



**STYLE OF COMMUNICATION AND LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY AMONG
LIBRARY STAFF IN TWO SELECTED UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES IN RIVERS STATE**

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Abstracts

This study examined style of communication and level of productivity among library staff in two selected university libraries in Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 32 library staff in the University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select only the staff who were directly involved in service delivery. Questionnaire was used for data collection from which 29 copies were found valid for analysis. The data that were collected for this research were analysed using mean ratings. All analyses were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 while results were presented in tables. The findings of the study revealed that active listening, staff meetings, customer service focus, informative signage and user-friendly language were the communication styles used by library staff. There is a high level of productivity among librarians. Communication style enhances task performance and service delivery in university libraries. The study recommended among others that there should be regular feedback and performance appraisals to identify areas for improvement on job productivity

Keywords: Style of Communication, Productivity, Library Staff and Level of Productivity.

Introduction

Clear and effective communication is essential to the success of any organization, including university libraries. The way library staff interact both verbally and non-verbally plays a crucial role in shaping the work environment and directly influences productivity levels. Inadequate communication often leads to frustration, and this is especially evident in academic libraries, where it can significantly compromise the quality of services provided. To stay relevant and impactful in a competitive global environment, library staff must recognize the critical role communication plays in their daily operations and service delivery. This is because communication is deeply embedded in the daily responsibilities of library staff and their managers. Whether it's interaction between supervisors and employees, among colleagues, or with library users and stakeholders, communication forms the foundation of every task and relationship. Supporting this view, Ifidon and Ifidon (2017) emphasize that communication is



so vital to management that it warrants focused attention. From morning to night, people engage in continuous communication, and this pattern spans all societal units and professional fields, including librarianship. At its core, communication involves the exchange of ideas, opinions, emotions, beliefs, and information. For it to be meaningful, it must be effective. Thus, strong communication skills are essential in libraries to ensure accurate and efficient service delivery. It is the driving force behind any dynamic organization, and even more so in academic libraries, where teaching, learning, and inquiry are central activities. As such, effective communication is not just beneficial but necessary for successful operations and for fulfilling the mission and goals of academic libraries.

Statement of the Problem

The style of communication within an organization plays a crucial role in determining the level of productivity among employees. In university libraries, effective communication among staff is essential for ensuring smooth operations, collaboration, and service delivery to students and faculty members. However, differences in communication styles whether formal or informal, directive or participatory can impact staff motivation, teamwork, and overall efficiency. In the context of two selected universities in Rivers State, it is unclear how communication styles influence the productivity of library staff. Challenges such as miscommunication, lack of clarity in instructions, or ineffective feedback mechanisms may hinder performance and service quality. Conversely, an effective communication style can enhance coordination, reduce conflicts, and improve workflow. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the communication styles and the productivity level of library staff in these universities, identifying key factors that either facilitate or hinder their effectiveness.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine style of communication and level of productivity among library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. Identify the communication styles used by library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State.
2. Determine the level of productivity exhibited by library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which communication style affects task performance and service delivery in academic libraries in two selected universities in Rivers State.



Research Questions

1. What are the communication styles used by library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the level of productivity exhibited by library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does communication style affect task performance and service delivery in academic libraries in two selected universities in Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Style of Communication in Academic Libraries

In academic libraries, the way management operates is closely tied to communication methods. This relationship stems from the frequent communication required to improve organizational performance, employee engagement, and the dissemination of knowledge. Clear and effective communication helps build positive relationships among library leaders, staff, suppliers, patrons, and other relevant parties. When all participants convey their thoughts and messages clearly and understand each other, communication becomes effective. Kreitner and Buelens (2020) argue that effective communication depends on aligning the richness of the communication medium with the complexity of the issue. Miscommunication often occurs when the medium is either too sophisticated or too simplistic for the situation. While libraries use various communication tools, only those with an appropriate level of richness are suitable for delivering quality academic services.

According to Hofmeister (2024), effective communication is a scenario where the message intended by the sender closely matches how the receiver understands and reacts to it. This involves transmitting and interpreting information correctly between individuals. Although flawless communication is rare, it remains a critical goal when engaging with library users to support the mission of academic libraries. The communication style and productivity levels among university library staff are strongly interconnected and influenced by multiple elements. Clear, open, and respectful communication is essential to creating a productive work atmosphere. On the other hand, ineffective communication can lead to confusion, tension, and reduced motivation, all of which can hinder performance. Organizational culture, leadership style, and the availability of communication technologies significantly influence these dynamics (Mokhchy et al., 2025). When communication flows freely and employees feel



appreciated, collaboration improves, knowledge is shared more easily, and the library's objectives are more effectively met. However, challenges like understaffing, poor working conditions, or limited access to technology can obstruct both communication and productivity. Thus, a well-functioning communication system is fundamental to achieving high productivity in university libraries. As Ani et al., (2022) notes, academic libraries serve individuals involved in academic and research activities at institutions such as universities, colleges of education, technical colleges, and polytechnics. These libraries act as key service points for a diverse user base and must ensure excellent service delivery through strong communication practices.

Productivity among Library Staff

The university library functions as a structured organization with specific goals that must be achieved. Both the staff and management share the responsibility for ensuring these objectives are met. According to Mmejim and Nsirim (2023), library management should recognize and leverage the unique strengths of each employee by implementing strategies that make the most of their talents, thereby boosting overall productivity. Job productivity, as defined by the Business Terms Glossary (2014), refers to the measurable output produced by an employee within a set timeframe. Segun-Adeniran (2015) similarly describes it as the ratio between output and the total resources used to produce it. These definitions highlight that efficiency and effectiveness are key components of productivity in any organization, including libraries. While libraries are traditionally viewed as service-oriented and non-profit institutions, achieving optimal productivity in libraries depends significantly on effective communication practices. Root (2015) points out that a leader's approach to decision-making, delegation, and interaction with team members can have either a positive or negative impact on the organization. Leaders who aim to boost staff productivity must lead by example, fostering a culture of diligence and commitment. Such behavior establishes a firm foundation for staff to perform effectively, even though the leader's personal effort alone may not directly result in increased productivity.

To this end, library administrators must adopt suitable communication styles to promote productivity. It is equally important to recognize that different situations and staff members may require varied communication approaches. For instance, while a transactional communication style might be appropriate in some scenarios, it may not be effective in others. It falls upon the university librarian or management team to exercise sound judgment in selecting the appropriate communication approach based on the context. Moreover, in today's digital and information-driven era, transformational and democratic leadership styles are especially effective in encouraging staff participation and idea-sharing (Bangura, 2023). When



library employees are given opportunities to voice their opinions and engage in decision-making, they are more likely to feel motivated and invested in their work. This inclusive approach enhances productivity, as employees are more inclined to perform well when they feel heard and valued. The university librarian, by considering diverse perspectives and recognizing that knowledge is not exclusive to management, plays a pivotal role in fostering a collaborative and innovative work environment. using the right communication styles in managing library operations can inspire innovation and creativity

The Communication Styles used by Library Staff

Library staff use a variety of communication styles, with interpersonal communication playing a central role. This involves direct, in-person interactions where clarity and empathy are vital for effectively supporting library users. Verbal communication is also key for giving directions, responding to questions, and leading informational sessions (McDuffie, 2021). As digital tools become more prominent, written communication through email, live chat, and social media has grown in significance. Therefore, library professionals must be proficient in multiple communication formats to meet the diverse needs of their users. In practice, library staff often combine different communication styles to engage with patrons and work collaboratively with colleagues. The facilitative approach is frequently applied, allowing library staff to assist users in locating information by asking relevant questions and offering customized guidance. A warm, approachable demeanor helps create an inviting atmosphere where patrons feel comfortable seeking help. When delivering instruction such as teaching research skills or explaining catalog systems an educational communication style is essential. In more formal contexts, like policy discussions, reporting, or coordinating across departments, a clear and structured communication style is required. When addressing complaints or sensitive issues, a tactful and empathetic tone promotes respectful and effective resolution (Nkanu et al., 2025). By adjusting their communication style to suit various situations, library staff are better equipped to improve user satisfaction and support a cooperative work environment.

The level of Productivity Exhibited by Library Staff

The productivity of library staff is crucial for the effective functioning of any library. It encompasses various aspects, including efficiency in tasks like cataloging, circulation, reference services, and user assistance. Productive staff members are adept at time management, prioritize tasks effectively, and consistently meet deadlines. The level of productivity exhibited by library staff is a crucial factor in ensuring the efficient operation of a library (Shahzad et al., 2023). Their productivity is reflected in their ability to manage book circulation, assist patrons with research, organize and update library collections, and maintain



a welcoming and resourceful environment. Highly productive staff members efficiently handle administrative tasks, implement digital tools for better service delivery, and engage in community outreach programs to promote literacy and learning. Effective time management, teamwork, and adaptability to technological advancements further enhance their productivity. Ultimately, a dedicated and proactive library staff contributes significantly to the overall success and reputation of the library.

Communication style effects on task performance and service delivery in academic libraries

Communication style significantly impacts task performance and service delivery in university libraries. Clear, concise, and professional communication ensures that library staff effectively collaborate, share information, and respond to user needs. A well-structured communication style enhances efficiency, reduces misunderstandings, and fosters a positive work environment, ultimately leading to improved task execution (Bukar et al., 2025). Additionally, the ability to adapt communication styles whether formal, informal, verbal, or written ensures that library staff can engage effectively with diverse users, from students to faculty members. Poor communication, on the other hand, can lead to delays, errors, and frustration among both staff and library patrons. Effective communication also plays a crucial role in delivering quality services, such as research assistance, information literacy instruction, and resource management. By fostering open dialogue, active listening, and responsiveness, academic libraries can optimize service delivery, enhance user satisfaction, and contribute to a more supportive learning environment. Adeogu (2025) noted that a clear, empathetic, and responsive communication style fosters a positive environment, enhancing collaboration among library staff and improving interactions with patrons. Conversely, poor communication, characterized by ambiguity or insensitivity, can lead to misunderstandings, decreased efficiency, and reduced user satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Sahabi and Ogunbote (2021), evaluated the influence of communication style in academic library: challenges of service delivery of librarians in Kaduna state university library, Kaduna. The population of the study comprise of 133 library staff of Kaduna state university. The total enumeration technique was used to include all 133-library staff. A validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability co-efficient indicated that the research instrument is reliable, since the Cronbach 's alpha of the scale for all the variables were greater than 0.70. Data was analyzed using the SPSS software, frequency distribution and percentages. The findings revealed that the communication style utilized at Kaduna state university library was



transactional and transformational styles of communication. Further details from the analysis depict that all the indicators show high level of service delivery. The study concludes that the leadership style is important elements that can drive effective and efficient service delivery in Kaduna state university library. The study recommended that the prevailing communication style is the transactional leadership. Hence, this study recommends that the leadership of the Kaduna state university Library should adopt more of transformational leadership style to total inclusiveness in the management of Kaduna state university Library.

Nnadieto (2021), investigated motivational variables and staff productivity among library staff in Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO). The study investigated the various levels of motivational variables and staff productivity and their relationships between the variables. The study adopted a correlational study. The population of the study consisted 106 library staff made up of professionals and para professionals. The instrument used for data collection was the rating scale. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level using t-test statistics. Findings of the study are that: the level of staff productivity is high; there is a significant positive relationship between the financial incentives provided to library staff and their productivity; there is a significant positive relationship between the training given to library staff and their productivity; there is a positive relationship between effective communication with library staff and staff productivity and there is a relationship between leadership style and staff productivity. The recommendations were that: the tempo of the motivation should be sustained and improved so that the staff will continue to be productive; government at all levels and other proprietors (in the case of private owned libraries) should ensure that the library staff are motivated by giving them financial incentives; regular training of library staff; university library administrators should constantly ensure that they communicate effectively with their subordinates and library leaders should adopt leadership styles that will motivate if not all staff but more of the library staff to enhance high productivity.

Uwandu et al. (2022), study focused on participative management and effective communication as predictors of job performance of library staff in Federal Universities in South-East Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Correlation research design which involved simple linear method was adopted for the study. The population of the study is 332 library staff. Using total enumeration sampling technique, the entire population was adopted as sample for the study. Rating scale was used to collect data for the study. Pearson r statistics was used to answer the research questions while t-test of



significance of simple linear correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses at $P < 0.05$ level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that participative management and effective communication respectively are highly and significantly related with job performance of library staff in Federal Universities in South-East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. Based on the above findings, the researchers recommended that university management and university library management should incorporate the library staff in taking decisions concerning them and the affairs of the library. University library management should ensure that there is downward, upward and horizontal communications among staff in their libraries.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 32 library staff in the University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select only the staff who were directly involved in service delivery. Questionnaire titled: Style of Communication and Level of Productivity among Library Staff Questionnaire (SCLPLSQ) was used for data collection. The administration of the questionnaire was carried out by the researchers and assisted by research assistants. 29 copies of the instrument were found valid for analysis. The data that were collected for this research were analysed in tables, using mean ratings. All analyses were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 while results were presented in tables.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the dominant communication styles used by library staff in two selected university libraries in Rivers State?

Table 1: Summary of mean and standard deviation on the dominant communication styles used by library staff in two selected university libraries in Rivers State.

communication styles used by library staff	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision Rule
Active Listening	3.3	3.6	Positive
Staff Meetings	2.8	3.4	Positive
Customer Service Focus	3.3	3.7	Positive
Informative signage	2.9	3.6	Positive
User-friendly language	3.4	3.7	Positive
Grand mean	3.14		



Table 1: Shows the dominant communication styles used by library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State. It should be noted that the items were re-arranged in order of mean rating for ease of understanding. It showed that active listening (mean = 3.3), staff meetings (mean = 2.8), customer service focus (mean = 3.3), informative signage (mean = 2.9) and user-friendly language. (mean = 3.4) were the communication styles used by library staff. The finding also supported the finding of Ojiebge (2010) that effective verbal communication is essential for providing instructions, answering inquiries, and conducting informational sessions. Furthermore, with the increasing reliance on digital platforms, written communication through emails, online chats, and social media has become increasingly important.

Research Question Two: What is the level of productivity exhibited by library staff in two selected university libraries in Rivers State?

Table 2: Summary of mean and standard deviation on the level of productivity exhibited by library staff in two selected university libraries in Rivers State.

level of productivity exhibited by library staff	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision Rule
Speed and accuracy in assisting patrons	3.2	3.5	Positive
Efficient cataloging and shelving of materials	3.7	3.7	Positive
Effective use of digital databases	3.3	3.6	Positive
Regular updating and weeding of the collection	3.3	3.7	Positive
Increased patron engagement and visits	3.2	3.5	Positive
Grand mean	3.34		

Table 2: Shows the level of productivity exhibited by library staff in two selected universities in Rivers State. It should be noted that the items were re-arranged in order of mean rating for ease of understanding. Also, the overall mean showed that Speed and accuracy in assisting patrons (Mean = 3.2), efficient cataloging and shelving of materials (mean = 3.7), effective use of digital databases, (mean = 3.3), regular updating and weeding of the collection (mean = 3.3) while increased patron engagement and visits (Mean = 3.2). This indicates a high level of productivity of library staff. This study upholds that of earlier study by Orme (2008) who opined that productivity of library staff is crucial for the effective functioning of any library. It encompasses various aspects, including efficiency in tasks like cataloging, circulation,



reference services, and user assistance. Productive staff members are adept at time management, prioritize tasks effectively, and consistently meet deadlines.

Research Question Three: how does communication style affect task performance and service delivery in academic libraries in two selected university libraries in Rivers State?

Table 3 shows how Communication style affects task performance and service delivery in the selected university libraries in Rivers State.

Communication style effects on task performance and service delivery in academic libraries	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision Rule
Clarity and Efficiency	3.4	3.6	Positive
Leads to efficient problem-solving and decision-making	3.2	3.5	Positive
Information Dissemination	3.6	3.7	Positive
Regular feedback and updates	2.3	3.2	Negative
User Interaction.	2.8	3.2	Positive
Grand mean	3.5		

Table 3: Shows how Communication style affects task performance and service delivery in academic libraries. It should be noted that the items were re-arranged in order of mean rating for ease of understanding. Also, the overall mean showed that clarity and efficiency (mean = 3.4), leads to efficient problem-solving and decision-making (mean = 3.2), information dissemination (mean = 3.6), regular feedback and updates (mean = 2.3) and user interaction (mean = 2.8). This indicates that communication style enhances task performance and service delivery in the selected university libraries. This finding is in line with the findings of Ivongbe, Abdulsalami and Omorogbe (2021) who found that communication style significantly impacts task performance and service delivery in academic libraries. Clear, concise, and professional communication ensures that library staff effectively collaborate, share information, and respond to user needs. A well-structured communication style enhances efficiency, reduces misunderstandings, and fosters a positive work environment, ultimately leading to improved task execution.

Conclusion

The style of communication among library staff in universities plays a crucial role in determining their level of productivity. Effective communication whether formal or informal,



verbal or non-verbal enhances teamwork, reduces misunderstandings, and improves service delivery. In the two selected universities, the findings suggest that clear, open, and collaborative communication fosters a more efficient work environment, leading to higher productivity, thus, poor communication, could hinder workflow and overall efficiency. Therefore, to maximize productivity, university libraries should adopt communication strategies that promote transparency, active listening, and mutual respect among staff.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be regular feedback and performance appraisals to identify areas for improvement.
2. There should be training and professional development opportunities to enhance staff skills and knowledge.
3. Staff have access to the necessary resources, including technology, equipment, and information resources to enhance their communication style.
4. There should be proper implementation or optimization use of collaborative tools and platforms (e.g., project management software, shared document repositories) to facilitate seamless communication and information sharing.
5. Utilization of instant messaging platforms for quick communication style should be implemented, but set clear expectations regarding appropriate use.

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