WORK ENVIRONMENT, WORKLOAD AND LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

By

[1.]Oluwaseun Cecilia OLAGUNJU (M.ED)
Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ilorin, Kwara State
+2348133178312
oct4real@gmail.com

[2.]Adedayo Adeniran ODUNLAMI (Ph.D.) MNIM, MNAEAP, MHERPNET
Department of Educational Management,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ilesa, Ilesa, Osun State
+2348033035630
odunlamiadedayo111@gmail.com

&

[3.]Olufunso Titilope OGUNYEMI (Ph.D.)
Staff Development Centre
Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State
olufunsoyemi@gmail.com
+2347030594195

Abstract
The study investigated work environment, workload and lecturers' performance in Nigerian Universities. The descriptive design of the survey type was selected for the study. Data was collected to illustrate the current situation regarding work environment, workload and lecturers' performance in Unilorin and Kwara State University. The population of the study was made of 985 lecturers. Four hundred (400) respondents were selected as sample size using purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used. The instrument used was tagged 'Work Environment, Workload and Lecturers' Performance Questionnaire' (WEWLALPQ). The instrument used for the study was subjected to screening by expert for face and content validity, the expert determined the face level of appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what it purport to measure and ensure that it contain appropriate items that could actually elicit the intended responses. The reliability of the instrument was determined using a pilot test. The instrument was administered to 60 lecturers outside the study area. The instrument was administered twice within an interval of two weeks. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. Reliability Coefficients of 0.81 was obtained. The co-efficient value was high enough to make the instrument reliable and useful for the study. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings of the study revealed a moderate work environment and lecturer performance. Also, lecturer workload plays a moderate role in their level of performance. The study recommended based on this result that, lecturers should not be over loaded with work and duties in other to increase their performance. The university administrators should employ more lecturers and improve the provision of facilities to reduce the workload of the available lecturers and support the safety and convenience of the work environment.

Key words: University Education, Work Environment, Workload and Lecturer Performance.

Introduction

University education is crucial for national development and global sustainable goals. Its productivity is influenced by the working conditions of lecturers, which can affect their satisfaction,

stress, or motivation. (Awodiji & Ijaiya, 2019). The university education is the stage at which the nation's higher skilled, trained and qualified labour is produced to attain national development goals. It is established that no institution or nation can grow beyond its lecturers. University lecturers are the propelling engine which other agents revolve around in the achievement of university's goals and objectives as stated in the National policy of education. The academic staff of any university is its backbone and plays a significant role in the wheel ensuring its progress and goal attainment. They are the most vital asset of every university in a dynamic competition. Thus, they are to be motivated and encouraged so as to improve their performance (Awodiji, 2018). Lecturer performance could be ascertained in terms of teaching, research and community services which seem to be declining in Nigerian universities. Adunola (2011) and Ganyaupfu (2013), viewed teaching as a collaborative process which encompasses interaction by both learners and the lecturer.

It has been observed that teaching methods are vital in any teaching and learning situations, the method adopted by a lecturer may promote or hinder learning. It may sharpen mental activities which are the basis of social power or may discourage initiative and curiosity of the learner. There is no doubt that lecturers in tertiary institutions actually set the tone and process of learning in the institutions (Omwirhiren & Ibrahim 2016).. Therefore, they must be versed in their quality and quantity. The quantity is determined by the number of students given to a lecturer below which teaching and learning processes is relatively affected. This is referred to as lecturer-student ratio; this ratio varies from one discipline to another at the tertiary school level. Sciences have 1:12; the social sciences 1:20 while education and the humanities 1:23 (Hojo, 2021).

Experience has shown that some lecturer do not engage in writings and paper publications. Instead they seek the assistance of other colleagues in other institutions to include their names while they pay the bill. The aftermath effect of this is that such lecturer would not be productive in their fields of study. Promotion is not automatic rather it is based on certain criteria which lecturer must meet before they move from one level to another. Among other things, attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars are part of the criteria (Ibraheem, 2024). Hence, failure to meet up with this criterion will amount to waiting till the following year. One of the critical factors used in determining academic performance is research output. "Apart from competence in professional duties, research and publications are compulsory indices or indicators of assessment of academic productivity of lecturer" (Joccylyn 2015:21-22). Therefore, lecturer deficiency in the area of research and publications is an indicator of unproductively.

It has been observed that some lecturers in Nigerian universities are given additional responsibilities outside teaching which is their primary assignment is. Such responsibilities include Head of Departments, Directors of various Programmes, Dean of faculties, and other portfolios. In most times it appears that these assignments are too tedious to the extents that some lecturer does not have time to attend lectures, carry out research work, and attend conferences, workshops and even re-training programmes. Such lecturer becomes unproductive. Community service is a non-paying job performed by one person or a group of people for the benefit of the community or its institutions.

Services to their community have been undervalued in comparison to research and teaching which was not rewarded (Adekalu, Shittu, Turiman, Olohungbebe and Adio 2017). Higher education often perceives research, teaching and community engagement outreach as separate elements of the academic continuum (Krauss & Turiman, 2018). Community engagement is perceived as additional activities engaged by academics that contribute positively to the community wellbeing which seems to be lacking.

Just like research and teaching activities that university academics engage in, community engagement is often likely to increase lecturer performance. Experience has shown that lecturer participation in community service is very low. Some often complain that, it is not monetary rewarded. Lecturer performance can be attributed to various factors like: societal factors, institutional location, teaching and learning policies, and institutional factors. Among these factors, working environment and workload appear to be the prominent problem militating against lecturer performance in Nigerian universities. Experience has shown that employees perform better on the job when the work environment is favourable which reduces high absenteeism from work, sabotage among others (Oludeyi, 2015). It has been observed that work place and better physical environment of office boost the employee and ultimately improve their productivity. A better work place produces

better results. The provision of a suitable physical working environment for lecturers is one of the contributing factors to employees' dignity at work and productivity (Obadaya, 2016).

Physical work environment refers to offices, cubicles, buildings, and mobile workplaces in which workers perform their work. In the corporate world, it is believed that physical work environment rather than remuneration accounts for the level of employees' performance on the job most times. This is because the former is believed to have some bearing on employees' error rate, innovation level, absenteeism and turnover rate while the latter has a temporary effect on employees (Chandrasekar, 2018). This is not different from the academic world since every employee would require a good working environment for their productivity at work. It has been observed that lecturers are among the group of employees classified as knowledge workers whose work uses mental faculty and involves the use of information, creativity, and decision making.

Experience has shown that most universities do not have enough offices and therefore partition some of the offices for lecturers to manage which is likely to affect lecturer performance. It seems lecturer prefer having an office in a serene environment because it allows them to enjoy uninterrupted concentration required by the nature of their work which a rowdy office design does not cater for. Research finding shows that less distraction increases workers' productivity (Ajala, 2012).

Overloaded employees are liable to make mistakes, have poorer health, experience high level of stress thus frequently offend their co-workers or employers and seek employment elsewhere. Similarly an overloaded lecturer is likely to be a demotivated lecturer and this can lead to declined productivity which can be detrimental to the institution as a whole. Experience has shown that the workload of lecturers in most public universities appear to be excess. For instance, lecturer that teaches the regular degree, also teach part-time, Sandwich degree students and even Post graduates programmes

It is likely that increased workload of a lecturer improves short-term productivity, but in the long run, it increases long-term costs. It has been observed that when lecturer are overloaded with work, this may result to stress mistakes and lead to poor health and this may invariably lead to decline in lecturer productivity. Experience has shown that lecturer often complain of not having enough time for marking and recording of examination scripts because of the workload. This may not give room for thorough job, thereby resulting in loss of students' scripts while in a hurry to collate scripts to meet the deadline set by the management. The educational attainment of students depends on the efficiency of teachers; hence, the teachers' social, political, and economic well-being are very imperative. When lecturer performance declines, it has a correlation to the standard of education both in the short and long term.

Public universities in Nigeria are in two categories in terms of proprietorship or ownership. Those that are owned and managed by the Federal government and those that are owned and managed by the State government. It has been observed that federal universities enjoyed a stable and undisrupted academic calendar than state universities. Experience has shown that state universities often embarked on strike action due to irregular payment of salaries, inadequate physical and material resources among others could be responsible. The level of lecturer performance between the two categories of universities appears to be unequal. This study investigated through a comparative analysis of the differences. It is against this background that this study investigated work environment and workload as correlates of lecturer performance in Nigerian universities..

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the work environment, workload and lecturers' performance in Nigerian universities.

Specifically, the study:

i. examined the level of lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities.
ii. assessed the status of work environment in Nigeria public universities.
iii. examined the extent of lecturer workload in Federal and State Universities

Research Questions

1. What is the level of lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities?
2. What is the status of work environment in Nigeria public universities?
3. What is the extent of lecturer workload in Federal and State Universities?

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. Descriptive research was considered appropriate because it focuses on the observation and perception of existing situation, describes and interprets what is concerned with issues, conditions, practices. The research design is descriptive because it involves collection of data in order to describe existing characteristics as they exist regarding work environment, workload and lecturer performance in Nigerian universities. The population of this study consisted of 80,000 academic staff in public universities in Nigeria (National Universities Commission, 2024). The sample for this study consisted 400 lecturers from University of Ilorin and Kwara State University). Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample size. A self-constructed instrument designed by the researcher was used to collect data for the study titled "Work Environment, Workload and Lecturer Performance"The instrument was divided into two sections (A & B). Section A elicited information on the demographic data of the respondents while Section B contained 20 items on work environment, workload and lecturer performance. Section B was based on 4 scale rating from Strongly Agree (SA), with 4 points; Agree (A) with 3 points; Disagree (D) with 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) with 1 point.

The instrument used for the study was subjected to screening by expert for face and content validity, the expert determined the face level of appropriateness of the instrument in measuring what it purport to measure and ensure that it contain appropriate items that could actually elicit the intended responses. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method. In conducting the test-retest reliability for the questionnaires, the instrument was administered to 60 lecturers outside the study area. The instrument was administered twice within an interval of two weeks. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. Reliability Coefficients of 0.81 was obtained. The co-efficient value was high enough to make the instrument reliable and useful for the study. The researcher personally administered the instrument with the aid of trained research assistants. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities?

Table 1: Level of Lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities?

Lecturer Performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (30 - 91.31)	96	24
Moderate (91.32 – 105.81)	220	55
High (105.82 - 120)	84	21
Total	**400**	**100**

Table 1 showed the level of lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities. The result revealed that out of 400 respondents, 96 representing 24% had low performance. Those who had moderate level of lecturer performance were 220 representing 55% while 84 representing 21% had high level of lecturer performance. This implied that the level of lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities was moderate.

Research Question 2: What is the status of work environment in Nigeria public universities?

Table 1: Status of work environment in Nigeria public universities?

Lecturer Performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low (30 - 91.31)	26	6.5
Moderate (91.32 – 105.81)	272	68
High (105.82 - 120)	102	25.5
Total	**400**	**100**

Table 1 showed the status of work environment in Nigeria public universities. The result revealed that out of 400 respondents, 26 representing 6.5% had low status. Those who had moderate level of work environment were 272 representing 68% while 102 representing 25.5% had high status of work environment. This implied that the status of work environment in Nigeria public universities was moderate.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of lecturer workload in Federal and State?

Table 3 Lecturer Workload in Federal and State

	WORKLOAD	**FREQUENCY**	**PERCENTAGE**
UNILORIN	**Low (30-100)**	**64**	**16%**
	Moderate (100-200)	**150**	**37.5%**
	High (200-400)	**186**	**46.5%**
	Total	**400**	**100%**
	WORKLOAD	**FREQUENCY**	**PERCENTAGE**
KWASU	**Low (30-100)**	**32**	**8%**
	Moderate (100-200)	**160**	**40%**
	High (200-400)	**208**	**52%**
	Total	**400**	**100%**

Table 3 demonstrates lecturer workload in Unilorin and Kwara State University. From the table, it can be deduced that lecturer workload in Unilorin had a moderate level of 150 (37.5%) while that of KWASU had a moderate level of 160 (40%). It implies that the workload in KWASU as against Unilorin had a moderate level of (2.5%) differences. Also, Unilorin had 186 (46.5) high level of workload while KWASU had 208 (52%). This implies a difference of (5.5).

Findings of the Study

The findings revealed a moderate level of lecturer performance in Nigeria public universities. Awodiji (2018) opined that the academic staff of any university is its backbone and plays a significant role in the wheel ensuring its progress and goal attainment. They are the most vital asset of every university in a dynamic competition. Thus, they are to be motivated and encouraged so as to improve their performance.

It was discovered that work environment in Nigeria public universities was moderate. This is in line with Oludeyi (2015) who observed that work place and better physical environment of office boost the employee and ultimately improve their productivity. A better work place produces better results. The provision of a suitable physical working environment for lecturers is one of the contributing factors to employees' dignity at work and productivity (Obadaya, 2016). Also, Awojiji & Ijaiya (2019) argued that university education is crucial for national development and global sustainable goals. Its productivity is influenced by the working conditions of lecturers, which can affect their satisfaction, stress, or motivation.

Moreso, the findings also revealed differences in lecturer workload from the two universities. It implies that the workload in KWASU as against Unilorin had a moderate level of (2.5%) differences. Also, Unilorin had 186 (46.5) high level of workload while KWASU had 208 (52%). This implies a difference of (5.5).

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made.

(1) Government at both federal and state level should provide a conducive work environment to aid better performance of lecturer.

(2) Lecturers should not be over loaded with work and duties in other to increase their performance.

(3) The university administrators should employ more lecturers and improve the provision of facilities to reduce the excessive workload of the available lecturers and support the safety and convenience of the work environment.

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