



INNOVATION, MENTORING AND REWARD SYSTEM IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined innovation, mentoring and reward system in university libraries. The University Library is the heart bit of its institution that is established to support the educational objectives of their parent bodies, which include teaching, learning, and research. The role of mentoring in the performance of librarians is also established in this paper. The paper showed that a good reward system is affected by social and psychological factors, including the employee ideas of “fairness” and “trust”. This includes developing from print or traditional environment to the automated, virtual and digital libraries. This paper concluded that the concept of innovation, mentoring and reward system in university libraries are directly related to librarians’ job performance and hence, innovation should be a continuous activities that must be frequently embraced in the library for it to continue to be relevant in the academic community. The paper recommended that innovation, mentoring and reward system should be provided in university libraries in Nigeria as a way to enhancing librarians’ productivity in terms of user information services for sustainable development.

Keywords: *Innovation, Mentoring, Reward system, University library*

Introduction

The overall focus of this study is to investigate the concept of innovation, mentoring and reward system in university libraries in Nigeria. These concepts are three different but related variables investigated in this study. It is generally believed that innovation is a major driver of economic development of any country. Science and technology can only have meaningful impact on socio-economic transformation of countries if it can influence the processes of development and bringing of new products to the market. The process involves the interaction of several actors and stakeholders such as government, industry and finance, academia and research institutes and civil society in what is generally referred to as the system of innovation.

However true this may be, the state of innovation of firms in a country must be constantly assessed to enable government come up with policies that will improve on the system. Innovation is a concept with varying definitions depending on the fields of study and social theories (Goldsmith & Foxall, 2003). Though there seems to be no universal meaning of innovation, it encompasses two basic ideas - novelty and commercialization or diffusion - to varying degrees, depending on who is defining it. For measurement purposes, a common feature of an innovation is that it must have been *implemented*. A new or improved product is implemented when it is introduced on the market. New processes, marketing methods or organizational methods are implemented when they are brought into actual use in the firm’s operations (OECD, 2005).

Innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or a service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organization method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations. For innovation to occur, the product, or service or process leading to its introduction must at least be new to the firm. Innovation is seen to play a central role within the knowledge-based economy and this has led to greater policy attention being paid to the processes of technological innovation and diffusion by firms (Muzart, 1999). In fact, without innovation, the economic and social pay-off of hardcore Science and Technology (S&T) efforts would be diminished (National Centre for Technology Management, NACETEM, 2010). Without innovation, science and technology becomes a mere academic exercise that lacks societal impact. With specific reference to developing countries, the idea of novelty is often relaxed while that of diffusion or commercialization is emphasized.

Thus, innovation is distinguished from invention in the sense that it only needs to be new to the context of analysis. For instance, the World Bank (2010) defined innovation as technologies or practices that are new to a given society. Although, they may not be new in absolute terms, these technologies must be diffused in that economy or society. At the firm level, innovation is understood as new to the firm and not necessarily to the sector or the country (Mytelka, 2000). Firm-level studies in developing economies suggest that innovation is more incremental than radical and that it occurs mainly in response to constraints (Oyelaran-Oyeyinka *et al.*, 1996; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka & Lal, 2006; Goedhuys, 2007). It focuses on adapting existing technologies rather than creating new ones (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development- OECD, 2005; Goedhuys, Janz & Mohnen, 2006).

Types of Innovation

There are four types of innovation: product, process, organizational and marketing as reported in the literature (OECD (2005): **Product innovation:** This is the market introduction of a new or significantly improved good or service with respect to its capabilities. **Process innovation:** This is the implementation of new or significantly improved methods for the production or supply of goods and services. Product and process innovations focus on firm's technological development of new products and new production techniques and its diffusion. They are together regarded as technological innovation. Technological innovation has contributed to globalization by supplying infrastructure for trans-world connections. As pointed out by Ajayi (2000) the revolution taking place in information and communication technologies has been the central and driving forces for the globalization process. One of the key by-products of the globalization period of rapid technological development and on-going information revolution is dynamic change, which is occurring in nearly all facets of human existence and affecting the underlying structure of the society. The global village has removed geographical barriers and led to the shrinking of the frame. In particular, developments in the means of transportation, communications, and data processing have allowed global links to become denser, faster, more reliable, and much cheaper.

According to Scholte (2000) large-scale and rapid globalization had depended on a host of innovations relating to coaxial and later fibre-optic cables, jet engines, packaging and preservation techniques, semiconductor devices and computer software. In other words, global relations could not develop without physical tools to effect cross-planetary contacts. **Organisational innovation:** This is the implementation of new or significant changes in firm structure or management methods that are intended to improve firm's use of knowledge, quality of goods or efficiency of work flows. This type of innovation is also commonly regarded as a supporting factor for technological innovation. **Marketing innovation:** This is the implementation of new or significantly improved design or sales methods to increase the appeal of goods and services or to enter new markets.

Marketing and organisational innovations are regarded as non-technological innovation. An innovative firm is one that has implemented at least one type of innovation in the period under review. Innovation activities include all scientific, technological, organisational, financial and commercial steps which actually led, or are intended to lead, to the implementation of innovations. These activities are not themselves innovations, but they are necessary for the implementation of innovations. Innovation activities, whether radical or incremental, are the aggregation of the transfer,

generation, use, diffusion and assimilation of new knowledge, methods, processes and products within public and private organisations as well as the market they participate in. These activities are critical to sustainable economic growth and development, with a lot of implications for the general improvement of the quality of life. This understanding has led to an increasing demand among policy makers in the developing countries for both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the nature of innovation and how it changes over time within national and regional boundaries.

Innovations in Nigerian Libraries in the 21st Century

When different networks are connected together to facilitate communication and sharing of resources at global level, this is generally referred to as Internet. It is therefore defined as network of networks. The Internet facility is a powerful and efficient tool for searching, retrieving and disseminating information. As an electronic resource, Internet is currently having the most significant impact on almost all professions. Internet simultaneously fulfils three important roles in libraries. First, it is a resource that can be consulted and used like any other reference resource. Second, it is more dynamic and far reaching than any other resource in the library setting. Lastly, it provides a medium of communication that has extended the potential of librarians to interact beyond the physical library with users, colleagues and other professional activities and relationships.

In specific terms, Internet facilities support such services as e-mail, listerv, newsgroups, remote login, file transfer protocol and World Wide Web, otherwise known as W3, which has become the most popular way of locating and retrieving information. It does provide the facilities and capabilities to browse through a list of subject headings to get an idea of what is available. Internet facilities enable reference librarians to answer questions for which they had virtually no background and the information is usually more up-to-date than printed resources. The areas of application of internet in libraries according to Internet World Status (2011), are support a library wide information system; deliver improved information service; deliver more information electronically and remotely; aid distance education; offer librarians a new role in teaching; permit interactive user education; promote electronic publishing; aid greater collaboration ; improve work processes electronically; improve library research; change staffing needs; change use of physical space; aid services for the disabled.

In their study ‘recognizing and rewarding innovation in NHS library/knowledge services’ Ray, Linda and David of the SHALL Service Development Group, (2012) regarded innovation as a “novel” way of providing a service or a completely new product that has not been seen before in library/knowledge services. They summarized innovations in the library/knowledge centre as follows:

Innovation Type	Criteria	Evidence
Product innovation	<p>A new or significantly improved product of service that has all or most of the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfies unmet user need; • Increase quality/value; • Save users’ time; • cost effective; • Sustainable (unless it is was deliberately designed to be short-term); • Reflects organisational aims/objectives. 	<p>Possible metrics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User satisfaction surveys. • Demonstrable increase in service use or evidence that new service is well used or growing well. • Praise/approval from key personnel in the organization.
Process innovation	<p>A new or significantly improved way of producing or delivering a service or product that has all or most of the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly or indirectly increases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that time/money has been saved. • Evidence of increased productivity.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality/value for the users; Saves time and/or money for the library; increases the library's productivity or effectiveness.
Marketing innovation	<p>An original or significantly improved method of marketing/promoting a library service or product that provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases the use of a service or product; Organisational Innovation Raises awareness of the library service in general. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrable increase in service/product use.
Organisational Innovation	<p>A new or significantly improved way of organising/managing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saves library staffs' times/ Saves money; Increases productivity; Possibly involves working in partnership with internal and/or external parties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that time/money has been saved. Evidence of increased productivity.

The Concept of Mentoring

A mentor can be described as an individual with expertise who has the ability to help develop the career of a mentee. Available studies have shown that the idea of mentoring has long been recognized as a powerful tool in career development. In fact, mentoring has received considerable coverage in recent decades and this is evident by the proliferation of publications in popular literature the world over. Mentoring has been hailed as an important human resource management strategy, a career tool and a workplace learning activity for men, women and minority groups in a variety of organizational settings such as hospitals, large corporations, schools, universities and government departments. Mentoring within organizations provides new or less-experienced employees the opportunities to network with more experienced individuals to develop a better and broader understanding of the organization beyond just their individual position. Being surrounded by role models that portray positive characteristics, appropriate attitudes, behaviors and skills enable mentees to experience and observe practices they can emulate to succeed within the organization (Allen & Poteet, 1999; Henderson, 1985; Noe, 1988).

Fajana (2002) described mentoring as the process of using especially selected and trained individuals to provide care and advice that will help to develop the career of other employees who have been allocated to them. To Munro (2009), mentoring is a process in which a more advanced or experienced person (a mentor) provides career and/or personal support to another individual (a protégé). Saying the same thing in another way, Ilevbare (2011) reasoned that mentoring is a developmental relationship between a more experienced partner (the mentee) for the purposes of sharing technical information, institution knowledge, and insight with respect to a particular occupation, profession, organization or endeavour.

Mentoring has further been described as a one-on-one relationship between a less experienced (protégé) and a more experienced person (mentor), which is intended to advance the personal and professional growth of the less experienced individual (Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, 2003). Mentoring allows new individuals to observe departmental activities, divisional functions and goals under the supervision of an experienced professional. Agreeing with other authors, Lankau and Scandura



(2002) described mentoring as a process where a mentor encourage protégés to value learning by imparting wisdom about the norms and values, that are specific to the organization and help advance the protégé's career. As shown in the literature, the process of mentoring may be viewed under three models: the apprentice, competency and reflective models. In the apprentice model, the mentee observes the mentor and learn. In the competency model, the mentor gives the mentee systematic feedback about performance and progress. In the reflective model, the mentor helps the mentee become a reflective practitioner.

Mentoring in University Libraries

Mentoring in librarianship is a process of learning and development based on a personal relationship in which an experienced librarian called a mentor helps a new librarian called mentee to develop as a professional and achieve professional goals. A core feature that defines mentoring relationship and distinguishes it from other types of personal relationship is that it is a developmental relationship embedded within the career context. While learning, growth and development may occur in many different types of work and close personal relationships, mentoring relationships are unique because their primary focus is on career growth and development (Ragins & Kram, 2008). For a new librarian, professional training begins from the moment he steps into the profession (Insala, 2013). Professional training and learning are required to be built on the existing foundation in order that new librarians can develop the depth of knowledge required over time. Mentoring a new and prospective professional provides an opportunity for both the new and the seasoned professionals to develop and refine the necessary skills to be successful in the diverse and rapidly evolving library and information profession.

The library and information science study, according to Pan and Hovde (2010), prepares librarians for the role of service provision. Yet, librarians may be less equipped through formal training for the scholarly demands of their own research and publication needs. The skills required to satisfy these demands are often times acquired on the job, especially with the support of experienced and versed librarians. Different institutions require that librarians pursue successful researches and publications for their promotion. Thus, the need for mentoring librarians to become as savvy as the clients they serve. The most productive and effective way for librarians to keep up with these changes is to seek professional development opportunities. Professional development is the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge and skills that relate to one's profession, job responsibilities or work environment (Spencer & Ard, 2006).

It plays a key role in maintaining trained, informed and motivated employees regardless of job classification. Pan and Hovde (2010) also observe that it is a universal requirement of all librarians in order to keep up with the rapid changes in the library field and to maintain professionalism. There are varieties of approaches to professional development. These include consultation, coaching, and communication of practice, technical assistance, reflective supervision and mentoring (Richie & Genoni, 2008). This paper focused only on mentoring. The human resource in any organization is its most expensive but vital asset. Consequently, the future of any organization depends more on its staff than on any other factor. The usefulness of service institutions like libraries is measured by the services rendered by them to the users and this in turn depends on the personnel who are responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of service. They acquire, organize, and disseminate information.

If the authorities tend to think of their service almost exclusively, it is very likely that these functions cannot effectively be discharged unless they give due weight to those who manage them in universities. It is imperative that human resource recruited and selected have to be properly and adequately developed, motivated, and maintained to provide quality service. Library professionals, therefore, occupy a prominent and decisive place in university libraries as compared to material resources such as buildings and equipment. The reason is that human resources are animate with attendant emotions, feelings, beliefs, expectations, opinions, perceptions, attitudes, and other personal traits. All material resources in a university library such as buildings and equipment, books, and other kinds of reading materials, finance, and managerial methods are inanimate.



The human factor will give the necessary support and life to all the material resources to provide useful service to the users. This is the central point of the whole university system wherein one could find the various functions performed and services rendered by the library professionals. Library professionals should know that one of the most effective ways to win the loyalty of their staff is to make each employee feel that his/her work is both important and appreciated. In addition to possessing an employee-centred attitude, a library supervisor should be equipped with certain competencies in dealing with people, should have the ability to make clear assignments and to delegate authority, should be competent to instruct and to check completed work, should know the most effective ways to correct as well as commend, and should be able to discuss problems with staff members in an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, confidence, goodwill, commonality of interest, shared vision, and determination to excel.

Therefore, management of university library personnel is of paramount importance. To realize library's unique function of serving as the one unbiased, nonpartisan bureau of information for the people, personnel of the highest competence and integrity are essential. This calls for proper management of university library personnel with a sense of purpose, pride, and direction. To increase efficiency, improve job satisfaction, and raise the employee morale, it is essential that an employee is viewed as physiological, sociological, psychological, and egoistic creature. Mentor is a process where a more senior employee is providing guidance and counseling to a newer or less experienced employee (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Cummings & Worley, 2001). The mentor often provides on-demand training and skills for the new employee. Today, more and more organizations including libraries are creating formal mentoring programs for various reasons ranges from increased morale to increased organizational productivity and career development.

Scholars have argued that mentoring helps mentors and mentees by establishing, progressing, and safeguarding various stages of their careers (Cummings & Worley, 2001). Mentors provide opportunities for organizational socialization, motivation, and increased job performance by identifying what skills a new employee may be lacking to become more engaged (Wilson & Elman, 1990). Mentees on the other hand provide employee satisfaction back to the mentor. Mentors on the other hand, have the opportunity to view new perspectives on their current performance and communicate the organization through different experiences to help the mentor to grow professionally (Stone, 2004). A mentor can offer the support, guidance, and counseling that a new employee needs to transition into the organizational structure (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1983). Mentoring has been identified as an important influence in professional development in both the public and private sector.

Mentoring can either be formal or informal relationship between two people. Within library and information centres, mentoring is often a component of different types of development, including comprehensive career development programs. The major function of mentoring within an organization is to promote the mentee development in specific areas and to facilitate successful completion of the program. While these mentoring relationships can produce positive developmental and organizational outcomes, both mentoring programs and relationships sometimes fail due to a variety of causes and problems such as lack of participation, no leadership involvement, poor planning, unrealistic expectations, and "fuzzy" goals.

The mentoring relationship is inherently flexible and can vary tremendously in its form and function. The mentoring relationship exists between one individual in need of developmental guidance and another individual who is both capable and willing to provide that guidance. Further, the mentoring relationship represents an important developmental relationship for the mentee as it supports and facilitates his or her professional development. A mentor has two primary functions for the mentee. First, the career-related function which establishes the mentor as a coach who provides advice to enhance the mentee's professional performance and development and second the psychosocial function which establishes the mentor as a role model and support system for the mentee. Both functions provide explicit and implicit lessons related to professional development as well as general work-life balance (Young, Cady & Foxon, 2006).

Reward System in University Libraries

A library is an organization whose mission is to provide information to its users. The library staff are the human resources, who provide information services using library resources. How well the services are provided depends on how well the human resources are motivated and developed. Rewards system is crucial to the development of human resources in the library. Job content, developmental opportunities, and performance appraisals are all important parts of the total reward system. As Rock (1984) stated, it is one of the great challenges to management, requiring the creation of “an environment which stimulates people in their jobs” (p. xix). In addition, the management style of an organization is becoming an increasingly more important factor in the total reward system. He pointed further that compensation is more than pay in most institutions.

Compensation is a total reward system involving incentives and noncash benefits, performance appraisal, and work force development as well as base wages and salaries. Thus, in addition to providing for material needs, the compensation administrator must consider the employee’s need for self-realization—the need to feel that he or she is having a real impact on the organization. While money, in one form or another, is a major source of satisfaction and motivation, other factors can be equally important to employees’ morale. These include the nature of the work, the organizational environment and style of management, and the company’s past performance and its outlook for the future (p. xix).

The money that employees receive is actually a package of salary and benefits. Theories of motivation suggest that salary and benefits have influence on effort and persistence. Pay has the potential to satisfy each of the five needs in Maslow’s hierarchy. In Herzberg’s two-factor model pay is a maintenance factor that should not contribute significantly to motivation. In expectancy theory, pay can satisfy a variety of needs and influence choice and behavior, while in equity theory, pay is a major outcome that one compares with other employees. A number of studies reveal that, in order to motivate, a salary plan must demonstrate that good performance leads to higher levels of pay, minimize any negative consequences of good performance, and relate other rewards to good performance.

Steven and Tanguy (1998) identified two basic means of stimulating innovative activity. One is a system of rewards paid by the government to innovators. According to this system, innovations would pass immediately into the public domain, becoming freely available to all. The other approach is the familiar system of intellectual property rights, notably, patent and copyright protection, under which the government confers to innovators exclusive rights to market the goods and services that embody their intellectual works. Reward systems have three main objectives namely to: attract new employees to the organization, elicit good work performance, and maintain commitment to the organization.

Attraction: A reward system is intended to attract and retain suitable employees. An employer who develops a reputation as “cheap” is unlikely to be desirable in the job market, because potential employees will think it does not reward effort. Such an organization is likely to end up with the people that nobody else wants.

A great performance: Rewards are also intended to maintain and improve performance. Nobody can truly motivate: employee motivation can only come from within. But the promise of a bonus or a pay rise is intended to encourage employees to motivate themselves to reap the rewards. Performance-related pay is very popular in today’s organizations. The main problem with individual performance-related pay (IPRP) is that it assumes that pay alone motivates workers, but this is not correct. Consider the intrinsic rewards or psychological rewards mentioned earlier. A worker with high pay but who receives no intrinsic rewards will probably go elsewhere.

Commitment: The reward system also serves to maintain and strengthen *the psychological contract*. It indicates what behaviour the organization values, i.e. what is paid for. For example, if your company values teamwork, then there will probably be a team bonus of some kind. The psychological contract will partly determine what employees perceive to be “fair” in terms of reward for the work they do. Disruptive behaviour such as theft in the workplace is often an attempt to restore “fairness” to remuneration. Violation of the psychological contract is far more likely to cause problems with employees more than any other single factor. The most common financial incentive system found in



academic libraries is merit, often referred to in business and industry as “performance-based reward programs.” Merit systems are found in a variety of academic libraries, including those covered by collective bargaining agreements and civil service. There is a great variety in merit pay programs and each organization should consider the variables that apply to its situation when designing or implementing such a program. Among the variables that are particularly applicable to libraries are:

1. ability to specify quality and quantity of good service;
2. employee needs, perceptions, and demands; and
3. external environmental pressures, including consumers of goods or services, market demand for goods or services, legal requirements, and society in general (Henderson, 1985, p. 488).

Certain aspects of merit pay distribution seem particularly appealing in the academic environment because of the constraints of available funds. These include a policy for paying different rates of pay to individuals receiving identical merit ratings (Henderson, 1985, p. 596). This generally means that individuals in the upper ranges receive a smaller percentage increase than those in the lower ranges. It is an effective way of rewarding and encouraging less senior staff members. Besides, forced-distribution rating systems are sometimes used, which require distributing percentage increases according to a predetermined mix which includes limiting the number of superior ratings (Henderson, 1985).

Types of Reward

There are *extrinsic rewards*, which cover the basic needs of income to survive (to paybills), a feeling of stability and consistency (the job is secure), and recognition (my workplace values my skills). In Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, these are at the lower end. We could also call these the financial rewards. On the other hand, there are *intrinsic rewards*, the most important of which is probably job satisfaction, a feeling of completing challenges competently, enjoyment, and even perhaps the social interactions which arise from the workplace. These are at the upper, self-efficacy end of the need hierarchy. This can be called psychological rewards.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has shown that the concepts of innovation, mentoring and reward system in university libraries are directly related to the librarians’ job performance. It has shown that innovation is a continuous activity that must be frequently embraced in the library for it to continue to be relevant in the academic community. The role of mentoring in the performance of librarians has also been clearly indicated. Also, the paper has revealed that a good reward system responds to market forces. However, it is also affected by social and psychological factors, including the employee ideas of “fairness” and “trust”. It has shown that a system perceived to be fair is one of the key components of the psychological contract that must be established in university libraries in Nigeria. The paper recommends that innovation, mentoring and reward system should be a continuous provision in university libraries in Nigeria as a way to encourage librarian to be more productive in terms of user information services for sustainable development.



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