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Effect of adequate academic staff-mix on staff job performance in south-eastern Nigeria Universities

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of adequate academic staff mix on staff job performance in south eastern Nigeria universities. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study consisted all academic staff of public universities in south eastern Nigeria. six hundred (600) academic staff were sampled using multistage sampling technique which involves random selection of three (3) Federal universities of university of Nigeria Nsukka, Nnamdi Azikiwe university Awka and Federal university of Technology Owerri and three (3) state universities of Enugu state university of science and technology, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu university and Imo state university. Four (4) faculties of Environmental Sciences, Natural/Physical Sciences, Engineering and Agricultural Sciences were purposefully selected based on government's aspiration as enunciated in the National Policy on Education to advance science and technology in the country. A random selection of twenty-five (25) academic staff from each faculty were used for the study. Two sets of instruments titled Academic staff job performance questionnaire (ASJPQ) and Academic Manpower Adequacy Inventory (AMAI) were used for the study. The two instruments were validated and had a reliability coefficient of 0.71. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation and percentages. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that academic staff mix is significantly related to academic staff job performance. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that federal and state universities in south eastern Nigeria, should scale up recruitments of more academic staff especially the senior academics to ensure improved academic staff job performance.

Keywords: Academic Staff, Staff Mix, Job Performance, Staff Adequacy and Universities

1. Introduction

Education is a tool for advancing a nation's socioeconomic and cultural development, as well as one of the fundamental human rights outlined in the United Nations Charter. It also inspires national advancement. One of the primary requisites for accreditation is human resources, which are crucial to the operation of the university system (Ifedili and Ifedili 2015). Academic staff has received more weight in the accreditation process as a gauge of universities' operational effectiveness. This is evident in the National Universities Commission's (NUC) scoring methodology, which assigns 68% of the score to factors such as funding, physical facilities, academic content, and libraries and 32% to staffing alone (NUC, 2019).

It has also been observed that as a result of academic staff shortage in many South-Eastern Nigeria universities and Nigeria in general and in a bid to sustain some of the courses without lecturers, the management of the institutions assigned additional courses to the available academic staff which invariably increased their workload. This as observed affects both students' performance and the academic staff output who handles between five to seven courses.

In other words, one of the main issues facing Nigerian universities is staffing, with less focus being placed on the impact on the quality of education. The National Universities Commission (NUC) was created in 1985 in response to the staffing crisis and given the authority to define minimum requirements for all programmes offered in Nigerian universities in 1988. As a result, the Commission created minimal academic requirements for every programme offered in Nigerian universities in 1989 in collaboration with the institutions and their faculties. The commission

approved the update of the minimum academic standards in 2007, which is now known as the Benchmark for Minimum Academic Standard (BMAS), following thorough deliberations on the necessity of having a revised version for all programmes.

In line with the BMAS currently enforced in all Nigerian Universities, for a certain degree programme, the permissible percentages of professors/readers, senior lecturers, and lecturers I and below are arranged in the academic staff mix by rank. The appropriate lecturer-to-student ratio, which is determined by dividing the total number of students by the number of lecturers available for a certain programme, is equally significant. The BMAS indicates that there are differences in the ratios of lecturers to students and the composition of the academic staff by rank among all degree programmes. The NUC established the following rules for the lecturer-to-student ratio and the academic staff mix by rank, as shown in tables 1 and 2, in order to guarantee that high-quality graduates are produced in Nigerian universities and are of a similar international level. (NUC,2019; NUC 2019, NBS 2010 and Oyebanji, 2012).

Table 1: The NUC BMAS for Lecturer/Students ratio and Academic staff mix by Rank

S/N	Faculty	Lecturer/ Students Ratio	Percentage of Professors/ Readers	Percentage Of Senior Lecturers	Percentage of Lecturer I and below
1	Science	1:20	20	35	45
2	Engineering	1:15	20	35	45
3	Medicine	1:10	20	35	45
4	Veterinary Medicine	1:10	20	35	45
5	Pharmacy	1:10	20	35	45
6	Management Science	1:30	20	35	45
7	Agricultural. Science	1:15	20	35	45
8	Environmental Science	1:30	20	35	45
9	Social Science	1:30	20	35	45
10	Law	1:30	20	35	45
11	Art	1:30	20	35	45
12	Education	1:30	20	35	45
13	Administration	1:30	20	35	45

Source: NUC 2019.

Table 2: Nigerian universities' average number of academic staff (1980–2019)

Year	The average number of academic staff members	Prof/Reader% (20% Required)	SL% (35% Required)	Lec1& below (45% Required)
1980-89	9,954	14.6	23.1	62.3
1990-99	14,808	13.9	23.0	63.1
2000-09	24,539	18.2	21.4	57.6
2010-19	70,964	14.2	24.7	61.1

Source: Statista 2022

As illustrated in table 2, hiring and keeping academic personnel is a major challenge for many

Nigerian institutions. The number of academic staff members fluctuated throughout the period, despite a record of rising enrolment, in the Nigerian university system, the number of academic staff did not increase in line with enrolment patterns as expected. The NUC's requirement that the academic staff be composed of 20% academic professors, 35% senior lecturers, and 45% lecturer 1 and below is remarkable, nevertheless, since the university system has not met this requirement. With more than 60% of the academic staff being lecturer₁ or lower, the majority of Nigerian institutions have a disproportionately low level of academic personnel. Thus, most of the universities have not been able to meet the NUC norm of 20% professors, 35% Senior Lecturer and 45% Lecturer₁ and below. This conforms with the finding of Oyebanji, (2012) in her study titled “Human Resource Situation in Nigerian Universities” which shows that most universities in Nigeria have not met the NUC required norm of academic staff in their right cadre (Professor/Reader, Senior

Lecturer and Lecturer I&II) which could affect the performance of the available academic staff.

In addition, it seems that NUC has not been able to carry out its strategy of requiring a PhD as the minimum academic qualification, given that the majority of the new universities depend on Federal University employees when their institutions are situated nearby. This suggests that the scholarly workforce at Nigerian institutions is inadequate, which would have an impact on the staff's performance level. This is consistent with Satope's (2014) study's findings, which indicate that a significant issue facing the Nigerian university system has been the disparity between the needed number of academic staff (Demand) and the actual amount available (Supply).

According to the analysis of the link between staff composition and academic staff job performance, mentorship and an institution's capacity to operate effectively depend heavily on the quantity and accessibility of academic staff within the necessary ranks. A substantial impact on academic staff job performance has been established when the proper mix of academic staff members, including Professors/Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturer I, Lecturer II, and Assistant Lecturers, are present in their ranks. According to NUC, BMAS (2007) regulation, all Nigerian universities are required to adhere to the lecturer/student ratio and the academic staff mix ratio by rank. The main purpose of these regulations is to guarantee high-quality graduates are produced in Nigerian universities and are at par with international standards.

Staffing has been identified as one of the major issues facing Nigerian universities, with less attention being paid to the implications it has on staff performance, according to some researchers,

such as Oyebanji (2012), in her study on "Human resources situation in Nigeria universities." The researchers believed that having academic staff members available at all levels would result in their doing their jobs effectively, based on the review.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The academic staff shortfall in the staff mix of the university system has been found to be the reason why the job performance of academic staff in South Eastern Nigerian universities has fallen short of expectations. Academic staff is required to carry out community service, research, and teaching as part of their main mandates; it is believed that this has had an impact on the quality of these activities. The bottom-heavy academic staff mix in the university education system appears to have hindered knowledge transmission, which is why academic staff mentorship looks to be inadequate.

Similarly, some academic staff appears not to be teaching effectively, conduct productive research and effective community service. Academic staff in their teaching mandate are expected to cover the course contents at all levels of the university education, conduct examinations and release students' results as at when due, but this seems not to be the case in most of the South Eastern Nigerian universities. In the area of carrying out research mandate, it is perceived that some academic staff do not contribute much to journals, chapter in books, monographs, occasional papers or being editors to scholarly journals/books and adding value to knowledge through book writing. On community service, it appears some academic staff are not doing much in performing public enlightenment programmes, disseminating research findings to university communities and host communities, render consultancy services to communities and agencies.

The perceived low job performance of the academic staff in their mix could be as a result of inadequate academic manpower in the university system. The effect of academic manpower shortage in the universities will be that the core mandate of teaching, research and community service will not be given the required attention. All these inadequacy issues seem to have gone a long way to affect the university system.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of adequate academic staff mix on staff job performance in South-Eastern Nigeria Universities. The specific objective of the study was to:

1. Examine the relation between the adequacy of academic staff mix and staff job performance

1.3 Research Question

1. What is the level of manpower adequacy in southeastern Nigeria universities?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the purpose of this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between staff mix and academic staff job performance.
2. There will be no significant difference between federal and state universities and manpower adequacy.
3. There will be no significant difference between federal and state universities and academic staff job performance.

3. Methodology

The study made use of the descriptive research of the survey design. The research is descriptive in nature because the study describes the existing situation regarding manpower adequacy and academic staff job performance in southeast Nigeria universities.

3.1 Population and Sample

In this study, 8,892 academic staff members from public institutions in Southeast Nigeria made up the population. Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states are the five states that make up southeast Nigeria. Academic staff members made up the study's sample of 600. States, universities, and participants for the research were chosen using a multistage selection process that included stratified random sampling, purposive sampling, and simple random sampling approach.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed in the initial phase to choose three federal and three state universities based on their ownership type. Furthermore, four faculties Environmental Sciences, Engineering, Natural and Physical Sciences, and Agriculture were selected using the purposive sampling approach. Additionally, the states included in the study were those where Federal and State institutions that have been around for more than 15 years and provide courses in the chosen faculties are located. Twenty-five lecturers from each faculty were chosen in the third stage using a simple random sample approach. The study included a sample of 600 academic staff members overall.

3.2 Research Instruments

The data for this study were sourced through primary source and inventory on academic

manpower adequacy. A self-developed instrument titled Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (ASJPQ) was used for this study. An Academic Manpower Adequacy Inventory (AMAI) was also developed for the study which consists of two sections (A & B). Section A which contained general information elicited information on the name of the university and year of establishment while section B collected information on Manpower Adequacy. All instruments administered were retrieved (100%) and data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.3 Validity/Reliability of the Instruments

To guarantee face validity, analysts from Test and Measurement department identified the face levels of the instruments in measuring what they were supposed to measure and made sure the instruments had the right questions that truly caused respondents to answer in the way that was intended. To assess the content validity, the experts' confirmation was involved. The experts verified that the instrument items accurately reflected the ideas being studied in terms of content specificity. The researcher employed the test-retest procedure to determine the instrument's dependability. Ebonyi State University, which was outside of the sampling state, was where the (ASJPQ) was administered. The work performance of twenty academic staff members was gathered through the usage of four department heads. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to compute the score derived from their answers. For the study, the ASJPQ's reliability coefficient of 0.71 was deemed high and dependable.

4. Presentation of Results

Table 3: Level of academic Staff-mix in South eastern Nigeria universities

Institution	Professors/Reader			Senior Lecturers			Lecturer I and Below		
	N	%	NUC Required	N	%	NUC Required	N	%	NUC Required
University of Nigeria Nsukka	100	18	20%	150	28	35%	296	54	45%
Nnamdi Azikiwe University	58	16	20%	119	33	35%	186	51	45%
Federal University of Technology Owerri	46	14	20%	90	28	35%	186	58	45%
Enugu State University of Science and Technology	55	14	20%	101	26	35%	229	60	45%
Emeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University	30	9	20%	87	28	35%	200	63	45%
Imo State University	27	11	20%	71	29	35%	146	60	45%
Total	316	13	20%	618	29	35%	1243	58	45%

Table 4: NUC Evaluation Criteria for Staff Mix by Rank. NUC Score = 33

	Staff Mix by Rank	Score	%
I	Consistent with NUC guidelines in all three categories or deviates from NUC guidelines by virtue of high proportion (over 20%) of professors in the programme	3	100
II	Has a high proportion of senior lecturers and a shortfall in the professorial cadre	2	67
III	Does not meet the NUC guidelines as a result of a preponderance in lecturers I and below in the programme.	1	33

Table 3 presents the staff mix in South eastern Nigerian universities. Critical analysis of the distribution of academic staff by rank indicated that South eastern Nigerian university system was experiencing a staffing or manpower shortage. The distribution of academic staff in the universities revealed that 18% of the academic staff in University of Nigeria Nsukka was within the bracket of Professors and Readers as against the 20% recommended by National Universities Commission (NUC). The percentage of Senior lecturers and Lecturers I and below in the same university were 28% and 54% as against 35% and 45% NUC recommendation. The table showed that

percentages of academic staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University was 16% for Professors and Readers, 33% for Senior lecturers and 51% for Lecturers I and below. These were against the standards of the NUC which were 20% for Professors/Readers, 35% for Senior lecturers and 45% for Lectures I and below.

Similarly, table 3 revealed that 14% of academic staff in Federal University of Technology Owerri were Professors/Readers while 28% and 58% were Senior lecturers and Lecturer I and below respectively, as against the 20%, 35% and 45% standard set by NUC. It was also evident in table 3, that academic staff within the rank of Professors and Readers in Enugu state University of Science and Technology were 14%, Senior lecturers 26% and Lecturers I and below 60%.

In a related manner, the table also indicated a mix of academic staff in Chukwu Emeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University, Uli Anambra State where 9% of the academic staff were Professors/Readers, 28% Senior lecturers and 63% were Lecturer I and below, as against the NUC recommended standards of 20%, 35% and 45% respectively.

In the same vein, the table revealed that 11% of the academic staff in Imo State University, were Professors/Readers, 29% were Senior Lectures and 60% of the academic staff were Lecturers I and below, which were not within the limit of NUC recommended standards of 20% of the academic staff to be within the ranks of Professors and Readers, 35% for academic staff and 45% for Lecturers I and Below. The disparity between the proportion of academic staff who were Senior Lecturers and above and those who were Lecturer I and below was wide. This implies that the level of Staff mix in South eastern Nigerian universities was inadequate and could lead to increased staff

workload thereby affecting their job performance in their core mandate of teaching, research and community service.

In reference to the NUC evaluation criteria for academic staff mix by rank, it was evident from the evaluation score in table 4 that none of the universities met the NUC score guidelines which fall on the last rating score of 33%. This was mainly due to preponderance in the number of academic staff within the ranks of lecturers I and below across of the universities sampled.

4.1 Testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between staff mix and academic staff job performance.

Table 5: Staff mix and academic staff job performance

Variable	No of Institutions	Mean	SD	r _{cal}	r _{table}
Staff mix	6	33.00	0.06	0.942*	0.707
Academic staff job performance	6	102.93	20.65		

*p<0.05

Table 5 presents the findings, which indicate that at the 0.05 level of significance, r_{cal} (0.942) was higher than r_{table} (0.707). The null hypothesis was rejected, this suggests that there was a substantial correlation between the job performance of academic staff and the mix of staff members. Employee insufficiency had an impact on the academic staff's work

performance in teaching, research, and community services at universities in South Eastern Nigeria. This relationship was strong and substantial in a favorable direction.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between federal and state universities and manpower adequacy.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to manpower adequacy in federal and state universities were computed using the “Academic Manpower Adequacy Inventory (AMAI)” and subsequently compared for statistical significance using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 6.

Table 6: Manpower adequacy in Federal and State universities

Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD		t _{cal}	t _{table}
Federal	3	26.00	15.52	4	4.246*	2.776
State	3	19.00	7.63			

*p<0.05

Table 6 shows that, at the 0.05 level of significance, t_{cal} (4.246) is higher than t_{table} (2.776), the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that there was a noticeable difference in the number of

academic staff that federal universities had compared to state universities, with the federal universities having a larger academic staff pool.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between federal and state universities and academic staff job performance.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to manpower adequacy in federal and state universities were computed using the “Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (ASJPQ) and subsequently compared for statistical significance using t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 7.

Table 7: Academic staff job performance in Federal and State universities

Type of Institution	N	Mean	SD	df	t _{cal}	t _{table}
Federal	300	39.00	19.45	598	15.771*	1.960
State	300	34.00	15.00			

*p<0.05

Table 7 shows that, at the 0.05 level of significance, t_{cal} (15.771) was higher than t_{table} (1.960), the null hypothesis was rejected. This suggests that because of the disparity in the adequacy of the academic staff, there was a notable variation in the work performance of academic staff members between federal and state universities in South eastern Nigeria.

4.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the academic manpower in south eastern Nigeria universities were inadequate, with the academic staff job performance being affected due to the observed staff shortages. This was considered as the major factor that affected some academic staff inability to complete their teaching syllabus, inability to attend conferences and seminars that would boost their academic outputs and as well disseminating of their research findings to the university community through community services.

4.3 Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it becomes imperative to make the following recommendations which would enhance the adequacy of academic staff mix and their job performance in the study area and Nigeria in general.

1. In view of the fact that the level of academic staff mix in the south eastern universities are inadequate, there is the need for the federal, state and universities managers in the area of study to declare a state of emergency in universities academic staff and scale up the recruitment of more academic staff to ensure qualitative teaching, research and community services for improved academic staff job performance.
2. The universities authority should source for funds and provide them as grant or seed money for academic staff on yearly basis to conduct individual/group research and dissemination of their research findings to the university community through seminars and skills empowerment to communities around the universities. This will translate

into more informed academic staff and would improve academic staff job performance.

3. The universities managers should ensure the academic staff of their universities meet the National Universities Commission staff requirement benchmark to ensure impassive academic activities even when some key academic staff leave for sabbatical, political appointment or other adjunct functions. This will ensure that available academic staff meets the institutions' mandate at all time with high job performance.

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