

CRITICAL THINKING AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS IN GOVERNMENT OWNED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

The study investigated critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South South Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey using questionnaire to collect data. A total of 57 librarians was picked from (4) four university libraries in Nigeria. A total of 57 questionnaires were distributed only 48 were retrieved. Descriptive statistics, (mean and percentage) were used for analysis. A mean score of 2.5 and above and a percentage score of 50% were considered for decision making. The study revealed that the indices of critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria are interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, inferring, and self-control respectively. The study further affirmed that the extent of critical thinking to librarian's job performance was high. The study recommends that librarians should imbibe the culture of critical thinking to perform their daily task more effectively and also librarians should collaborate together by thinking critically in order to achieve the mission of the university library.

Keywords: Critical thinking, Job performance, Librarians, University libraries, Nigeria

Introduction

It has long been acknowledged that university libraries serve as the "hearts" of their respective institutions. The libraries' role was to assist the teaching, learning, research, and cultural development goals of their parent bodies through the establishment and upkeep of standard books, periodicals, and audio-visual collections and services. The development of critical thinking abilities by librarians is necessary for this to be feasible. Since critical thinking enables librarians to assess the material they are presented with and make better decisions, it is essential to the professional and civic lives of all university library employees (Facione, 2019). Additionally, inquiry is based on critical thinking (Abrami et al., 2008). Without using critical

thinking, it is impossible to look into claims, assess the reliability of the evidence, or engage in any other inquiry-based activity. In one's social and personal life, critical thinking is a strength and a source of energy (Siti Zubaidah, 2010). The application of critical thinking to the work ethics of the university libraries enhances their job performance.

Job performance indicates how they contribute to the overall success of the university library. Stated differently, job performance is the extent to which workers satisfy the necessary level of organizational requirements. It is difficult to define acceptable librarian behaviors in many university libraries, despite the consensus on the complex character of librarian performance (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). The performance of librarians is intimately linked to their disposition for critical thinking. For librarians, critical thinking and performance are influenced by intelligence, rational dedication, and desire to receive trustworthy information. It is in light of the above that this title critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South, Nigeria are imperative.

Statement of the problem

Librarians are trained to assist the public in identifying correct and trustworthy information through critical thinking, and they are experts in information literacy. Letting rid of our preconceptions and being open to new ideas and viewpoints are necessary for critical thinking. The most enjoyable aspect of this process is picking up fresh knowledge and perspectives on the world. By impacting their work performance, using external resources that goes beyond our own beliefs and thinking by allows us to comprehend the world more broadly. Performance on the job is the capacity to work within a specified time by applying critical thinking.

It has been observed that research topics on critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries exist, but no study has been carried out on critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South, Nigeria hence the need for this study.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to find out the indices for critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. To find out the indices associated with critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria.
2. To find out the extent to which critical thinking influence job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria

Research Questions

1. What are the indices associated with critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria?
2. To what extent does critical thinking influence job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria?

Literature review

In order to establish a firm framework for the study, the researcher critically analyzed literature done on the following area: librarians and the university libraries, critical thinking and job performance

Librarians and the university Library

University libraries are libraries attached to tertiary institutions for the purpose of reading, learning and research. The mission of the university libraries is to ensure the mandate of the university is established. Under the new regime, university libraries and librarians have taken on the roles of knowledge gateways and guides. In response, university libraries and librarians have adopted a new service model, according to Akintunde (2004). The role of documentarian and archivist has changed to that of a knowledge portal. Additionally, the role of the university librarian has changed from that of an all-knowing knowledge keeper to that of a "guide" on the

side. He says that because of the abundance of freely available data, the librarian builds portals for his clients and instructs them on how to use the World Wide Web (www).

Because of this, librarians are still expected to assist users in finding and accessing information because they are search experts and information specialists in this specific scenario. University libraries put themselves in a solid position as the highest caliber of social service by offering consumers a significant degree of comfort (Gothenburg 2010). Igwe (2010) came to the conclusion that access to a vast array of information resources and chances for interactive communication are offered by university libraries. The primary goal of providing access to information and knowledge has not changed, but the methods, instruments, and procedures have experienced significant modifications. The community that surrounds the university library is an essential component of it.

Additionally, university libraries make information more accessible, which gives rise to new knowledge that is created and made available to everyone. Understanding is the cornerstone of all aspects of life. When this idea is examined, it becomes clear that knowledge is formed when people take in, process, and integrate information. Knowledge is also essential for the development of society (McCallum, 2013). University libraries are vital information sources that contribute significantly to the generation of new knowledge. These establishments are essential to the birth, growth, and maintenance of knowledge societies.

Critical thinking and job performance

Using critical thinking abilities while offering their users effective services is one of the many strategies librarians utilize to enhance their users service and job performance. Academic librarians need to be critical thinkers. Critical thinking is a non-obsessive, objective, and in-depth way of thinking that guarantees excellent services to library users. To deliver quality services, librarians must be able to think rationally and multidimensionally in order to explain difficult situations (Campelia & Tate, 2019).

Critical thinking is important because it is a general-domain thinking talent that encourages creativity through introspection and serves to validate our beliefs and methods of

living. Furthermore, by teaching one to analyze logically and methodically, critical thinking enhances communication and presentation abilities (University of the People, 2021). In critical thinking, having knowledge is insufficient; you also need to be able to examine facts and legitimate problems in a way that makes sense of the knowledge you already possess (Wilson, 2017). This skill will enable one to ask the appropriate questions that promote greater comprehension and meaningful interpersonal relationships (Rayan, 2017).

A systematic departure from logic, the best possible rational, reasonable thought and behavior, is referred to by specialists as a "cognitive error" or inability to think properly (Dobelli, 2013). By understanding how the brain functions and deliberately attempting some of the approaches that lead to the acquisition of a variety of practical mental talents, this error can be avoided (Albrecht, 2009). One of the most crucial cognitive abilities that can be acquired via deliberate thought practice is critical thinking, which helps people make positive changes in their personal and professional lives (Sutour, 2020).

The primary goal of education in the 20th century is to teach students to think (Dewey, 1939). The focus now lies on developing the students' critical thinking abilities rather than just providing them with facts and substance. Almost everywhere in the globe, university libraries and librarians are refocusing on helping users develop their higher mental processes, which include problem-solving and critical thinking (Ashraah et al., 2012). Their overall work performance at the university libraries will therefore improve as a result.

The extent to which employees fulfill the necessary demands of the organization is known as job performance. It is difficult to define acceptable employee behaviors in various sectors, despite the general agreement that employee performance is multidimensional (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). Task performance and contextual performance are the two domains in which academic studies evaluate the work performance of librarians. Employee leadership responsibilities, duties, and activities that support the mission of the library are referred to as task performance (Campelia & Tate, 2019). Employees' willingness to assist coworkers, work together, and feel accountable for finishing the task are all factors in contextual performance (Coleman & Borman, 2000).

Critical thinking dispositions are closely related to librarian's performance. For librarians, intelligence, rational commitment and willingness for reliable information influence critical thinking and performance. Librarians use critical thinking skills in clinical settings to provide evidence-based quality patient care and improve performance. Studies show critical thinking skills are significantly associated with librarian's competence and clinically competent patient care (Ryan & Tatum, 2012). In addition, the librarian's competence of librarians who use critical thinking skills increases directly. This study was conducted to reveal the relationship and interaction between librarianship practice and librarians critical thinking skills and their performance.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey using questionnaire to collect data. A total of 57 librarians was picked from (4) four university libraries in Nigeria. A total of 57 questionnaires were distributed only 48 were retrieved. Descriptive statistics, (mean and percentage) were used for analysis. A mean score of 2.5 and above and a percentage score of 50% were considered for decision making.

Population of the study

Table 1

S/N	Higher Education in Nigeria	Students
1	Enugu State University Library	14
2	Delta State University Abraka Library	17
3	Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun Library	13
4	University of Dela Agbor Library	4
	Total	48

Table 1 depicts the population of the study, Enugu State University Library has 14 librarians, Delta State University Abraka library has 17 librarians, Federal University of

Petroleum Resources Effurun Library has 13 librarians while University of Dela Agbor Library has 4 librarians respectively.

Table 2

Data Analysis and Presentations

Indices of critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria

S/N	Items Statement	A	SA	D	SD	X
1	Interpreting	22	21	4	1	3.3
2	Analyzing	21	24	3	0	3.3
3	Evaluating	18	29	0	1	3.3
4	Inferring	31	11	2	4	3.3
5	Self-control	10	24	2	12	2.6

Table 2 above shows the indices of critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria as interpreting (3.3), analyzing (3.3), evaluating (3.3), inferring (3.3) and self-control (2.6) respectively.

Table 3

To what extent does critical thinking influence job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria

KEY: VHE: Very high extent, HE: high extent, **ME: moderate extent**, LE: low extent, **VLE: very low extent**, NE: No extent

S/N	Items Statement	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	X
1	Critical thinking spur librarians performance	23	23	2	0	3.4
2	Critical thinking enhances	23	24	1	0	3.4

	librarians performance					
3	Critical thinking is used to measure librarians performance	20	22	3	3	3.2
4	Critical thinking influences librarians skills	27	16	1	4	3.3
5	Critical thinking triggers librarians job satisfaction	18	16	6	8	2.9

Table 3 indicates the extent to which critical thinking influence job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South Nigeria as critical thinking spur librarians performance (3.4), Critical thinking enhances librarians performance (3.4), Critical thinking is used to measure librarians performance (3.2), Critical thinking influences librarians skills (3.3) and Critical thinking triggers librarians job satisfaction (2.9). This shows that the extent of critical thinking to librarians job performance was high.

Recommendation

The study recommends thus:

1. Librarians should imbibe the culture of critical thinking to perform their daily task more effectively
2. Librarians should collaborate together by thinking critically in order to achieve the mission of the university library

Conclusion

Critical thinking is an essential cognitive process for developing and using knowledge. It can be used to solve problems and make decisions in social, clinical, ethical, managerial, or political fields. Since critical thinking is useful in analyzing complex data, evaluating situations and actions, and implementing the most appropriate actions, it is recognized as an essential need

for problem solving and effective decision making in all stages of life. Lack of critical thinking, in addition to harming personal and social life, can also harm professional life. Every day, librarians face a complex challenge in searching, retrieving, and selecting through vast sources of information to meet users' very specific information needs. With the adoption of critical thinking by librarians in the university libraries, their job performance is sure to increase drastically.

This study examined critical thinking and job performance of librarians in government owned university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Our results can increase the awareness of librarians and those involved in library education to adopt appropriate measures to change and modify the structures and programs. Also, the areas mentioned in this study can be used for further investigations.

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