

AFFECTIVITY, INFORMATION SHARING, INFORMATION POLITICS AND CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING SKILL OF LIBRARY MANAGERS

By

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Abstract:

This article has been able to show the synergy between affectivity, information sharing, information politics and creative problem solving skill of library managers. It was able to identify the fact that the decisions reached by library managers in the daily discharge of their duties is greatly influenced by their emotional state which propels the ways they handle issues in relation to information identification, gathering, storage and dissemination which is referred to as the politics of information. It is their attitude to this politics of information that will guide and direct their information sharing for specific purposes especially for creatively solving daily routine challenges and problems.

Keywords: Affectivity, Information Sharing, Information Politics, Creative Problem Solving

Introduction

Some actions being carried out by individuals are mostly affected by what they think and their emotional judgment. This is referred to as affect. Affect is the experience of emotion that can occur without extensive perceptual and cognitive encoding and is often the first reaction to a given stimuli (Zajonc, 1980). Affectivity is seen to be "relating to, arising from, or influencing feelings or emotions" (*Merriam Webster Dictionary*, 2014).

Affectivity is one of the three domains of psychology where there are: cognitive, conative and affective. Harmon-Jones, Gable and Price (2013) assert that affective states are considered "psycho-physiological constructs and are split up into three main categories, namely: valence, arousal and motivational intensity". There are also two extremes of affectivity. These are negative and positive affectivity (Toegel, Anand & Kilduff, 2007; Harmon-Jones, Gable, and Price, 2013). Negative affectivity is related strongly to the personality trait of neuroticism and positive affectivity is related strongly to the

personality trait of extraversion. While individuals with high negative affectivity are more prone to experience less job satisfaction, those with high positive affectivity are more prone to be satisfied in most dimensions of their life, including their job. Differences in affectivity are likely to impact how Individuals will perceive objective job circumstances like pay and working conditions, thus affecting their satisfaction on that job (Brief & Weiss, 2002).

Knowledge@Wharton Partners (2007) in their study to determine if positive and negative attitudes drive performance in the workplace asserts that "affect matters because people are not isolated 'emotional islands ' Rather, they bring all of themselves to work, including their traits, moods and emotions, and their affective experiences and expressions influence others". They went forward to report that employees' moods, emotions, and overall dispositions have an impact on job performance, decision making, creativity, turnover, teamwork, negotiations and leadership. In a study report, Toegel, Anand and Kilduff, (2007) concluded that:

results from a study of 94 members of a recruitment firm confirmed that those active in providing emotional help to others in the workplace tend to possess a combination of managerial responsibility and a high self-monitoring or high positive affectivity disposition. By contrast, when members were low in positive affect or self-monitoring they provided less emotional help to others, irrespective of the level of managerial responsibility

It is then evident that a person's state of affectivity has a lot of impact on his ability to analyse a problem and offer positive solutions to identified problems. Library managers are challenged with issues that require decisions to be made and their decisions are greatly influenced by such factors as affectivity that has a direct influence not only on the decisions they make but also on their approach to information politics and information sharing. This study examined the relationship between affectivity, information politics, information sharing and creative problem solving skills of library managers.

Information Politics of Amongst Library Managers

The extent to which the sources of information collected by authoritative spaces follow certain principles say, inclusivity, fairness and scope of representation could be regarded as the numerous Issues that the information managers contend with in their daily routine - what is the best method for the production and distribution of information?

Who should have the ownership right of information? And On what basis should the stratification of information be done? (Allen, 1990).

Gulati and Raina (2000) observe that at the dawn of the 21st Century, Library and Information Professionals (LIPs) are experiencing the consequences of three major paradigm shifts which are:

1. The transition from paper to electronic media as the dominant form of information dissemination, storage and retrieval.
2. Convergence of different media, such as text, graphics, and sound, into multimedia resources, has direct impact on this transition.
3. Increasing demand for accountability, with focus on quality customer services, performance measurement, bench marking and continuous improvement.

This paradigm shift as it affects library managers and the constant changing information seeking behaviour of man are all contributory factors to what is today referred to as "information literacy". The definition of information literacy (IL) by the Middle State Commission on Higher Education as reported in Ojedokun (2007) is:

... an intellectual framework for identifying, finding, understanding, evaluating and using information. It includes determining the nature and extent of needed information; accessing information effectively and efficiently; evaluating critically information and its sources; incorporating selected information in the learner's knowledge base and value system; using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; understanding the economics, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and information technology; observing laws, regulations, and institutional policies related to the access and use of information (p.23)

At this juncture, it is pertinent that information and politics be defined. While information is defined as "data that have been subjected to some processing functions capable of answering user's query, be it recorded, summarized or simply collected that would help in decision making ... the source and media of communication notwithstanding" (Uwem in Uhegbu, 2007), politics is "the practice and theory of influencing other people on a civic or individual level" (Wikipedia, 2014). A fusion of these definitions lead to the concept of "infopolitics". Travica (2005) has defined "infopolitics in terms of power, agendas and fights/flights that concern organisational information and IT. Sitting at the nexus of contemporary organisations, information and IT constitute high political stakes. ... By having some special knowledge that

others consider a resource, the knowledge holder can influence thought and behavior of others". This author thus submits that information politics (infopolitics) is:

the practice and theory of influencing other people in an intellectual framework for identifying, finding, understanding, evaluating and using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose; understanding the economics, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and information technology including formats of presentation and different search tools and also being familiar with prevailing policies related to the access and use of information

The practice of information politics in the library deals with a library's culture in relation to how it manage its information resources in terms of what information to provide, whom to provide for and means of dissemination, These backdrops are informed by the objectives establishing the particular library.

Generally in the information world of today, Information Politics have generated such issues as "Open Access" and "Freedom of Information", "Information Commons", etc for the information managers of the 21st Century, Open Access (OA) was an initiative at a convention fn Budapest by the Open Society Institute in early December 2001 and at that meeting Open Access (OA) was defined as:

free availability on the Internet, permitting users to read, download, copy distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical Darners other than those inseparable from gaining access to the Internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution and the only role or copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited The Global Network on Global Public Goods, as cited in Okoye & Ejikeme, 7011).

This presupposes that every published work on the Internet is to be open for free access and consumption by the general public, thus removing or reducing the economic right of the author. In this political environment, it is only the legal right of the author that is protected based on the Freedom of Information Act.

"Information wants to be free" is a known slogan amongst technology activists who are against the limitation placed on access to information arguing that information should be left in the public domain. These agitations for Open Access and Freedom of Information (FOI) evolved in the promulgation of laws and acts by different countries giving legal rights to certain limit of information and free access to information placed in the public domain. These agitations and accompanying rights have their limits in government publications and certain forms of information that are expected to enjoy a level of privacy, indicating that there is no absolute freedom. Freedom of Information (FOI) is therefore the:

fundamental human right recognized in international law ... understood more generally as freedom of expression in any medium, be it orally, in writing, print, through the Internet or through art forms...may also refer to the right to privacy in the context of the Internet and information technology...can include opposition to patents, opposition to copyrights or opposition to intellectual property in genera/(Wikipedia, 2014).

Reitz (2004) more succinctly describes FOI as:

The statutory right of public access to official information compiled and maintained by federal government agencies, embodied in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) passed by the U.S. Congress in 1966 and subsequently enacted in most European and UK countries. Under the FOIA, applicants who request in writing specific information must be supplied with copies of the requested documents or records within a designated period of time, Disclosure of information that might prove harmful to national defense, foreign relations, law enforcement, commercial activities of third parties, or personal privacy is exempted.

The *Online Business Dictionary* (2014) also sees Freedom of Information as the "right of a citizen to be informed in writing if a governmental agency holds certain information and to request its disclosure. If refused, he or she can demand to be given the cause of refusal in writing". The implication of FOI and Open Access initiatives for library managers is numerous. The agitations are for transparency, education, openness, general protection against mismanagement and corruption, accountability and good governance and free flow of information thus encouraging information sharing but the library manger who is a professional in his discipline applies logic and reasoning in

the discharge of his information provision duties. As a link between the information and information seeker, the library manager is obliged to ensure that users do not violate the legal rights of authors and also ensures fair use of available information resources.

With the prevailing influx of information in our world today, the book "Behind the Practice of Information Politics" made an expose of the politics of information devices on the Web, (as elsewhere) where sources of information are in constant competition with each other for the privilege of providing information. They compete for inclusion as well as prominence in all manner of information spaces. They also compete to be the leading information, the source that matches the information requested or given at any particular time. The competition is particularly fierce for placement in authoritative spaces. It is the duty of library managers to treat the extent to which the sources of information collected by authoritative spaces follow certain principles say, inclusivity, fairness and scope of representation, http://www.govcom.org/publications/full_list/rogers_info-politics_chap1.pdf. These, as stated earlier are to ensure management of access, use and manipulation of available information on the Net. To achieve this, some sort of copyrights (legal rights) are protecting information available on the Net, even the sites are protected.

In an attempt to illustrate information politics on the web, (http://www.govcom.org/publications/full_list/rogers_info-politics_chap1.pdf) reports that as an individual using a web site on ukonline.gov.uk you "are not entitled (nor will you assist others) to set up links from your own Web sites to ukonline.gov.uk, (whether by hypertext linking, deep-linking, framing, tagging or otherwise) without our (ukonline.gov.uk) prior written consent, which consent we may at our absolute discretion, and without providing a reason, grant or withhold". Here information managers have to deal with issues of open access, freedom of information and related matters.

Information Sharing (IS): A Brief Explanation

The term "information sharing" traditionally means an exchange of data between two ends, a sender and receiver, which is achieved through such open and proprietary mediums that aid communication. Janssen (2014) has defined information sharing as the exchange of data between various organizations, people and technologies. In the earliest times, our forefathers communicated and shared information on such crude instruments as papyrus, stone, parchment, vellum, cave walls, tree backs and the cuneiform writing

that was done on clay tablets (Okiy, 1998). These forms of writing had so many limitations such as lacking in durability, flexibility, portability and storage.

In recent times, however, communication has developed and information sharing mechanism has also improved from the papyrus through clay writings to present prints and audio visual devices; and information and communication gadgets. They have encouraged communication and the sharing of information. Janssen (2014) explains that there are several types of information sharing by individuals through such media as mobile phones, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, e-mails and Black Berry Messenger. These are basically the social media sites. There are also information shared by organisations and these include the RSS feed of an online weather report, happenings related to the work area, etc. The computer scientist is of the view that there are four primary information sharing design patterns, which are: sharing information one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many, and many-to-one.

To enhance these means of information sharing mentioned above and to manage information in circulation, technological design patterns have evolved and they include blogs, wikis, really simple syndication, tagging, chats, wide distributed networks, intranets, cross-platform compatibility, application porting, and standardisation of IP protocols which have all influenced the development and growth of worldwide information sharing. These evolutions have characterised the 21st Century and have actively encouraged the sharing of information across social networks.

The term "information sharing" in the information technology lexicon has a long history. It is a general knowledge that information sharing became crucial in the United States after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 when government agencies and departments were charged to put in place a way for regularly sharing of relevant information amongst personnel as it was believed that "when information is hoarded instead of shared, those needing it may not be able to react in a timely manner" (Janssen, 2014). The 9/11 Commission was an outcome of the acknowledgement given to the place **of** information sharing. Information sharing is crucial to all establishments as it helps them **to** meet with their set objectives.

Libraries engage in resource and information sharing because no single library can meet all the needs of its community. In the library system as in most organisations, the customer is usually the focus of operations hence information sharing helps to promptly meet customer and client needs through

customer relationship systems, improving overall accuracy of public data and allowing members of the system have access to information that they might need and the entertainment that they want to experience.

Recent initiatives to standardise information sharing protocols (ISPs) include extensible markup language ("XML"), simple object access protocol ("SOAP"), and web services description language ("WSDL"), (Noabeb, 2014). For the enabling of information sharing however, technology provides controlled vocabularies, data harmonisation, guidelines and standards with regards to privacy, security and quality.

Information managers have devised different ways of sharing information, especially with the aid of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies). Traditionally, the library catalogue was of immense benefit in the identification and location of information on the library shelves with the cataloguing and classification mechanism. Then, with the joint and union catalogues, libraries can facilitate information sharing amongst and with participatory libraries in library cooperation relationships. But what is prevalent now is information sharing on blogs etc, library consortium, and teleconferencing which information managers have embraced wholeheartedly because of the effectiveness and efficiency of these media in information sharing. For example, the NLA Online Forum in Nigeria is a consortium where Nigerian library managers, and indeed, all librarians in Nigeria have opportunity to share and interact with professionals in the field in matters that bother on librarianship.

From the foreign scene, there is a network called "Rede Pergamum" (<http://www.pergamum.pucpr.br/redepergamum/>) which consists of using the Pergamum software—Integrated Library System (software Pergamum - Sistema Integrado de Bibliotecas) with the purpose of improving the overall quality of services to users promoting cooperation in information processing, as well as sharing sources of information. The network currently comprises 424 institutions and 5,854 information units of which 259 are libraries of universities and colleges. The number of network users is 7,268,216, totaling a collection of 18,331,964 items.

Islam, Ikeda, and Islam (2013) report of the study on "Knowledge sharing behaviour", focused to measure knowledge sharing behaviour of Information Science and Library Management (ISLM) faculties in Bangladesh found a significant relationship 0.000 ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) between attitude of educators toward knowledge sharing and their intention to share knowledge.

Creative Problem-solving Skill for Library Managers

Problem solving is a mental process of finding solutions to issues. The process is creative when it entails searching for a new and novel creative solution. Van-Gundy (1981 & 1988, p. 3) believes "a problem can be defined as any situation in which a gap is perceived to exist between what is and what should be". It is on this premise that a problem solving process is said to be one whereby a situation that is not as it should be is changed into one that is as it should be.

Torrance (1965) defines creativity as the process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, and so on; identifying the difficulty; searching for solutions, making guesses or formulating Hypotheses about the deficiencies; testing and retesting them; and finally communicating the results. Rickard's (1988) view of creativity is that it is "a universal human process resulting in the escape from assumptions and the discovery of new and meaningful perspectives, or as an 'escape from mental stuckness'. Proctor (2006) also defines creativity as "something which occurs when we are able to organise our thoughts in such a way that readily leads to a different and even better understanding of the subject or situation we are considering".

Creative problem solving (CPS), therefore, is the imaginative and innovative process of bringing about solution to known problems or challenges without assumptions. **CPS** will entail a process of identifying the wrong problem, gathering of ideas and placing the ideas in an array of suitability, x-raying all options and not stopping with the first good idea, involving a team of key personnel in the library, build up assumptions and challenge assumptions, encouraging prudent risk-taking and freedom of thought and different viewpoints on problems and also encourage a continual flow of ideas and respond positively to new ideas no matter who has offered it (Osborn & Parnes, 2014).

This process is illustrated by the Creative Education Foundation as follows:

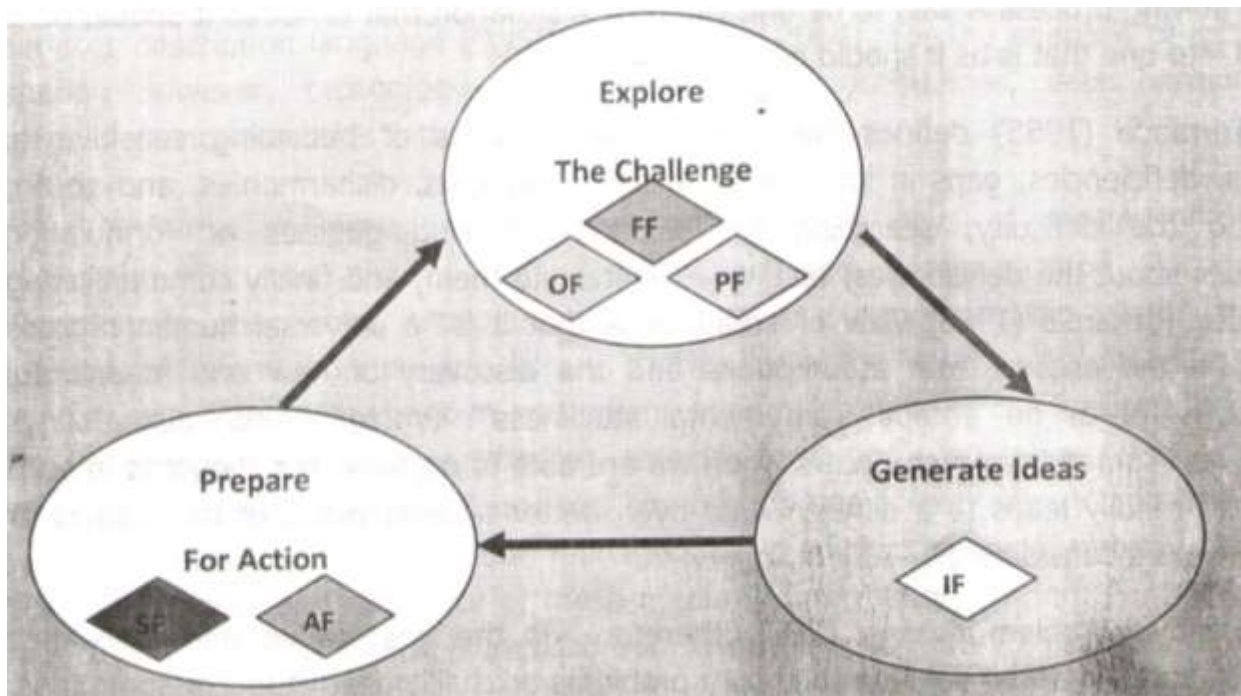


Fig 1.1: The Creative Problem Solving Process

Source: Osborn and Parnes in Creative Education Foundation, (2014)

From the illustration in Fig 1.1, solving a problem by library managers is a cyclical process, that entails exploring all what the challenge is about by imploring objective finding (OF), which means that as a library manager you will not be bias in analysing the problem before you, then you go on gathering data which is a fact finding (FF) process where you are to gather all relevant information pertaining to the problem. Then endeavour to ascertain the real problem which is the Problem Finding (PF) and redefine what you want.

Generate idea by engaging in Idea Finding (IF). Brainstorm to harvest all possible solutions thus arriving in Solution Finding (SF). You are to have alternatives of possible solution and you are not to limit yourself to just one. You are to have a set of criteria for selection of a given option that will make it actionable. The next step is Acceptance Finding (AF). Once an option is deemed the right solution you are to prepare for action noting what has to be done, what resources are available to accomplish it as a solution and then implement it (the solution). The process can be repeated for an alternative if the option employed does not seem effective to solve the given problem.

Impact of Affectivity and Information Politics on Creative Problem-solving Skill of Library Managers

Problem solving involves processing information. Emotion has been found to influence humans' cognitive information processing and decision-making (Schwarz, 2000). It should be noted that not all problems require the use of a Creative Problem Solving process as illustrated in Fig. 1.1. It is a common phenomenon that managers will fall back to previous strategies followed in solving problems that had been effective, relying on the processes of previous information gathering experience by selectively searching in areas close to where previous solutions have been found. Proctor (2006,) posits that executives may have learned from past experience that a particular way of dealing with a problem usually leads to a satisfactory solution and that "constant successful application of the approach reinforces the belief that this is the correct way to approach the problem, and even the only way to approach the problem". When a new problem arrives that defies solution by the learned approach, executives become stuck and do not know what to do", this is information politics.

Forgas (1995) reports that affect influences information processing (how people receive, store, integrate, retrieve, and use information), and subsequent behavioural responses- A study by Moreno (1998), to examine the impact of affective reactions on corporate managers' risky decision making, using prospect theory and other previous research, it was found that managers often consider their affective state consequently take risky decisions. In his study, Moreno (1998) asked corporate managers to choose between investments alternatives that varied in degree of risk where in:

each decision scenario, an affective context was constructed to elicit a negative or positive affective reaction toward one of the alternatives. Each of the scenarios investigated had a gain and a loss version. Experimental and control subjects' choices were compared to determine if affective reactions to specific data within a decision context can impact risky decision making. The results indicated that affect can significantly impact managers' risky behavior

Putting this result into the library scenario; it will be deduced that the ability of library managers to solve a problem creatively is influenced by affective reactions which impact managers' risky decision making.

Information Sharing for Creative Problem-solving by Library Managers

Information has special characteristics. It is easy to create but hard to trust. It is easy to spread but hard to control. It influences many decisions. These special characteristics (as compared with other types of goods) complicate many standard economic theories (Beth, 1990).

Feldman and March (1981) and Travica (2005) suggest that information could support power in even subtle ways. For instance, information managers that accumulate periodical reports on their desks implicitly signal their place in organisational hierarchy. Therefore, mere possession of organised data, rather than using it in decision making, is an aspect of power. Organizational scholars have also addressed technology in conjunction with information and power. Information sharing within an organisation is for growth and development within the industry, as well as the initiator of such information. In a study by Barley (1986, 1990) shifting attention to know-how of modern n used for medical purposes, he found that knowledge of using computer tomography and interpreting its output made technicians more powerful than radiologists, who had a power advantage while X-ray technology was in fashion.

Information sharing is thus a necessity for organisational growth especially in decision making processes. Libraries are influenced by the computers and communications networks that manipulate and transmit information yet the rhetoric and technology of information management have far outpaced the ability of people to understand and agree on what information they need and then to share it. Skimmer (2014) in his tenth key principle of information management advocates that a library manager should develop a sharing culture, understand his/her information politics and give attention to the cultural dimension of information which is essential for exploiting its value.

Sample Theories of Leadership Applicable to Library Management.

Individual differences in problem solving and decision making are considerations for understanding the dynamics of the theoretical base for affectivity, information sharing, information politics and creative problem solving of library managers. Several theories in other fields of study provide ample insight into library management and information utilization.

The first such leadership theories worth exploring are the "Trait Theories". These theories argues that effective leaders share a number of common personality characteristics, or traits (for example, integrity, empathy, assertiveness, good decision-making skills, and likeability) that are helpful

when leading others. The two major branches of the trait theories are behavioural and contingency theories. *Behavioural Theories* have their focus on how leaders behave. For instance, do leaders dictate what needs to be done and expect cooperation? Or do they involve their teams in decision-making to encourage acceptance and support? The *Contingency Theories* bother on how the situation influences good leadership. For the purpose of this study the contingency theory is adopted because it accommodates the fact that there is no one pattern of leadership. Rather a good leader is expected to go with the situation analysing whether a library manager should be more people-oriented or task-oriented?

The Hersey- Blanchard Situational Leadership theory

The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership theory is the framework for the contingency theory analysis of this study. "The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership theory was created by Dr Paul Mersey... and Ken Blanchard" (The Mindtools, 2014, www.Leadership-central.com). The advocacy for this theory is that leaders are to understand the situation of the problem and then place more or less emphasis on the job or the task and more or less emphasis on the people they are leading depending on the situation. This theory suggests there are four leadership styles:

First is "Telling" (S1), Leaders tell their subordinates what to do and how to do it; secondly is "Selling" (S2) as leaders sell their message to get followers on board by providing information and direction and involving a good communication flow; thirdly is "Participating" (S3) suggesting that leaders work with the team, building relationship and sharing decision-making responsibilities; and lastly is "Delegating" (S4) which presupposes that leaders decentralise responsibilities by passing most responsibilities to others. Hence while styles one and two focuses on the job, three and four are focused on developing team members' abilities.

At this juncture it is worth knowing that this theory recognises the place of affectivity in the leaders' styles as there is an analysis of four different maturity levels. A highly matured leader delegates responsibility. Emotions are seen as a driving force in determining a leaders' maturity level. A question that could arise among others is: how far can a leader control his emotions to make objective decisions? Library managers that apply this theory in decision making or in the creative problem solving will allow team play in the process as illustrated in Fig 1. 2.

Conceptual Model for the Study

Hornby (2005) sees a model as a simple description of a system used for explaining how something works or for calculating what might happen. The conceptual model shown in Fig. 2.2 is self designed by the researcher and will be used for this study.

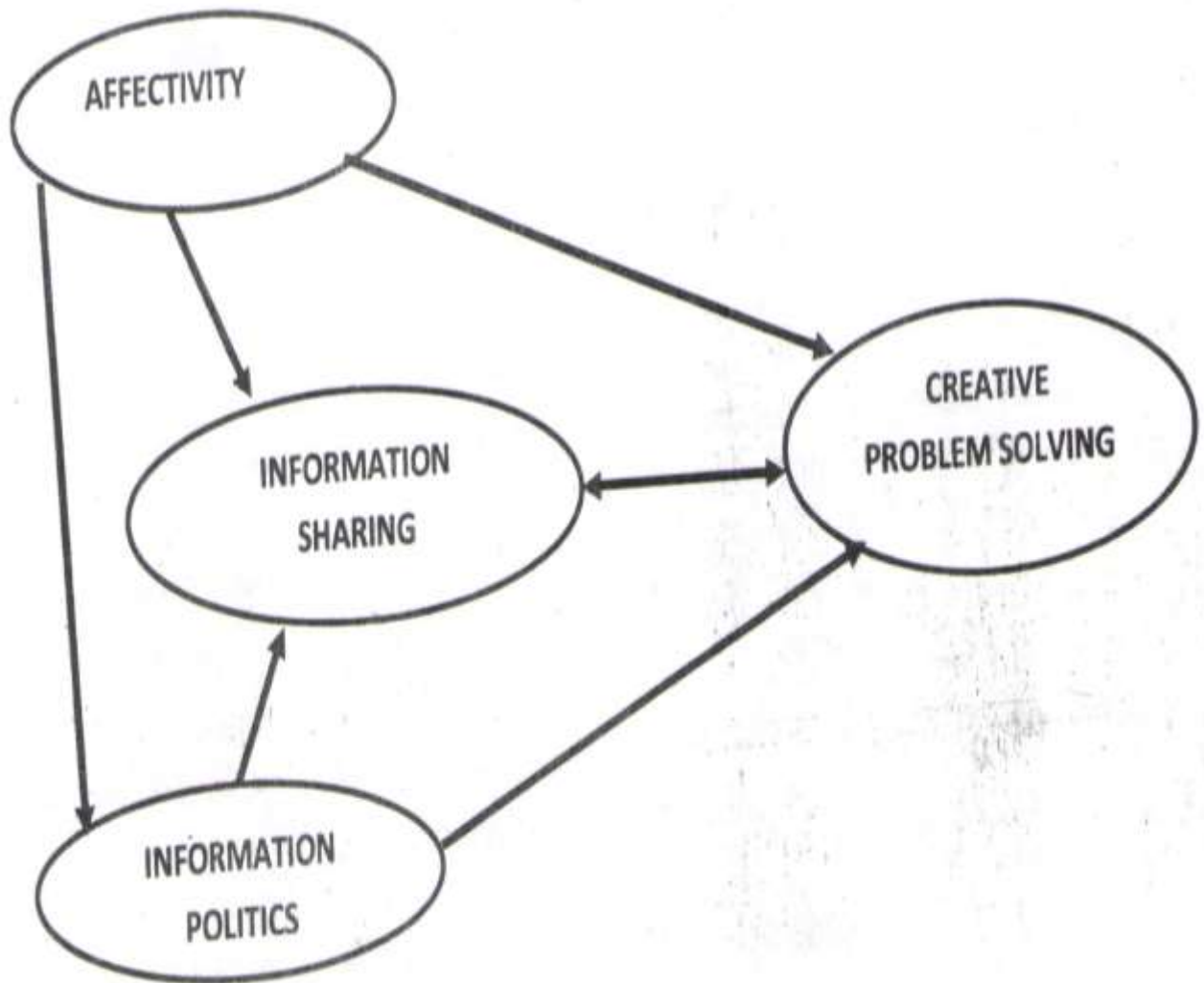


Fig. 1.2 Self developed conceptual model for affectivity, information sharing, information politics and creative problem solving of library managers

From the concept above, it is seen that affectivity which is a psychological variable will influence a library a manager's beliefs and ideology which inform his stance in the processes of acquiring, processing, managing and handling of information (information politics). One fundamental aspect of problem

solving involves gathering information to better understand the problem space, and manipulating and sharing that information so that it invokes and creatively combines already-learned solutions and strategies for action.

The manager's emotional state, beliefs and ideas are contributory factors to the ways and methods he will disseminate and share information. If he is one with a positive affectivity, his subordinates will learn from his wealth of knowledge and skills because he is a proactive leader. The communication flow in the organisation is a continuum in the sense that when the library manager in conjunction with his subordinate have been able to create a creative way of solving a particular problem, in a similar situation in future, the same method can be adopted or adapted.

For instance, a library manager has realised from a previous critical situation that to ensure that a rare material is well circulated in the library for users, the material has to be kept on "reserve" and used under close monitoring by library staff. In future when another material is acquired into the library with same characteristics or as a result of high cost of purchase, the same solution in the rare material can be adopted for the second or related cases. Thus the management psyche and idea have helped in creatively solving a problem and the information has been applied over, and over again (information sharing).

Conclusion and Recommendation

Affective states have been shown to considerably influence cognitive information processing and decision-making (Schwarz, 2000), Skyrme (2014) in his tenth key principle of information management advocates that a library manager should develop a sharing culture, understand his/her information politics and give attention to the cultural dimension of information which is essential for exploiting its value.

Developing, establishing, and maintaining successful and efficient wide knowledge repositories will play a crucial role in enhancing knowledge-related performance for library managers who are in constant need of solutions to problems to bring about library effectiveness. This exposition has been able to identify the relationship between the variables: affectivity, information sharing, information politics and creative problem solving for routine management of the library as a service organisation.

It is therefore recommended that library managers, scholars and practitioners should understand the intervention of these variables in the course of their professional undertakings. This consciousness would impact positively on the

quality of their information services and, ultimately, user satisfaction. It is further suggested that librarians and library scholars pay closer attention to the theories of leadership. This would give them deeper understanding of the reasons for certain management actions and administrative inactions that are manifest in the library workplace.

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