variable considered in the recruitment of staff for today’s technology-driven libraries. It can be seen therefore that there are varying job recruitment variables. Also work of Steffen, Lunce, Russel and Leitzau (2004) shows that experience, qualification and age have the highest consideration in the employment of library staff. For the purpose of this research, these three variables by Steffen et al., were chosen to form the focus of the study.

The word experience can be viewed in various perspectives; it is an active involvement in an activity or exposure to events or people over a period of time that leads to an increase in knowledge of skills (*Encarta Dictionary*, 2009). This relates to Mishra’s (2009) proposition that skill acquired is an experience. Moreover, this

skill is gained through being involved in or exposed to something over a period of time. Philosophically, experience is a knowledge acquired through the senses and not through abstract reasoning. Therefore, in this study, experience shall comprise of years of exposure to librarianship skills or abilities acquired, and general contributions to knowledge within the period.

Qualification as another variable means attributes that makes somebody suitable for a particular job or activity but in this study, qualifications refer to the educational requirements, the degrees and certificates obtained in institutions of learning, considered in recruitment of librarians in academic libraries.

Age is the length of time a prospective employee has existed in life, counted from the date of birth of the individual to the present day, and is measured in years. Notwithstanding, special attention is given to the years of eighteen (18) to sixty-five (65), as the civil service working age.

It is based on this background that this study on investigating job recruitment variables and employment of library staff in Federal University Technology, Owerri (FUTO) and Imo State University (IMSU), Owerri libraries is being carried out.

Statement of the Problem

Job recruitment variables are *sine qua non* for employment in libraries. Experience, qualification and age are some of the recruitment variables considered before employing someone to be a staff of an organization. This agrees with the fact that staff recruitment variables examined before offering employment to someone in a university library are not in any way different from the practice in other categories of institutions or organizations. However, in recent times, it seems that these variables are no longer considered when employing library staff. This may have been due to the issues of favouritism and relationships. This scenario may have effect on library services provided. There appears to be no empirical evidence to show how experience, qualification and age have influenced the recruitment of library staff in the university libraries under study. This is why this the study on job

recruitment variables and employment of library staff in Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO) and Imo State University, Owerri (IMSU) is being carried out.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate job recruitment variables and employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries. However, the specific objectives of this study are, to:

1. examine the extent experience influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries.
2. determine the extent qualifications influence employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries.
3. ascertain the extent age influences employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries.

Research Questions

The questions posed to guide this study are:

1. To what extent does experience influence the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries?
2. To what extent do qualifications influence the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries?
3. To what extent does age influence employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated at 0.05 significance level for this study:

H₀₁: The mean response of the respondents on the extent experience influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 20.0

H0₂: The mean response of the respondents on the extent qualification influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 20.0

H0₃: The mean response of the respondents on the extent age influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 15.0

Review of Related Literature

A university library having good collections cannot render best service to its readers without efficient and trained personnel. Thus, for the fulfillment of desired objectives of any library, organized human effort is essential. As a matter of fact, the basic aim of a university library employee should be to place the right information in the hands of the right readers at the right time. They ensure that no reader who requires help either in the choice of books or in getting information from documents should go without it.

The staff who perform the various library functions and services are employed through recruitment processes. Recruitment refers to the process of attracting, screening or selecting a qualified person for a job. It is the process of identifying and hiring the best qualified candidates, for a job vacancy, in a most timely and cost effective manner. It simply narrows down at employment through the selection of the most qualified applicants (Cole, 2002). It is an exercise that has stages. The stages in recruitment includes; searching for candidates by networking, advertising or other methods. The process is meant to not only evaluate the candidate but also to evaluate how the candidate wills it into the organization.

Work experience comprises of years of exposure to work, skills or abilities acquired, and general contribution to knowledge within a said work period. Beile and Adams (2000) saw a positive role in experience during recruitment of prospective employees. Work experience can help develop skills in communication and team work. It also helps a young person to decide if a work area is likely to be what they want. In today's society, employers look very closely at prospective

employees' Curriculum Vitae (CV) to see why they should be employed and not someone else. One of the most valuable benefits of work experience is that in placing a prospective employee in a real life situation, it gives him or her opportunity to work with people for whom the job is their full time occupation. The work of Shaffril and Uli (2010) has supported the research of Jabroun and Balakrishnan (2000) and, Fereshteh and Seyed (2007) who observed that working experience is a significant factor noting that the use of experienced manpower yield good work performance. They claim that the older the employee is, the higher work performance he has. Borghaans and Nelen (2009) who noted that younger employees are less experienced and therefore, has lower work experience compared to older workers. Uzuegbu and Arua (2012) carried out a study on "recruitment variables in the employment of library and information professionals in academic and research libraries in Nigeria". They found that work experience is to a great extent one of the major factors considered during employment of library and information professionals.

Studies have been conducted to find out the nature of relationship between employee qualification and their employment in organization. Uzuegbu and Arua (2012) discovered in their study that qualification is to a great extent one of the major factors considered during employment of library and information professionals. Also Paliwal, (2000) argued that adequate qualification should be checked during staff recruitment particularly, on the professional library staff that is ranked at par with professors, readers and lecturers. Ansari (2003) also agreed that qualification should not be joked with when selecting staff to be employed in the library particularly for the professionals (the librarian cadre at par with professors, readers and lecturers), and semi- professionals (senior, non- librarian cadre). Shaffril and Uli (2010) capped the issue by finding that employees with higher educational qualifications perform better than colleagues who possess lower or no educational qualification.

It is a common knowledge that every applicant to a job must indicate his or her age. More often than not, employers demand for birth certificate, declaration of age and other documents to attest to the age given by prospective employees. It is becoming difficult in varying countries to place the best age bracket that are more favoured when it comes to age and employment. In their study, Gayen, McQuaid and Raeside (2010) made a four-wheel comparison by age and employment status in order to investigate age of workers mostly sought for in a social network environment. Their findings on how that age was influenced by experience showed that the older cadre of the work force was recruited mainly because of their experience while the younger cadre was sought for based on their qualifications. Uzuegbu and Arua (2012) found that age is to a great extent one of the major factors considered during employment of library and information professionals. Shaffril and Uli (2010) discovered that age is an important determinant of work performance of an employee. Based on the person correlation result, most of the employees, in government agricultural agencies in Malaysia are youths and have a wonderful work performance.

Research Methodology

The survey research design is adopted for this study. The population of study is 133. This is made of 2 staff from the personnel department, 33 professional and 76 para professional staff of Federal University of Technology, Owerri Library and 2 staff of the personnel department, 15 professional and 5 para professional staff of Imo State University Library. The instrument that was used for data collection was the rating scale. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics comprising of mean and standard deviation while the test of significance for the hypotheses was tested at 0.05 alpha level using t-test statistical tool. **Decision Rule:** If $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$, reject null (H_0) and accept the alternative (H_A)

Data Analyses

Research Question 1: To what extent does experience influence the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries?

Table 1: Extent Experiences Influence the Employment of the Library Staff

S/n	Question Items	\bar{X}	<i>S</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1.	Candidates must show evidence of previous work experience with other libraries	3.09	0.96	HE
2.	Candidates must show research publications in Librarianship	2.39	1.09	LE
3.	Evidence of competence in specific areas of librarianship	2.01	0.95	LE
4.	A candidates with evidence of ICT knowledge will have added advantage	3.02	0.92	HE
5.	Evidence of subject background e.g. English, Economics etc	3.01	1.02	HE
6.	Activities in professional association's activities	2.73	1.13	HE
7.	Candidates must be fresh graduates from LIS school	1.77	1.02	LE
8.	Ability to carry out task with less supervision	2.88	0.87	HE
Overall Mean		20.90	2.82	

Table 1 presented the mean and standard deviations scores on the extent experiences influence the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries. Data in the table revealed that all the items to a high extent influence experience on the employment of library staff, except items 2, 3 and 7. Items 2, 3 and 7 say: “candidates must show research publications in librarianship”, “evidence of competence in specific areas of librarianship”, and “candidates must be fresh graduates from LIS school”. From the table, the mean of the influences (candidates must show evidence of previous work experience with other libraries; candidates with evidence of ICT knowledge will have added advantage; evidence of subject background; activities in professional association; and ability to carry out task with less supervision) approximate to 3.00 (to the nearest whole number), which indicate high extent. This shows that majority of the respondents indicated that “evidence of previous work experience”, “ICT knowledge”, “subject background”, “professional association” and “ability to work independently” to a high extent influence employment of library staff.

Research Question 2: To what extent do qualifications influence the employment of library staff in FUTU and IMSU libraries?

Table 2: Extent Qualifications Influence the Employment of the Library Staff

S/n	Items	\bar{X}	<i>S</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1.	Bachelor of Library Science	3.09	0.96	HE
2.	Candidates must possess master's degree in LIS	3.08	1.02	HE
3.	Candidates must possess A Ph.D in LIS	1.74	0.86	LE
4.	Certificate in ICT	3.04	0.83	HE
5.	Diploma in Library Science	1.90	0.98	LE
6.	Registered Librarian	2.74	1.00	HE
7.	Evidence of membership of professional association in librarianship.	1.70	0.97	LE
8.	Additional qualifications in areas other than Librarianship	2.21	1.05	LE
Overall Mean		19.50	2.72	

Table 2 presented the mean and standard deviations scores on the extent qualifications influence the employment of library staff in FUTU and IMSU libraries. Data in the table revealed that all the items to a high extent are the influence of qualification on the employment of library staff, except items 3, 5, 7 and 8. From the table the mean of the influences of Bachelor of Library Science; Candidates must possess master's degree in LIS; Certificate in ICT and registered librarian approximate to 3.00 (to the nearest whole number), which indicate high extent. This shows that majority of the respondents indicated that they to a high extent influence employment of library staff.

Research Question 3: To what is extent of influence of age as a variable on employment of library staff in FUTU and IMSU libraries?

Table 3: Extent age Influence the Employment of Library the Staff

S/n	Items	\bar{X}	<i>S</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1.	Candidates can be any age between 18 and 49	2.92	0.28	HE
2.	Candidates must be within a chosen age bracket	2.55	0.30	HE
3.	Candidates must present evidence of date of	3.11	0.28	HE

	birth.			
4.	Retired but not tired people are employed	1.61	0.47	LE
5.	Ability to work not minding the age	1.56	0.48	LE
6.	Age being seen as a thing of the mind	1.83	0.42	LE
Overall		13.58	0.94	

Table 3 presented the mean and standard deviations scores on the extent age influence the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries. Data in the table revealed that all the items to a high extent are the influence of age on the employment of library staff, except items 4, 5 and 6. Items 1, 2 and 3 say: “candidates can be any age between 18 and 49”, “candidate must be within a chosen age bracket”, and “candidate must present evidence of date of birth”. From the table the mean of the influences (“candidates can be any age between 18 and 49”, “candidate must be within a chosen age bracket”, and “candidate must present evidence of date of birth”) approximate to 3.00 (to the nearest whole number), which indicate high extent. This shows that majority of the respondents indicated that “candidates can be any age between 18 and 49”, “candidate must be within a chosen age bracket”, and “candidate must present evidence of date of birth” to a high extent influence employment of library staff.

H₀₁: The mean response of the respondents on the extent experience influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 20.0

Table 4: Tabulated t-value of the Extent Experience Influence the Employment of Library Staff in FUTO and IMSU Libraries.

N	\bar{X}	S	μ	t_{Cal}	df	t_{Tab}	Decision
132	20.90	2.82	20.0	3.65	131	1.65	Reject H ₀₁

From table 4 the calculated t-value is 3.65, while the tabulated t-value is 1.65. Since, the calculated t-value is greater than the tabulated t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the mean response of the respondents on the extent experience influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries

is significantly greater than the expected mean of 20.0. This means that experience to a high extent influence employment of library staff in the university libraries.

H0₂: The mean response of the respondents on the extent qualification influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 20.0

Table 5: Tabulated t-value of the Extent Qualifications Influence the Employment of Library Staff in FUTO and IMSU Libraries.

N	\bar{X}	S	μ	t_{Cal}	df	t_{Tab}	Decision
132	19.50	2.72	20.0	-2.10	131	1.65	Accept H ₀₂

From table 5 the calculated t-value is -2.10, while the tabulated t-value is 1.67. Since, the calculated t-value is less than the tabulated t-value, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 level of significance and 131 degree of freedom. Therefore, the mean response of the respondents on the extent qualification influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 20.0. This means that qualification do not to a high extent influence employment of library staff in the university libraries.

H0₃: The mean response of the respondents on the extent age influences the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 15.0

Table 6: Tabulated t-value of the Extent age Influence the Employment of Library Staff in FUTO and IMSU Libraries

N	\bar{X}	S	μ	t_{Cal}	df	t_{Tab}	Decision
132	13.58	0.94	15.00	-17.29	131	1.65	Accept H ₀₃

From table 6 the calculated t-value is -17.29, while the tabulated t-value is 1.67. Since, the calculated t-value is less than the tabulated t-value, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 level of significance and 131 degree of freedom. Therefore, the mean response of the respondents on the extent age influences the

employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries is not significantly greater than the expected mean of 15.0. This means that age do not to a high extent influence employment of library staff in the University libraries.

Discussion of Findings

Extent Experiences Influence the Employment of Library Staff in FUTO and IMSU Libraries

The findings of the study on the extent experiences influence the employment of library staff in FUTO and IMSU libraries revealed that some factors of experience to a high extent influence the employment of library staff. Those experience factors that influence to a high extent the employment of library staff are “evidence of previous work experience”, “ICT knowledge”, “subject background”, “professional association” and “ability to work independently”. The test of hypothesis revealed that even though some factors of experience are considered to a low extent in the employment of library staff, experience significantly influence it. These findings are in line with the findings of Uzuegbu and Arua (2012) who found that work experience is to a great extent one of the major factors considered during employment of library and information professionals. Beile and Adams (2000) saw a positive role in experience during recruitment of prospective employees because work experience can help develop skills in communication and team work.

Extent Qualifications Influence the Employment of Library Staff in FUTO and IMSU Libraries

The findings of the study on the extent qualifications influence the employment of library staff in the FUTO and IMSU libraries revealed that some factors of qualification to a high extent influence the employment of library staff. Those qualification factors that influence to a high extent the employment of library staff are “Bachelor of Library Science”, “Candidates must possess master’s degree in LIS”; “Certificate in ICT” and “registered librarian”. The test of hypothesis revealed that even though some factors of qualification are considered to a high extent in the employment of library staff, qualification itself does not significantly

influence it. These findings are not in line with the findings of Eckard, Rosener and Scipps-Hoekstra (2014) and Uzuegbu and Arua (2012) who found that qualification is to a great extent one of the major factors considered during employment of library and information professionals. Also Paliwal, (2000) argued that adequate qualification should be checked during staff recruitment particularly, on the professional library staff that is ranked at par with professors, readers and lecturers. Ansari (2003) also agreed that qualification should not be joked with when selecting staff to be employed in the library particularly for the professionals (the librarian cadre at par with professors, readers and lecturers), and semi- professionals (senior, non- librarian cadre). Shaffril and Uli (2010) capped the issue by finding that employees with higher educational qualifications perform better than colleagues who possess lower or no educational qualification.

Extent Age Influences the Employment of Library Staff in FUTO and IMSU Libraries

The findings of the study on the extent age influence the employment of library staff in the FUTO and IMSU libraries revealed that some factors relating to age to a high extent influence the employment of library staff. Those age related factors that to a high extent influence the employment of library staff are “candidates can be any age between 18 and 49”, “candidate must be within a chosen age bracket”, and “candidate must present evidence of date of birth”. This shows that age is not a factor considered in the employment of library staff. The test of hypothesis revealed that age does not significantly influence the employment of library staff. These findings are contrary to the findings of Uzuegbu and Arua (2012) who found that age is to a great extent one of the major factors considered during employment of library and information professionals. Shaffril and Uli (2010) discovered that age is an important determinant of work performance of an employee.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Recruitment of efficient staff is a prerequisite for effective service delivery in libraries. Different categories of staff require different experiences, qualifications and age, hence the consideration of these during the recruitment process. The results of data analyses showed that some of the recruitment variables on their own do not significantly influence employment of library staff but they are necessary factors to be considered during the recruitment process.

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher recommends that:

1. It is a fact that experience is important in job efficiency however, modality should be set by library employers to accommodate fresh graduates of LIS in the employment quota.
2. For one to be employed in the professional cadre, he must possess the necessary qualifications. Membership of professional bodies should be emphasized as it will encourage participation in Nigerian Library Association which will help in the growth of the association.
3. Much emphasis should not be led on age since it does not have influence on the recruitment of library staff. It has been observed that when emphasis is led on age. it leads to falsification of age.

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