

INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS; LEADERSHIP QUALITIES ON THE PRODUCTIVITY OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS IN NIGER STATE

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ABSTRACT:

The major purpose of this study was to determine the influence of University librarians' leadership qualities on the productivity of professional librarians in Niger State. In carrying out this study three (3) research questions were posed. The entire population which consisted of all the twenty-two (22) professional in the two University libraries were used. These University libraries are: IBB Library Complex of Federal University of Technology Minna and Abubakar Gimba Library of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai respectively. The Instrument used for this study was questionnaire, Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) was used to analyze data) The major findings of the study showed that for the University Librarians to promote productivity among professional librarians, they need to be intelligent, calculative, benevolent, physically fit, democratic and compassionate. The study also revealed that University librarians in Niger State should be made to go for in-service training in library administration. That decision that will affect staff directly should be taken after joint deliberations with them.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership qualities with reference to the university libraries if the way a university librarian uses his authority, power and position to influence the

behaviour of staff in order to achieve the libraries objectives. The method the university librarian uses to provide direction, guide group activities, inspire others, obtain compliance and ensure that the group activities are attained is termed leadership qualities.

According to Hills (2006) a leader has power and authority over others and the way and manner he or she exercises if for the purpose of influencing others behaviour is termed leadership qualities. In each of the two university libraries, the University librarian is the one designated as the apex leader. In agreement with this statement. Mullins (2007) stated that the University Librarian is the one who leads the professional librarians in the various libraries activities, all geared toward the achievement of the goals of the library.

As a leader, the university librarian is concerned with the supervision of staff and the improvement of the productivity of librarians. Others process of giving, directing, advising and helping the professional librarians to grow professionally and to be more productive.

As the University Librarian performs the duties of directing and supervising the professional librarians he or she exhibits leadership qualities on them. Mullins (2007) defined leadership qualities as those behaviour the university librarian exhibits as he leads his staff. The perception by the professional librarians' leadership qualities could affect the professional librarians' productivity negatively or positively. The Author further concluded that the success or failure of the professional librarians in carrying out their duties is dependent on the university librarians' leadership qualities. The term leadership qualities and leadership styles are closely related and are sometimes used interchangeably. Shatle and stodgily (2005) pointed out that in each leadership style there are leadership qualities peculiar to it. Examples of these qualities are:- intelligence, physical appearance, knowledge judgment and so many others. Newell, (2004) slated that in the past three leadership styles were identified thus: the autocratic or authoritarian, the democratic or participative and the laissez – faire or free rein. Current conceptions of leadership in educational organizations attempt to pattern leadership styles along the lines of consideration (autocratic) and initiating structure (autocratic). In consideration (democratic) leadership styles, the leader exhibits qualities such as encouraging professional librarians. Encourages initiative, emphasizes cooperation equal rights, justice, group activist, understanding, feeling for one another and consideration for each others needs. In consideration democratic leadership style, the university librarians and professional librarians work together cooperatively as a team towards achieving

the desired goals. It encourages positive leadership among staff, promotes creative innovations in solving problems, friendliness and freedom of expression. According to Newell (2004), the University Librarian who employs the initiation structure (autocratic), uses such qualities as dictating to the professional librarians of what ought to be done or avoided. He commands and expects compliance. He or she is dogmatic and positive, leads by the ability to give and also withhold rewards as well as punishment. In addition to the above attributes, pertomode, (1998) further stated that the university librarian who employs the initiating structure (autocratic) sees himself or herself as possessing all knowledge and also having all answers to all problems. He uses fiat approach, where the subordinates can neither ask questions nor seek clarification or endeavour to counter opinion or orders given. He or she is a "produce or perish" – type of leader. This type of leadership is seen by Fielder (2006) as undesirable because it leads to dictatorship. It discourages initiative, experimentation, leads to low productivity of professional librarians; and generally creates a great social distance between professional librarians and the university librarians. Thus, fostering an uncondusive environment for the improvement and achievement of set goals.

In the two University Libraries in Niger State, one should reasonably assume that the leadership qualities of university librarians will have a direct impact on the productivity of professional librarians under them. Thus, the aim of this research is to conduct a critical study of the relationship between the leadership qualities of the university librarians as they affect the productivity of professional librarians in the two university libraries in Niger State of Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to find out the influence of university librarians' leadership qualities on the productivity of professional librarians, in the two university libraries in Niger State. Specifically, the study was designed to:

1. Find out the relationships that exist between university librarians' leadership qualities and the productivity of professional librarians in the two university libraries.
2. Find out factors that hinder positive leadership qualities among the two university librarians in Niger State
3. Find out strategies for promoting good leadership qualities among the two university librarians in Niger State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What relationships exist between university librarians' leadership qualities and the productivity of professional librarians?
2. What factors hinder positive leadership qualities among university librarians in Niger State?
3. What strategies could be employed for promoting good leadership qualities among university librarians in Niger State?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Koont, et al., (1999) pointed out that the earliest studies of leadership were based on attempt to identify the trait qualities of leaders. These studies were based in parts on the assumption that human beings could be divided into two groups: the leaders and the followers. Therefore, leaders must possess certain qualities not possessed by followers.

Nwachukwu (2002) assumes that, if a set of traits or qualities could be identified, people could be trained to develop these qualities. Some of the traits considered important are intelligence, appearance, knowledge, judgment, initiative, honesty, truthfulness, open mindedness, courage, perseverance, social skill, age, socio-economic background, etc.

Ominyi (2009) stated that qualities of a good leadership include: sincerity tolerance, self-control proficiency and trendiness.

This list of qualities of a good leader is by no means exhaustive, it is however shown that quality traits are important in leadership effectiveness but are not the only factors that accounts for leadership effectiveness.

In the University Library setting, the professional librarian's productivity is affected by the leadership style of University Librarian Ukeji (1991)

According to Denga, (1999) university librarian could vary his style to suit the situation he finds himself in the nature of the group he or she is leading and his or her own personality will to a large extent, determine the productivity of is professional librarians.

Ukeji (1991) is of the view that, more important perhaps, is the overall satisfaction of the organizational participants, for it is said that, the end of any government is the governed; of course, the level of achievement of any organization or even a nation is a significant measure of its' leadership effectiveness.

Autocratic leadership style is one of the leadership styles that impede positive leadership qualities because it is generally characterized by excessive use of power and dominion by the leader. He is the only one that should give orders and such orders should be obeyed with least resistance. The tone of the university library is full of pretence, fear and strictness to law and order. In the view of Enoh (2002), an autocratic leader emphasizes the achievement of task at the expense of human considerations.

Mullins (2007) asserts that the university Librarian who subscribes to this style determines library policy alone and assigns duties to professional librarians without consulting them. Directives are issued out and must be carried out without questions and in the prescribed manner. The disadvantages of this style of leadership lies in the fact that, where people are coerced, controlled, directed and threatened individual initiative may be stifled and self-motivation may be discouraged. The leader is not accountable to anyone in the University Library, he or she does what he or she likes, this could lead to low moral among both professional librarians which in the long run becomes the root cause of strikes, riots, disaffection, brain drain and staff turn over. Overall productivity will be at a low ebb.

Laissez-faire leadership style is another factor impeding leadership quality in academic libraries. Laissez-faire is a French expression which literally means "Let people do what they wish". It is noted for carelessness and lack of concern attitude on the part of the leader. It is popularly named "I don't care attitude of leadership". The leader seems not to care nor is concerned with what goes on in the University Library. Every body is allowed to do what pleased him or her. Library activities are left to go on at the mercy and conscience of the subordinates. In this situation, order may hardly be achieved (Ede, 2000).

Democratic leadership style will be used as a strategy for improving good leadership qualities. It is a style of leadership in which there is high consideration of human factors in an organization as being important in the achievement of

organizational goals. Mullins (1996) and Edem (1998) in their contributions explained that, democratic style of leadership involves friendship, mutual trust, respect, warmth and rapport between leadership and subordinates. They further explained that democratic rule supports their employees' ideas and frequently allow them to participate in decision making.

According to Mgbodile (1995) libraries under democratic leadership are more related and committed to the achievement of the objectives of the organization since the style is built on the belief that individuals will give their support and cooperation to the decision, which they took active part.

Research Method

Survey research method was used to carry out this study hence it involves population of professional librarians in two (2) Universities in Niger State. Aina (2002) asserted that survey research involves a systematic and comprehensive collection of opinion, attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviours of a part or all of a population and described the feelings.

Federal University of Technology, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai in Niger State was settled as the study area. The target population for this study consist of the twenty-two (22) professional librarians in the two (2) University Libraries in Niger State. According to Nworgu (2006) for some studies, the group of items to which the study relates (i.e. the population) may be too small to warrant the inclusion of all of them in the study. Based on this no sampling of this population was carried out. The entire population was therefore adopted and used because of the smallness of the population size. The instrument before use was face – validated by presenting it to three senior colleagues in the field of library and information science. These experts were requested to examine the clarity of expression used as well as the appropriateness of language. The researchers administered and collected the questionnaire from the respondents. Thus there was a 100% rate of returns of the questionnaires distributed. The data for the study was presented in tables and analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

All the 22 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the professional librarians were retrieved and so there was 100% success. The data from all the

retrieved copies of questionnaire are hereby presented using simple descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation.

Table 1: Relationship that exist between university librarians' leadership qualities and the professional librarians' productivity

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		X	SD	Decision
1.	Accommodating, that is, ready to change easily to deal with & easy to be contacted	4.12	0.85	Agreed
2	Well adjusted, socially, psychologically, mentally and emotionally	4.0	0.75	Agreed
3	Flexible and easily adoptable to new changes or conditions	3.86	0.64	Agreed
4	Attentive and alert to the library situation or issues	4.04	0.76	Agreed
5	Caring and considerate to staff issues	4.21	0.77	Agreed
6	Very cooperative and helpful to subordinates	3.99	0.69	Agreed
7	Democratic, that is allows the opinion of the majority to prevail over his	3.66	0.89	Agreed
8	Dependable in handling crucial issues and has self control	3.90	0.83	Agreed
9	Willing to bear things with subordinates (patience)	4.07	0.70	Agreed
10	Changes his opinion easily to suit new needs or conditions (flexibility)	4.17	0.89	Agreed
11	Deals fairly with subordinates (impartial)	4.13	0.72	Agreed
12	Freely interacts socially with others to achieve a goal	3.96	0.88	Agreed
13	Takes first initiatives when the situation demands	3.38	0.96	Disagreed
14	Has good knowledge about the leadership of university libraries	4.14	0.72	Agreed
15	Has good behaviour, character & character	4.12	0.85	Agreed

	& usually acts right (immorality)			
16	Could wait patiently or calmly for something over time	4.12	0.85	Agreed
17	Has ability to continue firmly in a course of action despite opposition	3.86	0.64	Agreed
18	Generally popular or favoured among his subordinates	4.3	0.59	Agreed
19	Avoids risks taking, so thinks wisely before taking any action	3.86	0.64	Agreed
20	Uses very simply and clear language to communicate with staff	4.04	0.76	Agreed
21	Has self confidence when doing things	3.66	0.89	Agreed
22	Sensitive to teachers problems	4.17	0.72	Agreed

Note: Cut –off point =3.5, N + 128,, X = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation

An analysis of the responses presented in table 1 about shows that both university librarians and professional librarians have agreed that the productivity of professional librarians will be highest when the university librarians adopts and uses the above qualities as contained in items 1 to 27. All the items have received a mean score of above 3.50 which is the cut off point.

The analysis has shown that there is significant relationship between the leadership qualities of university librarians and the overall productivity of professional librarians. Productivity of professional librarians' will be highest when these qualities are adopted by university librarians.

Table 2: Factors that impede positive leadership qualities among university librarians in Niger state

		X	SD	Decision
1.	Inability to command respect for his office	4.12	0.85	Agreed
2	Inability to inspire professional librarians action	4.0	0.75	Agreed
3	Inability to organize and coordinate professional librarians activities	3.86	0.64	Agreed
4	Inability to appraise and get along with others	4.04	0.76	Agreed
5	Inability to get things done	4.21	0.77	Agreed

6	Inability to motive subordinates	3.99	0.69	Agreed
7	Inability to solve complex problems of staff	3.66	0.89	Agreed
8	Reluctance to reward hard work	3.90	0.83	Agreed
9	Inability to communicate clearly and simply	4.07	0.70	Agreed
10	Inability to delegate duties based on competencies	4.17	0.89	Agreed
11	Inability to forgive wrong doing	4.13	0.72	Agreed
12	Absenteeism from office by university librarians	3.96	0.88	Agreed
13	Aggressive use of power and authority	3.38	0.96	Agreed
14	Poor enumeration as well as denial of certain rights and privileges of professional librarians	4.14	0.72	Agreed
15	Application of strict rules for use library of equipment and materials	4.12	0.85	Agreed
16	Sub-charging staff members for accidental damages in the library equipment	4.12	0.85	Agreed
17	Insisting on meeting deadlines on task performance at all cost	3.86	0.64	Agreed

Cut-off point = 3.5, N = 128, X = Mean of responses, SD = Standard Deviation.

Analysis of the mean responses of respondents in respect of the factors that could impede positive leadership qualities among university librarians in Niger State shows that: all the respondents have agreed that the factors listed above in table 2 from number 1 to 17 could impede positive leadership qualities amount university librarians, since all the items have a mean response greater than 3.5 cut off point in responses.

Table 3: Strategies that could be employed for promoting leadership qualities among University Librarians in Niger State

		X	SD	Decision
1.	The University Librarians should use simple, clear & precise language for communication	4.49	0.69	Agreed
2	University Librarians should give equal opportunities to every professional librarians	4.21	0.83	Agreed

3	University Librarians should hold regular meeting with staff before decisions are made	4.72	0.57	Agreed
4	University Librarians should give rewards to encourage productivity	4.604.53	0.56	Agreed
5	University Librarians should show concern to the needs and welfare of professional librarians	4.52	0.70	Agreed
6	The University Librarians should listen and accept other professional librarians opinion instead of imposing task and methods on subordinates	4.51	0.70	Agreed
7	The University Librarians should strive to obtain the cooperative of his subordinate without coercion	4.10	0.69	Agreed
8	The university librarians should avoid taking actions based on rumours	4.34	0.87	Agreed
9	The university librarians should lead by showing good examples.	4.34	0.85	Agreed

Cut-off point – 3.5, N = 128, X = Mean of responses, SD = Standard Deviation.

An analysis of the responses presented in table 3 above shows that all the respondents have agreed that all the strategies listed in table 3 from number 1 to 9, are necessary for promoting good leadership qualities among university librarians.

Respondents have strongly agreed with the strategies as listed in number 3,4,5,6 & 7 respectively.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

The findings of the study showed that on the relationship between leadership qualities and productivity of professional librarians, the study has shown that professional librarians in Niger State university librarians will be more productive when the 22 leadership qualities listed in table 1 are inherent in the university librarians. This is so because all the items have a Yeas response above 80%, except items 13 with No response (60%) as to the university librarians taking the

first initiative when the situation demand. On the other hand, all the factors listed in table 2 have been agreed upon as factors that will inhibit positive leadership qualities in the university librarians. All the items have Yes response above 90%. As it is seen, these factors are in contrast with the good qualities listed by Ominyi (2009) which include: Sincerity, Tolerance, Self control Proficiency, friendliness and so on.

The responses of professional librarians on those strategies necessary for promoting good leadership qualities among university librarians shows that: all the items listed in table 3 are good strategies for promoting leadership qualities. Some of these strategies include: the use of simple and clear languages of communication, giving equal opportunities to professional librarians, holding regular meetings and so on.

The strategies are in line with those listed by Denga (2000).

From the above analysis, it could be deduced that leadership in university libraries is a very complex and dedicated exercise. For the university librarians to promote productivity among professional librarians, they need to be intelligent, calculative, benevolent, physically fit, democratic and compassionate just to mention few. However, this study agrees with Danga (2000) who explains that professional librarians' productivity is affected by the leadership qualities of university librarians. Professional librarians who serve under university librarians that have good leadership qualities are likely to be more productive than those who serve under university librarians who lacked as in the factors listed in table 1. So the fact remains that there are no hard and fast rules as to the best thing to do as a leader in particular circumstances but the ability of the leader to vary his methods, characteristics and qualities to suit the prevailing situations, s an assets for the leader. What may be right at a point in time may be wrong under the same conditions at another. Thus, leadership is largely influenced by situational factors such as economic, technology, social political, ethical, cultural, environmental and physical conditions. Consequently it is true that leaders are born and also made (Bennis, 1999)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be concluded that university librarians have the responsibility of managing the activities of the university libraries to increase productivity. To achieve these objectives, the professional librarians who are responsible for actualizing these

objectives need leadership that is rich in good qualities. University librarians in university libraries of Niger State have low leadership qualities needed for effective leadership of their libraries. This has accounted for the poor productivity of the professional libraries in recent years. However, if university librarians learn and acquire positive leadership qualities like being democratic, considerate, compassionate, objective relational, caring and fair, their quality of leadership will greatly improve and as a reciprocal, the productivity of professional librarians under them will also improve.

Factors such as inability to command respect, inspire, organize, appraise, and get things done, motivate, reward, forgive others, in an organization like university libraries have adverse effect on the productivity of professional librarians and tend to impede positive leadership qualities among university librarians. If university libraries strive to improve on these factors, then their leadership qualities will also improve greatly.

The strategies that could be employed by university librarians towards promoting good leadership qualities include the use of simple and clear language for communication, giving rewards showing concern, showing good example, listening and accepting other people's opinions. These strategies if adopted will greatly promote good leadership.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been presented.

1. University librarians in Niger State should be made to go for in-service training in leadership of library administration or should be retrained using resources persons through seminars, conferences and symposia.
2. University librarian should be friendly, approachable, considerate and democratic, have self-control, inspire, reward and deal fairly with their professional librarians to improve productivity.
3. Decisions that will affect staff directly should be taken after joint deliberations with them. Realizing that decisions jointly taken will be happily implemented by staff since they were part of it. Imposition of decisions should be avoided by university librarians.

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