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Content Analysing Work *Performance* of Lecturers in Southwestern Nigeria

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Abstract

Lecturers in Nigerian universities, according to literature, are subjected to challenging workplace conditions that tends to inhibit their performance and subsequently, their ability to achieve the teaching, research and community development service functions of their job description. It, therefore, becomes pertinent that the work performance of lecturers be analysed to either support or negate existing literature on the subject matter. This study is qualitative in nature and data was gathered through in-depth interview schedule from nine universities across Southwestern Nigeria (three Federal universities, three State universities and three Private universities). Three face-to-face individual interviews were held with academic staff who were Heads of Department and/or Deans in each of the selected universities giving a total of 27 of such interviews.Data were analysed using content analysis. The study found out that there are hinderances surrounding the work performance of lecturers particularly in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and productivity due to challenging poor working conditions such as erratic power supply, increased workload, absence of certain office facilities and lack of research funds. This study thus supports existing literature.

Keywords: *Content Analysing, Work Performance, Lecturers, Southwestern Nigeria, Qualitative method*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The concept of work performance is multidimensional, but in this study, it entails teaching and supervision, research and publications and community development services. As it stands, the quality of tertiary education and education generally is a function of the research outputs and quality of teaching by university lecturers. Furthermore, the development and growth of any nation are dependent upon the quality of its educational system, which is essential to the capacity-building of present and future generations. Education continues to provide a platform through which individuals attain competence, self-reliance and skills (Osakwe, 2014). At the tertiary level, university education is largely instrumental to the industrial, economic, and technological advancements of any country. In this sense, university education is perceived as anagent of change that drives innovation and development particularly in the areas of the economy, technology, culture and overall institutions (Ukpai &Ereh, 2016).

Poor work performance among university lecturers could be attributed to lack of funds, inadequate infrastructure, improper teaching aids (laboratories, projectors, libraries, and computers) and irregular or lack, thereof, of salary as evidenced in some states in Nigeria. Similarly, Ologunde, Akindele and Akande (2013) reported that defective and smaller classrooms in public universities make students loiter around classes during lecture hours; thereby, creating distractions for both the lecturer and the students. The classrooms and offices are not well furnished and the electric power supply is erratic. Most of the public universities delay until notified of accreditation exercise by the National Universities Commission (NUC) before they equip their institutions with the appropriate facilities and improve on staff condition/welfare (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi&Egharevba, 2015). Some departments go as far as “borrowing” lecturers from other departments to make up for the appropriate number of staff that is expected.

Adetunji, Adetunji and Oyelude (2016), furthermore, revealed that most private universities in Nigeria have fairly adequate infrastructural facilities coupled with ownership interference and job insecurity. In some of these universities, hanging evidence shows that lecturers now suffer from the propagation of faith where they must attend fellowship or risk reduction in salary, they are exposed to arbitrary decisions of management; and they have no academic freedom.
This, to a large extent, triggered the interest in this current study.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Over the decade, university education in Nigeria has been treated with levity. Less attention is consistently given to funding, infrastructural development, the welfare of staff, and the university governance structure. The levity, according to existing literature, has impacted negatively on staff productivity, the quality of research outputs, and the world ranking of Nigerian universities (Simisaye, 2019). Most lecturers find it hard to commit to the teaching and supervision aspect of their work duty because of the heavy work and supervision load attached to it (Mawoli and Babandako, 2011). Also, there is restricted access to research funds, making it difficult to embark on quality research that can enhance academic pursuit and meet up with universal standard of an ideal university (Ohiorenoya&Eboreime, 2014). Furthermore, little or no effort is given to community development services making the involvement critically low (Ezeamama, 2019). What then is the current reality of Nigerian lecturers?
Academic staff in Nigerian universities are subjected to challenging workplace conditions that tends to inhibit their ability to achieve the teaching, research and community development service functions of their job description (Ukpai &Ereh, 2016). They contend with the problems of unconducive offices (Anijaobi-idem &Archibong, 2012), inadequate classrooms and teaching instruments such as projector (Babatope, 2010), inadequate funding for research (Akpan, Archibong & Undie,2016), lack of access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (Akuegwu, Ntukidem, Ntukidem & Jaja,2011), inadequate power supply (Agba, 2015), inadequate library facilities (Krubu& Osawaru, 2011; Ogbuiyi & Okpe, 2013), brain drain (Anokye, Okri & Adie, 2019), poor leadership and policy

implementation (Daramola & Amos, 2016), delayed promotion (Archibong, David, Omoike & Edet,2010), underfunding (Famurewa, 2014), cultism and other vices (Ajayi, Ekundayo & Osalusi, 2010), inadequate number of teaching staff (Asiyai, 2013), irregular payment of salary (Aina, 2002; Eneh,2007; Archibong, Bassey & Effiom,2010; Ajewole, 2014), job insecurity (Bawalla&Ogunyemi, 2018) and propagation of faith (Aremu, 2015) which can tend to inhibit career development and academic freedom.

2. The revision of the specialty literature

2.1 Challenges of Nigerian universities

Ahunanya and Osakwe, (2012) explained the internal difficulties as cultism, unionism, shortage of academic staff, as well as disruption of the academic calendar while Oladejo (2021) described the external problems as being linked inextricably to politics and proprietorial interference. The challenges confronting private universities can generally be summed up as a lack of infrastructural development and financing. The other challenges include exorbitant school fees, inequality, irregular payment, staff turnover and possible involvement in examination malpractices. Some of the challenges are discussed below

Poor Leadership

Another challenge is the value and quality of leadership at higher learning of education. Financial allocations and distributions are some important and fundamental indices for appraising the commitment of the government towards the development of the educational system in any country. However, the Nigerian government has been nonchalant towards committing to the provision and improvement of quality education of higher education as evidenced in the amount allocated to its course which has persistently dwindled in comparison to other African countries (Agba, 2015). On the part of the university administrators, misappropriation and mismanagement of resources seem to be the common problem the universities encounter. Research has shown that most disputes and closures that occur in Nigerian institutions since the 1980s were as a result of mismanagement and

totalitarianism of some administrators of the institutions(Oladejo and Adenuga, 2021). Other problems of poor leadership included staff union's lack of involvement in decision making and dismissing academics without following due process (Iyayi, 2016).

The Decline in the Quality of Research

Quality research in any institution has an essential role to play in the improvement, inculcation and acquisition of practical value positioning that is required for the continued existence of the members of academic staff and the institution as a whole. It has thus become essential in making research the core of university education considering the problems Nigerian universities now face especially with the poor attitude of governments towards research and inadequate funding of research programmes (Osezua, 2016).

External Control and Issues of Independence

Independence is another principle that the university educational system tries to maintain in its operational stability and actualization of goals. Academic freedom, independence and thus, accountability, is facilitated when sovereignty is inaugurated in the right prospect(Oladejo and Adenuga, 2021). However, in 1973, universities in Nigeria had a major dispute over the issues of autonomy and a review of the conditions of service occurred between the governing councils and university teachers. The review of their conditions of service was impeded and hindered by the top executives in the Federal Ministry of Education. University lecturers were thereafter ordered by General Yakubu Gowon to resume work or risk being dismissed and ejected from their executive residences.

Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities and Equipment

University infrastructure and equipment are fast decaying regarding maintenance as all the resources required for the quality education of higher learning are in very limited supply which poses a challenge to research work and learning. Some Nigerian universities offer technical education programmes but have no necessary infrastructural facilities and equipment to manage the programmes(Oladejo, 2021). A typical example is when universities offer computer courses and some

students end up graduating without ever touching a computer instrument. The dearth of infrastructural facilities and equipment in the universities is becoming repulsive which invariably is not befitting of the ideal educational environment. Students are now being taught in decrepit buildings and as Adewusi, Ogunyemi and Aluko(2017)stated, students were using kerosene stoves instead of gas burners to conduct experiments, specimens were kept in bottles instead of the appropriate places where such specimen should have been kept.

Cultism/Insecurity and Campus Brigandage

Cult-related activities in public universities in Nigeria have become a contemporary issue that has continued to subject everyone, members and non-members, academic and non-academic staff, the students, high or low and the general public, to constant fear. According to Oduwole (2015)and Osezua (2016), cultic activities threaten to destabilise and wear away the very essence of university education. The challenge creates a significant hindrance to achieving quality assurance in universities. The efforts of the Nigerian government to curb cultism in institutions of higher learning have not yielded any positive result and cultism has physically, emotionally and psychologically maimed and rendered a good number of youths useless (Ogbondah, 2015). The activities of the cult groups as well as other vices are ever increasing; thus, creating an enormous hindrance to quality education of higher learning in Nigerian universities. Lecturers, students, and families generally live in constant agitation since cult groups perpetrate crimes like rape, assassination, robbery and infrastructural destruction (Asiyai, 2013).

Political Interference in Public Universities

There has been political interference in the establishment of universities in Nigeria ever since the reappearance of the education decree in 1999. This continued the spate of the government's establishment of federal universities; and in 2002, the Obasanjo administration resuscitated the first open university in Lagos, Nigeria. It was later suspended in 1984. The administration also established the Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), Effurun in 2007 (Bawalla&Ogunyemi,2018).

2.2 Relevant Theoretical Literature

Contingency Theory of Leadership

In analysing the change of organizational structure of higher education institutions in Hungary using contingency theory, Kováts, (2018) found out that change of leadership led toacademic and administrative structure becoming more differentiated, creation of new faculties and administrative units leading to more standardized processes and more bureaucratic way of operation.

Contingency theory isa behavioural theory that contends that the organisational leadership style may be effective in some situations and otherwise in others.

The theory believes there is no best way of organising/leading; and, it was developed out of the need to understand the best way to manage employees.

Contingency theory proposes that various internal and external constraints are contingent upon the ideal style of organisation/leadership.

The theory argues that appropriate management actions depend on a particular parameter of any situation by identifying contingency principles based on the characteristics of the situation. The basic assumption of the contingency theories of leadership is that leadership is situational; be it success or failure**.**

The overlying viewpoint of the contingency theory is that situation, task and people involved determine how effective leader can be.

The structure of any organisation should take into cognizance both the micro and the macro components and the interrelationship within the organisation.

The university system has various administrative responsibilities with various leadership positions who should lead as situations occur because according to the theory, there is not a single best leadership and management style that leads to effectiveness(Ogunyemi, Adenuga& Lawal, 2019).

Critics such as Aver, Aaver and Cadez (2009), Bastian and Andreas (2012) and Christ and Burritt (2013), however, have explained that this theory generally does not explain why leaders with

certain leadership styles are effective in some situations but not others.

The theory did not adequately explain what should be done about a mismatch of leader and situation in the organisation.

3. Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature with the purpose of analysing the work performance of lecturers in some selected universities in Southwestern Nigeria.

The data was gathered through in-depth interview schedule from nine universities across Southwestern Nigeria (three Federal universities, three State universities and three Private universities). The universities included Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), Crescent University, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State University of Science and Technology (OSUST), Ondo State, Wesley University of Science and Technology (WUSTO), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile Ife, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) and Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu (OUI).Three face-to-face individual interviews were held with academic staff who were Heads of Department and/or Deans in each of the selected universities giving a total of 27 of such interviews. Data were analysed using content analysis.

4. Analysis and interpretation of the research data

4.1 Analysis

4.1.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants in the In-depth Interviews

Table below presents the socio-demographic data of the twenty-four (24) respondents purposively selected for the interviews from all the selected universities the study covered. On ages of the respondents, six (6) of the interviewees were between 41 and 45 years old, seven (7) of the interviewees were between 46 and 50 years old,

five (5) of the interviewees were between 51and 55 years old, five (5) of the interviewees were between 56 and 60 years old, and only one was above 60 years of age. This showed that majority of the interviewees were between 41 and 55 years old (18 participants). The sex distribution reflected 19 males and 5 females in participation. This implied that majority of the interviewees were males and this partly reveals the situation in most Nigerian universities where the male gender is prevalent in most of the institutions. Also, 23 participants were married while one was widowed.

On the participants' cadres, 19 of the interviewees were Acting Heads of department, while five (5) were Deans of faculties and colleges.

This means that majority of the interviewees involved in the qualitative study were Acting Heads of department in their various universities.

This is largely attributed to shortage of manpower from the rank of Professor to fill the post. This is not uncommon in most Nigerian universities as Professors occupy various administrative positions which span beyond university community to neighboring and international universities where they serve as directors of institutes, heads or chair persons of professional and academic bodies amongst others.

On their ranks in their various universities of employment, majority of the interviewees (9) were Senior Lecturers, five (5) were Professors, five (5) were also Readers, four (4) were in the rank of Lecturer I, while only one (1) was in the rank of Lecturer II. This connotes that majority of the interviewees (19) were within the rank of Senior Lecturer and Professor.

This is expected because to become a Dean or HOD, one must have attained the rank of Senior Lecturer or above. The only exception is if there are no Senior Lecturers or Professors available for the position as is the case for the private universities sampled.

Data from the table showed the nature of participants' employment in their universities. Twenty-two (22) of the interviewees were on full time employment in the universities surveyed while only two (2) were contracted as Adjunct Lecturers in the study. This implied that majority of the participants in the qualitative survey were on full time contractual employment in the selected universities. Also,

on the religion of the interviewees, data from the table revealed that seventeen (17) of the interviewees were Christians while only seven (7) of the interviewees were Muslims. This implied that majority of the interviewees involved in the qualitative study were Christians.

On respondents' length of service in their universities of employment, ten (10) of the interviewees had spent between 5 and 10 years in the university where the survey was carried out, six (6) of the interviewees had spent between 11 and 15 years in their current university of employment and five (5) had spent between 15 and 20 years in the university while only three (3) had spent above 20 years in their universities of employment.

This showed that majority of the interviewees (16 interviewees) had spent between 6 and 15 years in their respective universities. This is not uncommon as being in positions of authority in any university in Nigeria requires great experience.

The table also presents data on the University of the Participants of the qualitative survey. Two (2) of the interviewees were selected from WUSTO, two (2) of the interviewees were selected from Crescent, three (3) of the interviewees were selected from FUNAAB, three (3) of the interviewees were selected from FUTA, three (3) of the interviewees were selected from LAUTECH, three (3) of the interviewees were selected from OAU, three (3) of the interviewees were selected from OSUST, two (2) of the interviewees were selected from OUI and three (3) of the interviewees were selected from TASUED.

Socio-Demographic Data of Participants in the In-depth Interviews

SN	Age	Gender	Marital status	Rank	Post	Nature of employment	Religion	Length of service	University
i.	42yrs	Male	Married	L I	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	6yrs	WUSTO
ii.	45yrs	Male	Married	L I	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	7yrs	WUSTO
iii.	49yrs	Female	Married	L I	Ag HOD	Full time	Islam	10yrs	Crescent
iv.	41yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Adjunct	Islam	6yrs	Crescent
v.	56yrs	Male	Married	Reader	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	19yrs	FUNAAB
vi.	54yrs	Male	Married	Reader	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	23yrs	FUNAAB
vii.	63yrs	Male	Married	Prof	Dean	Full time	Christianity	22yrs	FUNAAB
viii.	58yrs	Female	Widow	Prof	Dean	Full time	Christianity	22yrs	FUTA
ix.	58yrs	Male	Married	Reader	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	18yrs	FUTA
x.	54yrs	Male	Married	Prof	Dean	Full time	Islam	17yrs	FUTA
xi.	52yrs	Male	Married	Reader	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	12yrs	LAUTECH
xii.	49yrs	Female	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	18yrs	LAUTECH
xiii.	46yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Islam	11yrs	LAUTECH
xiv.	51yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	9yrs	OAU
xv.	49yrs	Female	Married	Reader	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	13yrs	OAU
xvi.	56yrs	Male	Married	Prof	Dean	Full time	Christianity	19yrs	OAU
xvii.	43yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	8yrs	OSUST
xviii.	47yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Islam	11yrs	OSUST
xix.	43yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	10yrs	OSUST
xx.	44yrs	Male	Married	L II	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	6yrs	OUI
xxi.	56yrs	Male	Married	L I	Ag HOD	Adjunct	Christianity	8yrs	OUI
xxii.	52yrs	Female	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Christianity	12yrs	TASUED
xxiii.	59yrs	Male	Married	Prof	Dean	Full time	Islam	14yrs	TASUED
xxiv.	50yrs	Male	Married	SL	Ag HOD	Full time	Islam	8yrs	TASUED

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

4.1.2 Work performance of lecturers in the selected university

Theme: Work performance

Work performance for this study was measured in terms of teaching and supervision, research and publications and involvement in community development services.

Category 1: Teaching and Supervision

The position of the participants on teaching and supervision revealed that many of the participants complained about the heavy workload which has inverse effect on publications. There were complaints about the staff to student's ratio considering that in some institutions there are undergraduates and postgraduates whose programme could be part time or full-time studies most especially in state institutions. There were issues raised on the lack of personnel as a major factor

responsible for this increased workload which has adverse effect on the time academic staff has on teaching. Some of the views were captured below:

> *,,The students to staff ratio are still not good enough. We have undergraduates and graduate students to attend to and this tell on our health most times. And the school keeps admitting postgraduate students every semester into this faculty. This makes the workload very hectic most times. Although we still try to produce quality and you can attest to this by the quality of scholarships and grants our graduate students and colleagues win. … on the issue of result, most undergraduates' results roll in almost two weeks after their exams".*
>
> *IDI/Male/HOD/56yrs/OAU*

Category 2: Research and Publication

On research and publication, participants stated that they published regularly but would have performed better if there had been enabling environment and access to grants to aid their research activities. There were evidences that heavy workload and varying emphasis on research has effect on academic staff productivity in the areas of research and publication.

> *,,The emphasis on publication here is quite demanding but we still attempt to cope because there is limited support from this institution on training to access grants from TETFUND, CODESRIA and several bodies which partner with public universities for research. This equally fosters the increased participation of the members of staff and students in conferences, workshops and symposia to place us at par with our foreign counterparts".*
>
> *IDI/Male/HOD/54yrs/FUNAAB*

> *,,We always encourage the staff to go for conferences and publish to remain relevant in academics irrespective of the existing workload on them and the obvious infrastructural and financial constraints"*
>
> *IDI/Female/HOD/49yrs/Crescent*

Category 3: Community Development Services

Responses further showed that participants engaged in community development services in their various institutions, albeit minimally.

Though, the intent, content and process of executing the community development services varied. While some explained that they limited their community development services to their campuses only, others carried out their community development services outside the university campuses and most importantly in the host communities. Also, findings revealed that the community development services covered areas such as health, culture, education, and rural development initiative. Some community development services also offer scholarship privileges to some beneficiaries. However, it is important to note that pubic institutions offered community development services than their private counterparts when compared.

> *,,The support from the university on community development services has been largely low financially but the commitment of our members to affect lives has kept us going."*
>
> *IDI/Male/HOD/45yrs/WUSTO*
>
> *,,Ever since I have joined, I can say that the university has done very little community development services to foster community development but you cannot compare what we do here to the public university climate because of the little resources often allocated to us for such purposes."*
>
> *IDI/Male/HOD/43yrs/OSUST*

4.2 Interpretation

The work performance of some of the respondents was greatly affected by the lack of stable power supply, increased workload, absence of certain office facilities, lack of manpower required for certain field in each department as well as emphasis on research publications as a major determinant for promotion than teaching and community development service involvement.

Although, one of the respondents from a private university stated that stated conditions may not absolutely be the cause of low work performance. The respondent attributed work performance to intrinsic values of academic staff as a determinant of their work performance.

This finding is partly in consonance with the position of Oladejo (2021) that the workplace conditions in some Nigerian universities place is not permissive and palatable for staff efficiency because of the absence of basic facilities mainly centered around electricity supply.

The study also supports the claims of previous literature (Agba &Ocheni, 2017; Arijesuyo&Olusanya, 2011) that lack of basic amenities is common in Nigerian public universities and this was described as unfavourable working condition that badly affects employee's productivity and performance in their institutions.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that the academic staff experienced difficulty particularly because of lack of stable power supply, increased workload, absence of certain office facilities and lack of research funds.

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