

Librarians' Perceptions of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices and the Perceptions' Effect on Job Satisfaction and Service Delivery in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria

Ademola Ferdinand Omosekejimi, CLN, Angela Chiwendu Nweke, CLN and Benjamin Kenechukwu Nwobu, CLN

Volume 19, Number 4, 2024

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1116050ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip30126>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

University of Alberta Library

ISSN

1715-720X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Omosekejimi, A., Nweke, A. & Nwobu, B. (2024). Librarians' Perceptions of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices and the Perceptions' Effect on Job Satisfaction and Service Delivery in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 19(4), 53–70. <https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip30126>

Article abstract

Objective – This study examined librarians' perceptions of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices and the perceived effect on job satisfaction and service delivery in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The study was aimed at observing whether or not librarians perceive that their senior library managers engage in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices; discerning the extent to which they are perceived to be engaging in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices; ascertaining how the perceived tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices can affect job satisfaction of librarians and service delivery by librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Methods – This study used a descriptive survey research design. The total population for this study comprised 296 librarians who were below the rank of senior library manager from 18 federal university libraries in the southern region of Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected for this study were analyzed using simple percentage/frequency counts and weighted mean.

Results – This study found that librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria believe that senior library managers engage in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices and that the extent of these practices is very high. These librarians clearly have strong concerns that the practise of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in libraries can have negative effects on librarians' job satisfaction and can lead to poor service delivery.

Conclusion – It is glaring from this study that tribalism and favouritism practices by senior library managers are perceived to be prevalent in university libraries in Southern Nigeria, significantly impacting librarians' job satisfaction. This negative workplace dynamic can hinder effective service delivery, ultimately affecting user experience and the library's role in education. Addressing these biases is crucial, as promoting fairness and inclusivity can enhance job satisfaction, improve staff morale, and lead to higher quality library services for all patrons.





Research Article

Librarians' Perceptions of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices and the Perceptions' Effect on Job Satisfaction and Service Delivery in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria

Ademola Ferdinand Omoskejimi (CLN)
E-Librarian
Fupre Library
Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun
Effurun, Delta State, Nigeria
Email: omosekejimi.ademola@fupre.edu.ng

Angela Chiwendu Nweke (CLN)
Principal Librarian
College Library
Federal College of Fisheries and Marine Technology
Lagos, Nigeria
Email: angelanweke909@gmail.com

Benjamin Kenekwaku Nwobu (CLN)
Principal Librarian
College Library
Federal College of Education (Technical)
Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
Email: kenebenjamin@yahoo.com

Received: 21 Mar. 2022

Accepted: 18 Aug. 2024

© 2024 Omoskejimi, Nweke, and Nwobu. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons-Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License 4.0 International (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly attributed, not used for commercial purposes, and, if transformed, the resulting work is redistributed under the same or similar license to this one.

DOI: [10.18438/ebliip30126](https://doi.org/10.18438/ebliip30126)

Abstract

Objective – This study examined librarians’ perceptions of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices and the perceived effect on job satisfaction and service delivery in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria. The study was aimed at observing whether or not librarians perceive that their senior library managers engage in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices; discerning the extent to which they are perceived to be engaging in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices; ascertaining how the perceived tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices can affect job satisfaction of librarians and service delivery by librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Methods – This study used a descriptive survey research design. The total population for this study comprised 296 librarians who were below the rank of senior library manager from 18 federal university libraries in the southern region of Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The data collected for this study were analyzed using simple percentage/frequency counts and weighted mean.

Results – This study found that librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria believe that senior library managers engage in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices and that the extent of these practices is very high. These librarians clearly have strong concerns that the practise of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in libraries can have negative effects on librarians’ job satisfaction and can lead to poor service delivery.

Conclusion – It is glaring from this study that tribalism and favouritism practices by senior library managers are perceived to be prevalent in university libraries in Southern Nigeria, significantly impacting librarians' job satisfaction. This negative workplace dynamic can hinder effective service delivery, ultimately affecting user experience and the library's role in education. Addressing these biases is crucial, as promoting fairness and inclusivity can enhance job satisfaction, improve staff morale, and lead to higher quality library services for all patrons.

Introduction

An organization’s success is determined by how well the human resources (employees) of the organization perform their jobs. In an academic library environment, the library staff's capacity to apply their knowledge and expertise to provide effective service in the library goes a long way toward addressing the needs of the academic community. Ibegbulam (2018) asserted that, while expertise is clearly very important for effective service delivery in academic libraries, the ability of library staff to perform their jobs to a large extent depends on their level of job satisfaction. It is worth noting that when librarians are satisfied with their job, they strive to deliver and render services effectively and professionally to their users. The term “job satisfaction” can be seen as a positive attitude of a worker toward their job and a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the perception of one’s job as fulfilling (Igbokwe, 2021). Furthermore, Weiss (2002) argued that job satisfaction is an attitude that comes about as a result of either a positive or negative evaluative judgment one makes regarding one’s job or job situation. Thus, if an employee feels that they are not being treated fairly in an organization, it can lead to feelings of frustration, anger, and resentment. This can result in decreased motivation and engagement in

their work, as well as a sense of alienation from the organization. In the same vein, unfair practices such as ethnicity, tribalism, and favouritism can lead to lowered psychological wellness, concentration disorder, fatigue, lowered self-esteem, anger, stress level increase and experience of psychosomatic indications which can affect job satisfaction of employees (Arubayi & Eruvbedede, 2022).

Ethnicity and tribalism, two different but related words, are commonly used interchangeably in the African setting and are therefore described in the Nigerian context as social phenomena connected with the identification of members of competing communal groups attempting to safeguard and advance their interests in a political system. Language, culture, race, religion, and common history may all be crucial communal factors. Ethnic prejudice, according to Ilorah (2009), is the result of personal links between public officials and certain interest groups within the same country, state, or institution, usually from the same ethnic group. Ethnic bias, like personalized ties, exhibits characteristics of corruption and partiality and is therefore not suitable for a workplace environment. Ethnic bias or tribalism is unique because "it involves demands by one group on other competing group(s)" (Nnoli, 1998, p. 2).

Favouritism, on the other hand, is considered as giving priority to friends and relatives in employment and career development, along with protection, when necessary, in public and private organizations (Aktan, 1992). In favouritism, friendship-related references receive more importance than merit in job appointments and promotions. This development of giving privileges to employees due to ethnic bias or favouritism was described by Nadler and Schulman (2015) as having the capacity to interfere with fairness because they give undue advantage to someone who does not necessarily merit such treatment. This development can have a great effect on the satisfaction of the employee, and librarians are no exception. It is on this premise that this paper will examine how the perception of unfair practices, specifically tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism, could affect job satisfaction and service delivery in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria today, tribalism and favouritism determine what people oppose or support collectively and individually, including in university libraries (Aminu as cited in Edokwe, 2020). The effects of tribalism and favouritism on job satisfaction and service delivery in organizations, university libraries inclusive, can be significant (Arasli & Tumer, 2008). For example, favouritism may lead to certain library staff being given preferential treatment, which can lead to dissatisfaction among those who are not favoured. This can also lead to a decrease in job satisfaction and performance. Also, there is a dearth of literature in the areas of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism and their effects on job satisfaction and service delivery. This is because most studies such as the one by Onuoha et al. (2020); Eze et al. (2019); Anyaoku et al. (2015) have focused on the physical aspects of libraries, such as collections, technology, and services offered. They have not looked at the underlying dynamics of tribalism and favouritism that may be influencing the level of job satisfaction, the quality of services provided, or the library's overall effectiveness, and this has constituted a gap in the literature that needs to be filled. It is against the aforementioned backdrop that this study seeks to examine librarians' perceptions of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices and how these perceptions can affect their job satisfaction and service delivery in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to examine how the perceived practises of tribalism and favouritism by senior library managers can affect librarians' job satisfaction and service delivery in academic libraries in Southern Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. Ascertain whether or not senior library managers in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria are perceived to be engaging in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices;
2. Determine the extent of these perceived tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices;
3. Ascertain the perceived effects of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices on the job satisfaction of librarians in these libraries; and
4. Ascertain the perceived effects of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices on service delivery by librarians in these libraries.

Literature Review

Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism in Nigerian Government

The unequal treatment of citizens due to tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism is a common characteristic of leadership in many African countries, including Nigeria. Moriba and Edwards (2009) asserted that "tribalism, nepotism, and autocratic leadership styles are prevalent among many African leaders, and even educational institutions have not escaped this unfortunate circumstance" (p. 82). According to Ilorah (2009), "in Africa, it is not uncommon for authorities to award government contracts to unqualified bidders who are in cahoots with relatives and cronies" (p. 695). Successive governments and administrations in Nigeria have advanced this trend of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism at different levels (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019).

However, in an effort to provide a lasting solution to the issue of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism, especially in government workplaces, the Nigerian government created the Federal Character Commission (FCC) in 1996 during the military regime of Sani Abacha (Demarest et al., 2020). Its first mandate was to work out an equitable formula, subject to the approval of the president, for the distribution of posts in public service as well as political appointments. Nigeria's 1999 Constitution included the Federal Character Principle, which stipulates that "there shall be no predominance of persons from a few State[s] or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies" (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 Ch. 2 §14(3); Osieke, 2006). In addition, the quota system was proposed by the federal government of Nigeria and was intended to facilitate equal representation of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria's public service to guarantee fairness and equity for ethnic diversity in Nigeria (Segun et al., 2014).

However, according to Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019), the government of recent past president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, appears to have adopted most ethnic and nepotic proclivities and dispositions. In particular, the government of President Buhari has brazenly violated the quota system provision in most of their appointments and activities (Nnanna, 2017). This has made the implementation of the Federal Character Principle as enshrined in Nigeria's 1999 Constitution a far cry from its intentions, and this has made a section of the citizenry restive (Obidimma & Okeke, 2021). The Nigerian federal government has refused to comply with these provisions of the Constitution. As a result, the high level of preference for loyalty and favouritism in appointment to government offices demonstrates clear bias and

inequality within the Nigerian government (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019). There is no hope that this practice will be curtailed any time soon as it is also the prevalent practice in the current President Bola Ahmed Tinubu led government.

To further support the existence of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism claims in the Nigerian system, Eifert et al. (2010) asserted that the Federal Civil Service in Nigeria operates in a highly fractionalized society where ethnicity and favouritism have gained prominence. It is noteworthy that in Nigeria today, “recruitment and selection processes into public offices[,] especially civil/public service[,] are] based on letter-headed papers from high profiled personalities” (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019, p. 14). This is clearly seen in the cases of the Nigerian Immigration Service in 2016 and the Federal Inland Revenue Service where all the wards of Nigerian citizens who do not have any political affiliation in the nation were not considered for employment in those aforementioned ministries (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019). As asserted by Ufuoma and Omekwu (2022), recruitment and selection into high-level public offices has been occurring unannounced with privileged individuals favouring their families and friends. It appears that adherence to qualification and merit as the basis of recruitment and selection, especially educational qualification, still remains a challenge facing human resource professionals and the Nigerian public sector, which is also applicable to librarians, as vacancies are rarely announced in modern Nigerian public service (Ufuoma & Omekwu, 2022).

Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices in Nigerian University Libraries

The high level of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in appointment and promotion is now being practised in the education sector of Nigeria, an act which has become a norm for every management staff of higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, including university library management (Inyang, 2011; Gberevbie, 2010; McOliver, 2005, as cited in Okeke-Uzodike & Subban, 2015). According to Moriba and Edwards (2009), the corrupt practices of African leaders are accountable for the ineffective school leadership observed in many West African educational institutions, including Nigeria. The principles of merit, competence, accountability, fairness, and equity have over time been grossly and blatantly abused in recruitment, appointment, and promotion processes in Nigerian organizations, especially in the academic environment, where libraries are a key stakeholder (Idike et al., 2019). Ufuoma and Omekwu (2022) lamented that “in recent times, especially in the higher institutions of learning and more specifically at the Federal University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria, ... recruitment of librarians has deviated significantly from the laid down principles of merit, competence and transparency” (p. 30). This is because tribalism or favouritism is becoming a tactic by some library management staff to appoint librarians and library officers who are their families, friends, or loyalists to reap the greatest benefits of the library where and when available, whether or not they are qualified for it. Adetayo et al. (2022) asserted that library management sometimes favours members of their own groups for hiring, promotion, and assessment. Ufuoma and Omekwu (2022) noted that it has also been observed that sociological factors such as cronyism, family connections, ethnic consideration, political leanings, and nepotism have been given significant consideration in the recruitment value scale in the Nigerian public sector establishment, including higher institutions of learning.

Negative Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices

In societies, institutions, or organizations that practise ethnic bias and favouritism, leadership behaviour toward others varies depending on whether those others are members of the in-group, with whom they share affinities and thus treat well, or outsiders, such as people from other ethnic groups who are politically and economically marginalized. Government officials and lawmakers have significant roles to

play in the administration of government to ensure that the delivery of goods and services are equitably distributed. A corrupt bureaucracy can lead to a decrease in the quality of goods and services being provided by the government and its various ministries (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019). A public administration that is prejudiced by ethnic, tribal, or kinship affiliations can bring about far-reaching negative consequences that affect individuals, team dynamics, organizational performance, and the overall reputation of the organization or institution.

Taiwo and Kolawole (2021) asserted that “it is very obvious that the escalation of corruption [accompanied] by tribalism is alarming to an extent that it is already saturating every spheres [sic] of Nigerian society” (p. 163). The implications of tribalism/ethnic bias and favouritism are immense on the socioeconomic, political, and educational development of Nigeria (Olabode, 2012). These practises of tribalism and favouritism are anti-developmental, aggravate the problem of income inequality, and lead to resource scrambles harmful to growth (Ilorah, 2009). Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019) averred that tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism often result in either poor implementation or non-implementation of projects, as those who are not qualified to execute these projects are awarded them. As asserted by Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019), tribalism has singularly stunted Nigeria's political development and stagnated its economic prosperity. It has fragmented the national unity by giving certain individuals undue privilege over others because of family, tribal, or religious affiliation (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019). This development has given Nigerians the impression that their nation does not always consider employing qualified people to fill public offices.

Just as tribalism and favouritism pose significant challenges at the governmental level, they can seep into the dynamics of individual workplaces, leading to harmful biases and unequal treatment among coworkers. The trust, reputation, and reciprocal obligations created by personal ties can facilitate corruption, distort the operation of the workplace, and lead to staff frustration (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). This favouritism in libraries, according to Adetayo et al. (2022), “frequently leads to animosity and disputes among coworkers, as seen by the behaviors of library employees” (p. 5). If employees are in competition with a privileged individual, their probability of getting considered for promotion is quite low (Hayajenh et al., 1994). Moreover, working under an incompetent person who got their job by tribal, religious, or political affiliation and not by following the due process of recruitment is a distressing situation for an employee. Inequality between job performance and compensation or incentives makes employees believe that they work in an unfair environment. In such situations, a lack of confidence in the treatment of employees in an organization can have a negative impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and individual performance (Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2019). Also, in a working environment where kinship, friendship, or other forms of relationship replace the principles of merit in the recruitment or promotion of employees, job dissatisfaction and low productivity should be expected as a norm (İyişleröğlü, 2006).

Personalized ties seldom promote efficiency in workplaces. As argued by Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019), tribalism/ethnic bias and favouritism encourage laziness: If someone realizes that, whether they work hard or not, there will be a job waiting for them somewhere by virtue of their father or mother being at the top, they will say to themselves, “What, then, is the need to work hard?” This scenario can have a negative effect on an employees’ satisfaction with their job, which can affect services provision in the library setting.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The total population for this study comprised 296 librarians who are below the rank of senior librarian manager from 18 federal university libraries in the southern region of Nigeria. This study adopted the total population sampling technique, which is a kind of data collection method that involves obtaining responses from or about every member of the population. Total population sampling was used due to the manageable size of the population. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. This was constructed by the researchers and considered appropriate because it is one of the most reliable instruments for collecting data from the respondents. Kabir (2016) asserted that:

Questionnaires have advantages over some other types of surveys in that they are cheap, do not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it simple to compile data. (p. 208)

The questionnaire items were composed by the researchers to elicit responses regarding this study’s objectives and were therefore personalized to this study. The test-retest method was employed to ensure that the instrument was reliable: 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered twice within one week to 30 librarians from Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), Akure, Ondo State, which was outside the scope of the study, and the responses were recorded separately. The person-to-person method of questionnaire administration was adopted by the researchers. This was done to ensure a high response rate and adequate representation of the respondents’ opinions on the issues under discussion. The results were correlated using Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a reliability index of 0.75, indicating there was high consistency in the instrument. A total of 296 copies of the questionnaire were administered, of which 283 were duly completed and found useable, for a response rate of 96%. The data collected for this study were analyzed using simple percentage/frequency counts and weighted means compared to a criterion mean. The weighted mean is a kind of average in which certain data points are weighted more heavily than others. The criterion mean is the value used to decide the validity of items on a questionnaire analysis (Sikiman, 2016).

Results

Study Objective 1

Ascertain whether or not senior library managers are perceived to be engaging in the practise of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Librarians perceived that senior library managers engage in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices (Table 1).

Table 1
Perceived Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria (N = 283)

Serial Number	Perceived Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices	Agree		Disagree		Undecided	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%

1	Favouring a subordinate over others because of tribal affiliation.	283	100	0	0	0	0
2	Supporting a subordinate at the expense of others because of religious affiliation.	283	100	0	0	0	0
3	Granting favours to a subordinate while sidelining others because of family affiliation.	283	100	0	0	0	0
4	Granting unmerited favours to some groups of subordinates because they belong to same syndicate, cliques, or cohorts as the senior library manager.	219	77	64	23	0	0
5	Perverting judgment in favour of one subordinate over another because of tribal, religious, family, or factional affiliation.	283	100	0	0	0	0
6	Engaging in the act of nepotism in favour of friends or allies when appointing unit heads at the expense of qualified subordinates.	201	71	82	29	0	0
7	Engaging in the act of cronyism to favour a friend or ally at the expense of a qualified subordinate.	189	67	94	33	0	0

Study Objective 2

Determine the extent of perceived tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

The extent to which senior library managers are perceived to be engaging in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria is very high, with an overall weighted mean of 3.0 across seven practices, which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

Table 2
Extent of Perceived Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria (N = 283)

Serial Number	Extent of Perceived Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices	Very High Extent	High Extent	Low Extent	Very Low Extent	Weighted Mean
1	Favouring a subordinate over others because of tribal affiliation.	126	74	47	36	3.0

2	Supporting a subordinate at the expense of others because of religious affiliation.	139	78	56	10	3.2
3	Granting favours to a subordinate while sidelining others because of family affiliation.	142	44	69	28	3.0
4	Granting unmerited favours to some groups of subordinates because they belong to same syndicate, cliques, or cohorts as the senior library manager.	109	73	84	17	3.0
5	Perverting judgment in favour of one subordinate over another because of tribal, religious, family, or factional affiliation.	113	92	56	22	3.0
6	Engaging in the act of nepotism in favour of friends or allies when appointing unit heads at the expense of qualified subordinates.	97	113	61	12	3.0
7	Engaging in the act of cronyism to favour a friend or ally at the expense of a qualified subordinate.	78	109	71	25	2.8
Overall Weighted Mean						3.0
Criterion Mean						2.5

Study Objective 3

Ascertain the perceived effects of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices on job satisfaction of librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria perceived that the practise of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism by senior library managers can negatively affect their satisfaction on the job (Table 3).

Table 3
Perceived Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices on Job Satisfaction of Librarians in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria (N = 283)

S/N	Perceived Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices on Job Satisfaction of Librarians	Agree		Disagree	
		n	%	n	%
1	Can lead to conflicts and fragmentation of workplace unity.	283	100	0	0
2	Causes preferential treatment that can lead to envy and hatred.	283	100	0	0

3	Leads to working in an unfair environment that results in job dissatisfaction.	283	100	0	0
4	Leads to lack of confidence that negatively affects job satisfaction.	283	100	0	0
5	Leads to lack of quality in leadership positions in the library that is capable of causing job dissatisfaction.	283	100	0	0
6	Tribalism- and favouritism-based pay system can lead to detachment from the institution, which transmits to job dissatisfaction.	283	100	0	0
7	If employees are in competition with a privileged individual, their probability of promoting is quite low, which causes job dissatisfaction.	283	100	0	0
8	The climate of unfair competition arising from nepotism and favouritism adversely affects job satisfaction.	283	100	0	0

Study Objective 4

Ascertain the perceived effects of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices on service delivery by librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria.

Librarians perceived that tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices by senior library managers in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria can influence job satisfaction and service delivery (Table 4).

Table 4

Perceived Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices on Service Delivery by Librarians in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria (N = 283)

S/N	Perceived Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices on Service Delivery by Librarians	Agree		Disagree	
		n	%	n	%
1	Encourages laziness.	283	100	0	0
2	Decreases the quality of services rendered to users in the library.	283	100	0	0
3	Leads to staff failure to independently carry out duties due to preferential treatment.	283	100	0	0
4	Encourages workplace deviance that affects service provision.	283	100	0	0
5	Encourages lackadaisical attitude to work, which leads to poor service delivery.	283	100	0	0
6	Leads to negative emotions that affect job performance and productivity.	283	100	0	0

7	Leads to decrease in morale, which leads to lower performance and productivity.	283	100	0	0
8	Can result in loss of faith in library management/leadership, which affects work enthusiasm and ultimately leads to poor service delivery.	283	100	0	0

Discussion

This study found that librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria believe that senior library managers engage in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices. This finding supports the assertion of Moriba and Edwards (2009) that “tribalism, nepotism, and autocratic leadership styles are prevalent among many African leaders, and even educational institutions have not escaped this unfortunate circumstance” (p. 82). The study also clearly revealed that librarians in university libraries in Southern Nigeria perceive that the extent of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices by senior library managers is very high. This finding is in agreement with the assertion that favouritism among employees is common in most academic institutions in Nigeria (Adetayo et al., 2022). From this study, university librarians in Southern Nigeria have strong concerns that the practise of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism by senior library managers can negatively affect librarians’ job satisfaction. This finding corresponds with the assertion of İyiişleroğlu (2006), that in organizations where intense preferential treatment, kinship, friendship, or other forms of relationship replace the principles of merit—such as knowledge, skills, ability, competence, success, or level of education—in the recruitment or promotion of employees, job dissatisfaction and low productivity should be expected as a norm.

This study further reveals that university librarians in Southern Nigeria hold a strong view that tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices by senior library managers can lead to poor service delivery in university libraries. This is in agreement with Chiamogu and Chiamogu (2019), who found that a corrupt bureaucracy can lead to a decrease in the quality of goods and services being provided by the government and its various parastatals. This implies that in a working environment where there are corrupt practices such as tribalism, ethnic bias, and favouritism, subordinates are likely to hold a negative attitude, which may translate to a decline in the quality of the services delivered.

Limitations

Despite the comprehensive scope and findings of this study, there are limitations that the researchers acknowledge. First, the study relies solely on self-reported perceptions of librarians regarding tribalism and favouritism practices, and while these perceptions provide valuable insights, they are inherently subjective and may be influenced by individual experiences, biases, or interpretations of organizational dynamics. Additionally, the use of a survey instrument, while practical for reaching a large sample size, limits the depth of qualitative insights that can be gained through interviews or focus groups. Surveys may not capture distinct experiences or unobservable factors that contribute to tribalism and favouritism in workplace behaviours. Moreover, the study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of perceptions at a single point in time, which may not fully capture the dynamic nature of organizational culture and practices over time. Future research could consider longitudinal approaches or mixed-methods designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these complex issues in university libraries in Nigeria.

Future study may also be conducted to explore the reasons for the occurrence of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in the university environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is clear from this study that senior managers of the library are believed to be engaging in tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices. The perceived extent of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria is very high. Also, the level of the perceived practise of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism can have negative effects on librarians' job satisfaction and can result in poor service delivery at university libraries.

In view of the foregoing, the researchers recommend that the federal government of Nigeria should enforce the Federal Character Principle on the management of all government-owned academic institutions, as this will limit the rate of employment based on tribalism and ethnicity. Also, since it is very difficult to detect the practises of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in the workplace except through official report, university management should provide a confidential reporting box in the administrative building of the university or another strategic location so that staff can report any form of unfair practice in their offices anonymously. Likewise, since tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism are capable of affecting productivity and service delivery in university libraries, strict sanctions—such as stripping offenders of any management positions in the university for several years—should be imposed by the University Council on any library management staff caught in these acts, as this will serve as a deterrent to others. Finally, librarians should be encouraged to improve their interpersonal skills through periodic training, as this will position them to address issues relating to tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in order to foster peaceful working relations in the library.

Author Contributions

Ademola Ferdinand Omosekejimi: Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing **Angela Chiwendu Nweke:** Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing **Benjamin Kenechukwu Nwobu:** Methodology, Writing – review & editing

References

- Adetayo, A. J., Lawal, F. M., Enamudu, A. I., & Gbotoso, A. O. (2022). Ethno-religious diversity in Nigeria academic libraries: Role of swarm intelligence on teams. *Library Leadership & Management*, 36(3). <https://doi.org/10.5860/llm.v36i3.7509>
- Aktan, C. C. (1992). *Politik yozlaşma ve kleptokrasi: 1980-1990 Türkiye deneyimi* [Political corruption and kleptocracy: 1980-1990 Turkish experience]. Alfa Yayınları Publishing.
- Anyaoku, E. N., Osuigwe, N. E., & Oguaka, C. N. (2015). Technology and job satisfaction in academic libraries: Role of leadership style and librarians' attitude. *International Journal of Library Science*, 4(4), 73-80.
- Arasli, H., & Tumer, M. (2008). Nepotism, favoritism and cronyism: A study of their effects on job stress and job satisfaction in the banking industry of North Cyprus. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 36(9), 1237-1250.

- Arubayi, O. D., & Eruvbedede, K. O. (2022). Effects of workplace harassment and favouritism on staff performance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)*, 10(9), 3851-3860.
- Chiamogu, A. P., & Chiamogu, U. P. (2019). Ethnic and nepotic issues in Nigeria: Exploring the bane to public sector performance in the fourth republic. *International Conference on Social Sciences in the 21st Century, July 12–14, 2019, Amsterdam, Netherlands*.
- Demarest, L., Langer, A., & Ukiwo, U. (2020). Nigeria's Federal Character Commission (FCC): A critical appraisal. *Oxford Development Studies*, 48(4), 315–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2020.1727427>
- Edokwe, B. (2020). *Effect of tribalism, nepotism and favoritism on the well being of our nation*. <https://barristerng.com/effect-of-tribalism-nepotism-and-favoritism-on-the-well-being-of-our-nation/>
- Eifert, B., Miguel, E., & Posner, D. N. (2010). Political competition and ethnic identification in Africa. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 494–510. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00443.x>
- Eze, J. U., Okeke, O. C., & Okoroafor, C. K. (2019). Motivation and job satisfaction of librarians in Nigerian public libraries. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 12(2), 64-72.
- Gberevbie, D. E. (2008). *Staff recruitment, retention strategies and performance of selected public and private organizations in Nigeria*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.
- Hayajenh, A. F., Maghrabi, A. S., & Al-Dabbagh, T. H. (1994). Research note: Assessing the effect of nepotism on human resource managers. *International Journal of Manpower*, 15(1), 60–67. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000003933>
- Ibegbulam, I. J. (2018). Investigating job satisfaction and demographic variables among library staff in federal and state university libraries in South East Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology*, 11(2), 31–42. <https://www.jaistonline.org/11vol2/4.pdf>
- Idike, A., Ukeje, I. O., Iwuala, H. O., Onele, J. C., Ekwunife, R. A., Nwachukwu, K., & Udu, O. (2019). The practice of inclusive representation in Nigeria bureaucracy: The federal character principle experience. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1601545. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1601545>
- Igbashal, A. A., Beetseh, K., & Kumba, L. (2016). Factors affecting librarians' job satisfaction in Federal University of Agriculture Makurdi Library. *International Journal of Academic Library and Information Science*, 4(9), 264–270.
- Igbokwe, P. C. (2021). Influence of job satisfaction on librarians' job performance in federal university libraries in South-East Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6811. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6811>
- Ilorah, R. (2009). Ethnic bias, favouritism and development in Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 26(5), 695–707. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03768350903303209>

- Inyang, J. B. (2011). Creating value through people: Best human resource practices in Nigeria. *International Business and Management*, 2(1), 141-150.
- İyişleroğlu, S. C. (2006). *Aile şirketleri: Adana ve çevresinde faaliyet gösteren aile şirketlerinde nepotizm uygulamasının tespitine yönelik bir araştırma* [Family companies: A survey emphasizing on finding nepotism application in the family companies which are active around Adana] [Master's thesis, Çukurova Üniversitesi]. Al Manhal. <https://platform.almanhal.com/Details/Thesis/2000239462>
- Kabir, S. M. S. (2016). *Basic guidelines for research: An introductory approach for all disciplines*. Book Zone Publication.
- Moriba, S., & Edwards, M. C. (2009). Tribalism and its consequences: A cancer infecting the corpus of educational leadership in many West African countries. In A. W. Wiseman (Ed.), *Educational leadership: Global contexts and international comparisons* (pp. 81–122). Emerald Group Publishing Limited. [https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3679\(2009\)0000011006](https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-3679(2009)0000011006)
- Nadler, J., & Schulman, M. (2015, October 23). *Favouritism, cronyism, and nepotism*. Markkula Center for Applied Ethics. <https://www.scu.edu/government-ethics/resources/what-is-government-ethics/favouritism-cronyism-and-nepotism/>
- Nnanna, O. (2017, May 18). Why nepotism is the worst form of corruption. *Vanguard*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/05/nepotism-worst-form-corruption/>
- Nnoli, O. (Ed.). (1998). *Ethnic conflicts in Africa*. CODESRIA.
- Obidimma, E. O. C., & Okeke, O. E. (2021). The federal character of Nigeria: A delicate bedrock for national unity and loyalty. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence*, 12(2), 9–17. <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/naujilj/article/view/215301>
- Okeke-Uzodike, O. E., & Subban, M. (2015). Public sector recruitment policies: Efficiency, effectiveness and consequences. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 13(1), 26–34. <https://www.businessperspectives.org/index.php/journals/problems-and-perspectives-in-management/issue-47/public-sector-recruitment-policies-efficiency-effectiveness-and-consequences>
- Olabode, O. (2012, July 18). Tribalism, nepotism, cronyism and general poverty. *Daily Post*. <http://dailypost.ng/2012/07/18/tribalism-nepotism-cronyism-general-poverty/>
- Onuoha, U. D., Ukangwa, C. C., & Otuzo, E. C. (2020). Work environment and the job satisfaction of librarians in private universities in South-East and South-West, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 3606. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/3606>
- Osieke, E. (2006). *The Federal Republic of Nigeria*. Forum of Federations. <https://forumfed.org/document/the-federal-republic-of-nigeria/>
- Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999). *Corruption and government: Causes, consequences, and reform*. Cambridge University Press.

- Segun, J., Loromeke, R. E., & Olanrewaju, I. P. (2014). Quota system, federal character principle and admission to Federal Unity Schools: Barriers to learning in Nigeria. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2(2), 1–10.
<https://www.ijims.com/uploads/a68aad8fc57772239123D1.pdf>
- Sikiman. (2016, November 1). Likert scale questionnaire analysis. *SJconsult*.
<https://sikiconsult.blogspot.com/2016/11/basic-tips-for-likert-scale-analysis.html>
- Taiwo, A. G., & Kolawole, O. P. (2021). Corruption and tribalism in Nigeria political context. In J. W. Carter (Ed.), *Light in a once-dark world: Contemporary issues in Nigerian Christianity* (Vol. 4, pp. 162–177). The American Journal of Biblical Theology.
<https://www.biblicaltheology.com/light/Corruption%20and%20Tribalism%20in%20Nigeria%20Political%20Context.pdf>
- Ufuoma, E., & Omekwu, C. O. (2022). Challenges of recruitment and selection process of librarians in Federal University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria. *International Journal of Knowledge Content Development & Technology*, 12(2), 29–40.
<https://journals.sfu.ca/ijkcdt/index.php/ijkcdt/article/view/611>
- Weiss, H. M. (2002). Deconstructing job satisfaction: Separating evaluations, beliefs and affective experiences. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12(2), 173-194.

Appendix Questionnaire

University Library, Federal University of
Petroleum Resources, P.M.B. 1221,
Effurun, Delta State, Nigeria
December, 2021

Dear Respondents,

I am currently conducting a research on librarian's perception of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices and their effect on job satisfaction and service delivery in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria. This questionnaire is to assist the researcher in gathering relevant and useful information needed strictly for academic purposes only. All information provided by you will be treated confidentially and used mainly for the purpose of this research.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation and God will richly bless you.

Yours Faithfully,

Researcher

SECTION A: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) the appropriate box as applicable to you.

1. Name of Institution.....
2. Designation: Graduate Assistant () Assistant Librarian () Librarian II () Librarian I ()
3. Years of Experience: 1-10 years () 11-20 years () 21-30 years () 31 years & above ()

SECTION B: Library Management Staff’s Perceived Engagement in Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) the appropriate box indicating: A (Agree), D (Disagree), U (Undecided).

4. Do librarians’ staffs in the library management cadre engage in the practice of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria?

S/N	Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices	A	%	D	%	U	%
1	Favouring a subordinate over others because of tribal affiliation.						
2	Supporting a subordinate at the expense of others because of religious affiliation.						
3	Granting favours to a subordinate while sidelining others because of family affiliation.						
4	Grating unmerited favours to some groups of subordinate because they belong to same syndicate, cliques or cohorts.						
5	Perverting judgment in favour of a subordinate over another because of tribal, religious, family or factional affiliation.						
6	Engaging in the act of nepotism in favour of friends or ally when appointing unit heads at the expense of qualified subordinates.						
7	Engaging the act of cronyism to favour a friend or ally at the expense of qualified subordinate.						

SECTION C: Extent of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism Practices in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) the appropriate box indicating: VHE (Very High Extent), HE (High Extent), LE (Low Extent), VLE (Very Low Extent).

5. What is the extent of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism practices in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria?

S/N	Extent of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favoritism Practices	VHE	HE	LE	VLE
1	Favouring a subordinate over others because of tribal affiliation.				
2	Supporting a subordinate at the expense of others because of religious affiliation.				
3	Granting favours to a subordinate while sidelining others because of family affiliation.				
4	Grating unmerited favours to some groups of subordinate because they belong to same syndicate, cliques or cohorts.				
5	Perverting judgment in favour of a subordinate over another because of tribal, religious, family or factional affiliation.				
6	Engaging in the act of nepotism in favour of friends or ally when appointing unit heads at the expense of qualified subordinates.				
7	Engaging the act of cronyism to favour a friend or ally at the expense of qualified subordinate.				

SECTION D: Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism on Job Satisfaction of Librarians in Federal University Libraries in Southern Nigeria

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) the appropriate box indicating: A (Agree), D (Disagree).

6. What are the effects of tribalism/ethnicity and favouritism on job satisfaction of librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria?

S/N	Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism on Job Satisfaction of Librarians	A	%	D	%
1	Can lead to conflicts and fragmentation of workplace unity.				
2	Causes preferential treatment that can lead to envy and hatred.				
3	Leads to working in an unfair environment that result to job dissatisfaction.				

4	Leads to lack of confidence that negatively affects job satisfaction				
5	Leads to lack of quality in leadership positions in the library that is capable of causing job dissatisfaction.				
6	Tribalism and favouritism-based pay system can lead to detachment from the institution, which transmits to job dissatisfaction.				
7	If employees are in competition with a privileged individual, their probability of promoting is quite low which causes job dissatisfaction				
8	The climate of unfair competition arising from nepotism and favouritism adversely affects job satisfaction				

SECTION E: Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism on Service Delivery by Librarians in Federal University Libraries

INSTRUCTIONS: Please tick (√) the appropriate box indicating: A (Agree), D (Disagree).

7. What are the effects of tribalism/ethnicity and favoritism on service delivery by librarians in federal university libraries in Southern Nigeria?

S/N	Perceived Effects of Tribalism/Ethnicity and Favouritism on Service Delivery by Librarians	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Encourages laziness.				
2	Decrease in the quality of services rendered to users in the library.				
3	Leads to staff failure to independently carry out duties due to preferential treatment.				
4	Encourages workplace deviance that affects service provision.				
5	Encourages lackadaisical attitude to work which leads to poor services delivery.				
6	Leads to negative emotions that affect job performance and productivity.				
7	Leads to decrease in morale which leads to lower performance and productivity.				
8	Can result to loss of faith in library management/leadership which affects work enthusiasm and ultimately leads to poor service delivery.				