Job Rotation and Job Performance of Career Administrators in Universities in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study focused on job rotation and job performance of career administrators in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study had one main objective. The survey research design was employed in the study. The population of the study consisted of 1,029 career administrators from where the 498 respondents were selected as the sample for the study through, a purposive sampling technique. The university career administrator's job performance scale was used for the collection of data. The instrument was subjected to face validation and internal consistency reliability and it was found out that the instrument met the accepted standard of reliability, thus, worthy for collecting the required data. The instrument was administered to the subjects with the help of research assistants. Means and standard deviations were used to answer research questions. Results indicated that career administrators were effective in their job. The major finding of revealed that the performance of career administrators in South-East Nigeria with regard to communication, decision-making, public relation and coordination were effective. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the government in collaboration with the supervising agency of universities should continually initiate, implement and evaluate realistic policies or decisions necessary for sustainable effective service delivery or job performance of career administrators in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Key words: Career administrators, job rotation, job performance, universities, job performance, indicated

INTRODUCTION

A productive workforce is indispensable in the achievement of organizational goals. The overall success of the university in achieving its objectives lies heavily on the performance level of her employees. Although, public universities have one of the best human resources among other higher institutions in Nigeria, there are manifestations of unsatisfactory performance of many employees. The career administrators are regarded as the custodians of the university's policies and decisions and their performance is critical to the achievement of the goals of the universities. Performance is an act of accomplishing or executing a given task (Mullins, 2005). Performance is the ability of a person assigned to specific duties to carry out such duties efficiently. Job performance, therefore is the achievement of specific tasks measured against predetermined or identified standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed (Saka and Haruna, 2012). In this study, job performance is the extent to which the career administrators are able to accomplish the task assigned to them and how the accomplished task contributes to the realization of the overall university goals. Job performance has some indices. These indices as noted by Obeki (2012) include scheduling and

coordinating meetings and appointments, maintaining office supplies, decision-making, recruiting, training and supervising junior staff and communication. Similarly The National Skill Standard Board (2000) states the following as the indices of job performance: gathering and analyzing information, communication comprising listening, speaking using information and communication technology, social relations coordination among others. However, the above mentioned duties are performed by career administrators but most generally and commonly done amongst them includes communication, decision-making, public relations and coordination which the researcher dwelt on.

It has been observed that the overall performance of staff in most of the public establishments seems to be deteriorating. Buttressing this, Ndu and Anabogu noted that the most common term used in Nigeria today to describe the general standard of performance in the public service in inefficiency. It is a popular consensus among many observers that public institutions in Nigeria have not measured up to the desired level of performance. These, therefore, pose serious challenges to both employers and employees in pursuance of set goals particularly in the universities in developing nations. Afolakemi (2006) reiterates that the Nigerian educational system, particularly at the tertiary level in the recent times

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has been in crises and the situation has recently been made worse by frequent strikes staged by staff resulting in low morale, poor attendance to work, apathy, absenteeism, corruption of all types among others. Nigeria seems to be facing immense challenges in terms of poor quality of products of higher educational institutions. It has been observed that a good number of graduates can neither express themselves nor write good official letters.

In the same vein, World Bank reports that the standards of education have fallen considerably over the past decades with low levels of competences in the work environment and that a university degree is no longer a guarantee of communication skills or technical competences. The World Bank further states that as a result of the above, Nigerian university graduates are commonly viewed as "half baked" and one cannot get five correctly crafted sentences in one paragraph from recent university graduates. According to World Bank reports on quality deterioration, some university graduates recruited as senior administrators cannot write a memo of three paragraphs, some of these half-baked products of higher educational institutions do find themselves in the labour market including appointments as career administrators in universities.

Observations show that most appointments, promotions and job placements in the public sector in Nigeria including the university system are based on paper qualification, political affiliation, ethnicity and religious inclination or on the connection and reference of the appointee to the people that matter and not necessarily through a competitive interview (Akpakwu, 2013). Seniority and quota system could equally be considered as a criterion for appointment and promotion in the public sector. Most of those employees, so, appointed or promoted including university career administrators may lack the basic knowledge and skills and may not be competent on the job. This could cause a lot of distortions and low performance in the system. This situation compromises the quality of services in tertiary institutions, thus, derailing the achievement of the university goals. Personal observation by the researchers shows that this trend has affected public tertiary institutions in Nigeria in general and those in the South East, Nigeria in particular. As a result, there is growing concern about the job performance of career administrators. This is evident in some of the complaints and reports from the heads of academic units and faculties on the inefficiency of some of these employees in writing official memos, late coming to work and failure to meet deadlines for preparation of important working document. The low score of many of these career administrators in staff appraisal exercise and their failure in promotion interview may be an indicator of poor performance.

Another problem is the overemphasis on the accumulation of wealth and its display among Nigerians which appears, so, dramatic in the psyche of people in the South-East, Nigeria. Some staff in public institution mortgage their conscience and integrity in pursuance of wealth through foul means ranging from extortion of money from clients before services are rendered to abandoning of one's duty post in the course of the marketing of certain products in offices among others. Eze (2003) describing the situation noted that what happens in the larger Nigerian society has crept into educational institutions. Staff no longer render services to clients unless their palms are "greased". Mails are either delayed or not treated at all. Stressing on the negative impact of this ugly trend, Ogusaju (2001) posits that no educational system devoid of culture and beliefs will ever meet the needs of the society. According to Ogunsaju, the values, devotion, hard work and trust among others are becoming weaker at present which could be attributed to rapid social change.

Ascertaining the extent of job performance among career administrators in the university system is not enough; investigating the correlates of their job performance was also necessary for determining strategies for promoting job output. Job performance and career development of employees in an organization rely on a variety of interventions. One of the best ways universities can meet the needs of their employees to enhance their commitment and job involvement could be to provide them with effective training programmes. Such training programmes may include; capacity building in the form of conferences, workshops, seminars, oversees training Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training and other types of in-services education such as job rotation.

Job rotation is a systematic movement of employees from one job to another at planned intervals within an organization (Dessler and Varkkey, 2009). Operationally, job rotation in this study refers to lateral transfer/movement of university career administrators to another assignment or unit of the university to expose the worker to new challenges requiring the same or similar operational ability in this modern age. Job rotation system is one of such mechanisms which develops and improves human resources. Mohsan *et al.* (2012) note that job rotation is an essential factor which enhances the job performance of employees in an organization. The researcher argues that when employees are redeployed to different jobs across various departments they become more committed and involved in their respective jobs. Consequently, university management has to reciprocate by rotating their staff as one of the ways of preparing them to adjust to the increased competition and globalization of the present 21st century.

Contrary to the assertion that job rotation enhances performance, Ali (2015) argues that in as much as job rotation might enable employees to learn many different skills, it may cause stress and confusion to employees and

also makes it difficult for them to excel or master one particular job and develop continuity. Similarly, Richard (2005) submits that job rotation is counter-productive in the performance of employees in an organization as the employees are made to do all aspects of the job without mastery of it. This presupposes that job rotation leads to loss of expertise in employee's previous field or area of specialization and results to jack of all trades and master of none. The controversial role of job rotation as a performance strategy in the management of organizations justified the need for ascertaining the level of relationship between job rotation and job performance as it affects career administrators in public universities in the South-East, Nigeria. This study, therefore, sought to contribute to resolving this controversy.

The relationship between ownership of university and job performance of career administrators is another focus of this study. Ownership of university in this study means whether the university is owned by federal or state governments with peculiar characteristics including working conditions. Proprietorship may present different conditions in an educational institution that may impact on different levels of performance of university career administrators. Looking at the ownership of university from the perspective of job performance vis-à-vis management approaches by important stakeholders, one would likely expect major differences between federal and state institutions (Ugwuanyi, 2014). However, there is contradictory empirical evidence regarding the extent of the job performance of career administrators based on ownership status. The purpose of the study was to determine the job rotation and job performance of career administrators in universities in South East, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey research design was employed for this study which was carried out in South East, Nigeria. The population of this the study comprised all the 533 career administrators within ranks of Administrative Officer, Assistant Registrar and Senior Assistant Registrar in the universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria. The population is made up of 140 for Enugu State, 116 for Anambra State, 1114 for Abia State, 35 for Ebonyi State and 128 for Imo State. A sample of 498 career administrators in universities in South-East Nigeria was used for the study. The University Career Administrator's Job Performance Scale (UCAJPS) and the interview schedule were used for data collection. The University Career Administrator's Job Performance Scale (UCAJPS) was a 32-item scale on measures of career administrator's performance. It was used by 45 unit heads to rule the performance of Administrative Officers, Assistant Registrars and Senior Assistant Registrars on four clusters of items arranged in relation to the duties of these career

administrators to elicit information on their performance. These clusters include: communication, decision-making, public relations and coordination. It had a 4-point rating scale of Very Effective (VE), Effective (E), Less Effective (LE) and Not Effective (NE). The instrument was face validated by five experts. The internal consistency coefficient was calculated using the Cronbach alpha method. The internal consistency estimates for career administrator's job performance scale are 0.62 for communication, 0.7 for decision-making, 0.76 for public relation and 0.62 for coordination with 0.88 as the overall. A direct delivery and retrieval method was employed in the administration of the instruments to the respondents. The research assistants were properly briefed by the researchers on the modalities of administration and retrieval of the instrument to avoid losing anyone. A total of 498 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and 344 were returned (69%). Mean and standard deviation, frequency and percentages were used for data analysis. The obtained means was interpreted using real limits of numbers as follows: items with mean of0 .50-1.49 was considered "Not Effective" (NE), items with mean of 1.50-2.49 was considered "Less Effective" (LE), items with mean of 2.50-3.49 was considered "Effective" and items with mean of 3.50-4.49 was considered "Very Effective" (VE) for extent of job performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question: What is the level of the job performance of career administrators in universities in South East, Nigeria? The results of the data analysis relating to the above research question are presented in Table 1-4.

The data in Table 1 shows the mean responses on the level of the job performance of career administrators in communication in universities in South East, Nigeria. The data revealed that all the items 1-8 had high mean scores as follows: 3.78, 3.72, 3.59, 3.47, 3.60, 3.57 and 3.10 with standard deviations of 0.45, 0.46, 0.59, 0.56, 0.56, 0.62

Table 1: The mean responses on the level of the job performance of career

Items	Items statement (Communication)	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec.
1	Write official memos	3.78	0.45	VE
2	Write minutes of meetings	3.72	0.46	VE
3	Verbally conveys information in a clear and accurate manner	3.59	0.59	VE
4	Interpret university rules and regulations	3.47	0.59	VE
5	Listen to instructions from supervisors	3.60	0.56	VE
6	Comprehend instructions given by superiors	3.57	0.56	VE
7	writes report	3.45	0.62	VE
8	Produces and delivers formal presentation	3.10	0.67	VE
	Cluster Mean	3.53	0.41	VE

$\overline{X}$: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, Dec.: Decision, E: Effective, VE: Very effective

Table 2: Mean ratings on the level of the job performance of career administrators in decision-making (N = 344)

Items	Items statement (communication)	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec.
9	Thinks independently in every situation	2.87	0.68	E
10	Chooses the best alternative in problem solving tasks	3.14	0.58	E
11	Welcomes suggestions from subordinates	3.15	0.67	E
12	Involves every staff in decision making on issues that concern them and their work	2.93	0.65	E
13	Initiates actions for his/her superior	3.13	0.69	E
14	Creates avenues for achieving unit/ university goals	3.22	0.69	E
15	Gives useful suggestions/advice to his/her superiors	3.23	0.68	E
16	Implements university policy decisions	3.23	0.76	E
	Cluster mean	3.11	0.51	E

Table 3: Mean ratings on the level of job performance of career administrators in social/public relations (N = 344)

Items	Items statement (Communication)	$\overline{X}$	SD	Dec.
17	Relates well with the superiors	3.76	0.49	VE
18	Appreciate subordinates for a job well done	3.65	0.50	VE
19	Relates well with subordinate	3.59	0.53	VE
20	Keeps the people abreast with the policies and programmes of the university	3.49	0.55	E
21	Recognizes individual differences among staff	3.35	0.57	E
22	Relates cordially with members of the host community	3.30	0.57	E
23	Creates good images of the university	3.22	0.60	E
24	Cluster mean	3.47	0.39	E

Table 4: Mean ratings on the level of job performance of career administrators in coordination (N = 344)

Items	Items statement (Coordination)	$\overline{X}$	SD	VE
25	Ensures that staff accomplishes the work assigned to them at the end of the day	3.51	0.54	VE
26	Organizes work activities	3.44	0.57	E
27	Ensures that available stationeries/working materials are well utilized	3.36	0.61	E
28	Synchronizes activities to save time, energy and money	3.20	0.69	E
29	Ensures prompt appraisal of achievement of unit/departmental goals	3.24	0.66	E
30	Shares the consequences of each course of action with others	3.24	0.63	E
31	Organizes activities in sequential order in which activities follow one another in a schedule	3.34	0.59	E
32	Shares responsibilities based on ability and skill	3.34	0.59	E
	Cluster mean	3.33	0.48	E

$\overline{X}$: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, Dec.: Decision, E: Effective, VE: Very effective

and 0.67, respectively. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.53 and 0.41, respectively. These results show that the career administrator writes official memos write minutes of meetings and verbally convey information clearly and accurately. They also share the view that the career administrator interprets university rules and regulations, listen to instructions from supervisors, comprehend instructions given by superiors, write a report and produced and deliver formal presentation effectively. The cluster mean and standard

deviation indicated that career administrators are effective in communication. These show that career administrator's job performance in communication in South-East Nigeria was very effective. From the interview schedule with the unit heads, there were divergent views of the interviewees concerning the performance of career administrators in communication. However, majority of the respondents agreed that their performance with regards to communication was moderate. Some were of the view that they communicate well while few stated that they cannot communicate effectively, especially, in spoken English.

Data in Table 2 indicated that all the items from 9-16 had high mean scores, thus, 2.87, 3.14, 3.15, 2.93, 3.13, 3.22, 3.23 and 3.33 with standard deviations of 0.68, 0.58, 0.67, 0.65, 0.69, 0.69, 0.68 and 0.76, respectively. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.11 and 0.51, respectively. In other words, these results indicate that career administrators think independently in every situation, choose the best alternative in problem-solving tasks, welcome suggestions from subordinates and involve every staff in decision making on issues that concern them and their work. It also indicated that career administrators initiate actions for his/her superior, create avenues for achieving unit/university goals, gives useful suggestions/advice to his/her superiors and implements university policy decisions effectively. The cluster mean and standard deviation indicated that career administrators are effective in decision-making. This shows that career administrator's job performance in decision-making in South-East Nigeria was effective. During the interview schedules, it was discovered that career administrative had fair performance in decision making. It was also established from the interview that career administrators within the ranks under study were not allowed to take initiative on their own.

The data in Table 3 revealed that all the items from 17-24 had high mean scores as follows: 3.76, 3.65, 3.59, 3.49, 3.35, 3.30, 3.22 and 3.41 with standard deviations of 0.49, 0.50, 0.53, 0.55, 0.57, 0.54, 0.60 and 0.59, respectively. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.47 and 0.39, respectively. Based on these results, the respondents share the view that career administrators relate well with the superiors, appreciate subordinates for a job well done, relate well with subordinate and keep the people abreast with the policies and programmes of the university. It also revealed that career administrators recognize individual differences among staff, relate well with students, relate cordially with members of the host community and create good images of the university. The cluster mean and standard deviation indicated that career administrators are effective in social/public relations. In other words, career administrator's job performance in social/public relations in South-East Nigeria was effective. From

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages of the extent of rotation of career administrators in public universities in South-East, Nigeria (N = 344)

Rotation	Frequencies	Percentage
Once	70	20.3
Twice	85	24.7
Thrice and above	71	20.6
Never	118	34.3
Total	344	100.0

the interview schedule, it was discovered from the respondents that career administrators performance is public relations was quite okay.

The data in Table 4 revealed that all the items from 25-32 had high mean scores as follows: 3.51, 3.44, 3.36, 3.20, 3.24, 3.24, 3.34 and 3.34 with standard deviations of 0.54, 0.57, 0.61, 0.69, 0.66, 0.63, 0.59 and 0.59, respectively. The cluster mean and standard deviation are 3.33 and 0.48, respectively. In other words, the respondents share the view that career administrators ensure that staff accomplish the work assigned to them at the end of the day organize work activities and ensure that available stationeries/working materials are well utilized. As well, they are the views of that career administrators synchronize activities to save time, energy and money and also ensure prompt appraisal of achievement of unit/departmental goals. They also held the views that career administrators share the consequences of each course of action with others organize activities in sequential order in which activities follow one another in a schedule and share responsibilities based on ability and skill. The cluster mean and standard deviation also indicated that career administrators are effective in coordination. This is an indication that the career administrator's job performance in coordination in South-East Nigeria was effective. The responses from the oral interview indicated that the coordination skill of these career administrators were fairly okay.

Research question: What is the extent of rotation of career administrators in public university in South-East, Nigeria?

The results in Table 5 revealed that 118 (34.3%) career administrators were never rotated, 85 (24.7%) were rotated twice, 71(20.6%) were rotated thrice and above, while 70 (20.30%) were rotated only once. From the result, it can be deduced that the majority of the career administrators in public universities in South-East, Nigeria were rarely rotated. From the interview schedule, the majority of respondents agreed that job rotation practices were very poor. In some cases, the transfer was highly political, favouritism or on punitive ground. It was also established from their responses that if job rotation

was religiously practised that it would enhance the performance of staff as it diversifies the individual experience in various aspect of the job.

The result showed that the job performance of career administrators in communication, decision-making, social/public relation and coordination is effectively done. This high level of performance in communication may be as a result of the nature of their job which is mostly on communication. More so, the university could have been careful in ensuring that they employed people who have good writing skills, spoken or oral English and as well listen to instructions and comprehend same easily. This finding supported the view by Nwachukwu (1994) which stated that the quality of communication skills possessed by a manager determines his degree of accomplishment. Their decision-making ability could be related to the fact that all of them had first degrees and first degree is enough for an administrator to be a critical thinker, possess the skills required to take initiative in solving problems such person can give certain useful suggestions as it concerns his or her duties. In terms of public relations, their effective performance could be related to the fact that career administrators are men and women who may have held positions in organizations where they might have acquired this public relation skill or maybe naturally endowed with the gift of relating to people. Or on the other hand, their job is such that they meet people daily and are bound to relate well and make the job interesting. The ability of the career administrative to coordinate effective of coordination could be attributed to an innate quality of planning in human nature and also knowledge when they might have acquired over the years through promotion.

In essence, it can be deduced that career administrators are devoted to their research. This finding is in agreement with the studies conducted by Olorunsola (2012) and Walson (2015). The study by Olorunsola (2012) reported that the performances of administrative staff are effective. Walson (2015) revealed that principal performance is high in communication and decision-making. However, this study disagreed with views of Ndu and Anabogu who stated that the general standard of performance in the public service is inefficiency. The interview provided support for this finding on the performance of career administrators with regards to communication, decision making, public relations and coordination. The result on the extent to which university career administrators are rotated indicated that most of the career administrators are rarely or never rotated. This is not surprising because there is no laid down policy on job rotation which would have mandated these universities management to rotate their staff at certain intervals. Supporting views from the

interviewees indicated that most of the career administrators stay in a particular office or unit for so long or possibly till retirement. This result concurs with the finding of Baro (2012) who reported that rotations of staff are not regularly practised. The excerpts from the interview participants are in agreement with the findings from the participants on the rotation of career administrators.

Given these results, the government in collaboration with the supervising agency of universities (NUC) should continually initiate, implement and evaluate realistic policies or decisions necessary for sustainable effective service delivery or job performance of career administrators in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The university management should ensure that career administrators are rotated on their job or redeployed to other offices/areas to enable them to acquire different skills and expose them to new challenges that will enhance their job performance. The present study employed only university career administrators. Future studies can improve in this by using larger staff population by including other categories of non-academic staff. A replication of this study could be conducted in private universities. Further research could be conducted in private universities, colleges of education or polytechnics to ascertain, if there is a correlation between the variables used in this present study and performance of their employees. This study could also be done using another design, like the experimental design for a more valid result.

CONCLUSION

Career administrator's performance with regards to communication, decision-making, social/public relations and coordination was effective. Most of the career administrators were rarely or never rotated in their job. The study implication is that career administrators must have had the basic skills and knowledge required for the job. Another implication of this study is that fewer emphases have been placed on the rotation of staff or that there is no guiding policy on job rotation practices in these universities which has consequences of hindering the exposure of career administrators and undermines their experience.

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