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OBJECTIVES

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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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STAFF ATTITUDES TO SHELVING AND SHELF READING IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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PRINCIPAL LIBRARIAN
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STELLA OBASANJO LIBRARY COMPLEX
LOKOJA

ABSTRACT

Shelving and shelf reading is an important task in the library, for any library to effectively deliver its services, its collections have to be organized for easy accessibility. For shelving and shelf reading to be accurate, it requires motivated and dedicated staff. The supervisor should not be bossy and be ready to correct them when a book is wrongly shelved. The task is monotonous and boring, having some health implications like squatting for a long time, kneeling or sitting on the ground to read the bottom shelf, lift and push heavy books, look up or stand on small stool to read the top shelf. Shelving and shelf reading is usually done by junior staff, library attendant, and library officers. To relief these staffs of status discrimination, they should be made to know that librarians have more professional duties to perform due to professional career status to make the whole system function to fulfill the library goals. New developments should be put in place to make shelving and shelf reading less tasking.

KEYWORDS

shelf reading, public libraries, staff attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

Shelving and shelf reading is an essential task in the library to make the library tidy and attractive. Readers consult books and leave them on the reading tables to be returned to the shelves by staff designated to do that. Shelving is described as organizing books by call numbers and placing them in their correct locations on the library shelves. While shelf reading is the process of reading the call numbers on books that are currently in the library shelves and making sure that they are in their proper order. To deliver effective library services the used materials need to be returned to its proper place where it was removed from, if that were not done it becomes difficult for a patron to locate a needed book. In all libraries all consulted materials were to be left on the tables, so that library shelveers will return them to their proper places. Book pillage a time is as a result of heavy use of books and not shelving them as at when due, thereby making the tables and shelves unattractive to library users. It is this pillage of books that make shelving uninteresting. This is why attempts are made to research on the attitudes of staff towards shelving and shelf reading.

Two public libraries were used for the study, Kogi State Library Board, Lokoja and Okene Public Library, Okene. Much has not been written on shelving and shelf reading

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature on shelving and shelf reading is very scanty. The importance of shelving and shelf reading cannot be over stressed. If a book is out of order, the person looking for it will not be able to find it, and we fail in our goal of providing excellent library service. Patrons expect us to keep accurate records of who has what checked out, when we find here on our shelves, our credibility is damaged. The same thing happens when a book that a person has reserved is found out on the shelves.

Inappropriate shelving according to Aliero (2003), is mostly done by library staffs, he pointed the following reasons which includes, ignorance, non- challant attitude, lack of supervision. Users are persistently dissatisfied in the use of library resources, when they look for a material and could not find it.

According to Agboola (1984) shelving is an essential aspect of library work which can determine user satisfaction or frustration as far as locating library material is concerned. Proper shelving and shelf reading maintains patron's confidence. Agboola (1984,) further stressed that shelving is the responsibility of junior staff under the supervision of professional librarians.

While in developed countries, part-time shelveers are engaged in shelving and shelf reading.

Staff can develop negative attitude to shelving and shelf reading because the work is a continuous and monotonous and boring, this can affect staff attitude towards the tasks.

It is as a result of this that the researcher wants to examine the the attitude of staff to shelving and shelf reading in public libraries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study is

1. To examine the attitude of staff to shelving and shelf reading in the public libraries.
2. To proffer ways of improving staff attitude.

METHODOLOGY

Two public libraries were used for this study. They are Kogi State Library Board Lokoja and Okene Public Library, Okene. All in kogi state.

All the library staffs involve in shelving and shelves reading were used for this study, from the public libraries. The total number of library staff ranging from library attendants to library officers were used for the study made up of twenty staff, twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered. The twenty questionnaires were retrieved and all found valid for the study representing 100%.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the administered questionnaire reveals that 10(50%) of the respondents had GCE/WASC, 9(45%) had diploma in library science while 1(5%) had HND in other discipline. This shows that the public libraries under study do not have enough trained shelveers.

Out of the total respondents 12(60%) were male, 8(40%) were female. 14(70%) were married, 6(30%) single. This reveals that most of the respondents are family men and women this had been reflected in the discharge of their duty in respect to their status.

In terms of age of respondents majority fall between the ages of 26-45 year 14(70%), 20-25years, 5(25%) 46year above. This shows that they are in the marital status age; therefore they should be responsible men and women.

The other part of the questionnaire was analyzed to determine the attitude of the shelving and shelf reading staff.

Respondents were asked to respond to the questions put before them.

(1) SHELVING OF BOOKS IS INTERESTING

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	2	10
Disagree	17	85
Undecided	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 1 indicated that majority of the staff disagree 17(85%) that shelving of books was interesting, 2 (10%) agree while 1 (5%) undecided the table shows that shelving is not an interesting task in the library.

(2) SHELVING IS NECESSARY IN THE LIBRARY

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	14	70
Disagree	5	25
Undecided	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 2, most of the respondents agree 14(70%) that it is necessary to shelf and shelf read in the library, 5(25%) disagree, while 1(5%) undecided on the necessity to shelf books. It is very necessary to shelf and shelf read so that readers can locate the needed materials when required after been used by other readers.

(3) USERS ARE CREATING UNNECESSARY PROBLEM IN THE LIBRARY

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	7	35
Disagree	10	50
Undecided	3	15
Total	20	100

Table 3, 10(50%) respondents disagree that users creates unnecessary problem in the library. 7(35%) agree that they create unnecessary problem while, 3(15%) respondents were undecided. If users were allowed to shelf books after use, the books might be shelved wrongly and this will pose a major problem for new readers to locate needed Books on the shelves

(4) IRRESPECTIVE OF STATUS EVERY LIBRARY STAYS SHOULD BE INVOLVED SHELVING

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	17	85
Disagree	2	10
Undecided	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 4, shows that majority of the library staff agreed, 17(85%) that every staff irrespective of their status should be involved in shelving and shelf reading. 2(10%) disagree while, 1(5%) undecided. The study reveals that both junior and senior staff, paraprofessional and professional should partake in shelving and shelf reading.

(5) SHELVERS SHOULD BE EMPLOYED

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	19	95
Disagree	1	5
Undecided	-	-
Total	20	100

Table 5, reveals that 19(95%) respondents agree that shelvers should be employed while, 1(5%) disagree. Therefore, shelvers should be employed to take care of shelving and shelf reading in libraries, because the task is very hectic and boredom on few individuals.

(6) FREQUENCY OF SHELVING AND SHELF READING

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	2	10
Weekly	12	60
2-times a week	6	30
Total	20	100

Table 6, shows that 12(60%) respondents affirmed that shelving and shelf reading should be done weekly. 6(30%) respondents affirm also that shelving and shelf reading should 2-times a week. while 2(10%) indicated daily shelving and shelf reading.

This shows that due to fewer books collection and less use of books at public libraries in Lokoja and Okene could be a reason for staff response to weekly shelving and shelf reading.

CONCLUSION

Shelving and shelf reading is an important task in the library, for any library to effectively deliver its services, its collections have to be organized for easy accessibility.

For shelving and shelf reading to be accurate, it requires motivated and dedicated staff. The supervisor should not be bossy and be ready to correct them when a book is wrongly shelved. The task is monotonous and boring, having some health implications like squatting for a long time, kneeling or sitting on the ground to read the bottom shelf, lift and push heavy books, look up or stand on small stool to read the top shelf.

Shelving and shelf reading is usually done by junior staff, library attendant, and library officers. To relief these staffs of status discrimination, they should be made to know that librarians have more professional duties to perform due to professional career status to make the whole system function to fulfill the library goals.

New developments should be put in place to make shelving and shelf reading less tasking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the attitude of staff to shelving and shelf reading, the following recommendations were drawn.

- (1) Library management should give adequate training to shelving staff before they are assigned shelves. If they are properly trained books will be properly placed at their right places and locating them will not be difficult for patrons to locate on the shelves.
- (2) Shelving staff should be compensated and rewarded for accuracy in shelving at the end of the year. This will motivate them to develop interest in the task.
- (3) Contributions of shelving staff should not be ignored when they offer advisory input to the development of shelving policy, if their contributions are acknowledged they will have sense of belonging and be dedicated to their work. Shelvers should not be looked at as the least staff in the library.

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