



Research Paper

Health and Counselling Services as Correlates of Academic Staff Productivity in Southwest Nigerian Universities

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ABSTRACT

The study examined health and counselling services as correlates of academic staff productivity in Southwest Nigerian universities. The study specifically examined the relationship among health services, counselling service and academic staff productivity. The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. The population consisted of 8,724 academic staff of the public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample for this study consisted of 1200 academic staff who were selected from 6 public Universities (Federal and State) in the Southwest, Nigeria. Multi – stage sampling procedure was used in the selection of the sample for the study. The data for this study were collected through the use of two sets of self – designed instruments namely Health and Counselling Services Questionnaire (HCSQ) and Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (PASQ). To ensure the face and content validity of the instruments, the instruments were subjected to screening by experts in the areas of Tests and Measurement and Educational Management. The reliability of the instruments was carried out through test re-test method. A reliability coefficient of 0.811 was obtained for HCSQ and 0.803 was obtained for PASQ. However, out of the 1200 copies of the questionnaire administered, 1173 were properly filled and returned. This was the number used for analysis. The data obtained for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of this study revealed that health services were related to staff productivity of academic staff while counselling service has no way of influencing academic staff productivity. It was recommended among others that the government should provide health insurance for academic staff as this will go a long way to cater for any health challenges that may come up.

KEYWORDS: Health Service, Counselling Service, Productivity, Academic Staff

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I. Introduction

The attainment of laudable goals of tertiary education hinges, on staff productivity which is the reflection of their effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery and resource utilization. Productivity is the measurement between the extent of time and energy employees devotes working and the subsequent output. If the subsequent output tallies to the inputs, the staff is assumed to be productive. Therefore, it has an important influence on an organisation's proceeds (Sheahan, 2011). When the staff are productive, they achieve more within a specified time frame and this in turn leads to greater productivity for the organisation while staff unproductive behaviour can lead to the reverse as they take longer time to meet set targets which invariably bring more losses to the organisation in terms of resources (Sheahan, 2011).

Academic staff productivity according to Kaniki (2003) is the competence with which academic staffs accomplish their numerous responsibilities of learning (product of teaching), knowledge and scholarship (the product of research and other scholarly activities) institutional, community and professional well-being (the

products of shared governance, community service and professional activities). Ensuring academic productivity is critical for existence in today's exceedingly competitive tertiary schooling setting (Ukwayi, Uko & Udida, 2013).

From observations, it appears that academic staffs are frustrated and seem to no longer attend classes regularly. It has been observed some academic staff hardly use relevant materials for teaching, some academic staff seem not to be covering the course contents, some are observed not to have good control of class during teaching. Some appear not to be interested in carrying out research, some seem not to be interested in the school/community service, and all these may have a negative effect on their productivity.

Truly, university lecturers in Nigeria contend daily with congested classrooms, obsolete laboratory amenities for research activities and teaching, pitiable working condition amongst others. The slogan in Nigerian universities '*publish or perish syndrome*' is a stressor. The concentrated pressure piled on lecturers particularly the newer ones to publish as many papers as possible in the unswerving time possible for elevation purposes is no longer news.

The provision of health services include the accessibility, availability and adequacy of health facilities as well as health personnel in these universities to attend to the health trials which are prompted by the stress encountered by the academic staff in their track of duty. It has been noticed that several academic staff in tertiary institutions are affected with emotional stress such as insomnia, fear, hypertension, headaches, depression, adjustment disorders which is as a result of academic stress (Usono & Etule, 2016). These occurrences seem to impede their level of productivity.

The health facilities in the universities have been observed not to be up to the required standard. Due to the fall in standard of these health facilities, academic staff could not access adequate health services they need in the course of their professional duties within the school system. Also, it could be observed that most of the academic staff could not make usage of their health insurance package provided by the government (NHIS) in the health facility provided within the school system. Therefore, it renders the health insurance system non effective, this is because even outside the school environment, not all hospitals reckon with or accept the NHIS scheme and this makes most of the academic staff to spend more on their health

Sometimes, it appears that the health facilities in the universities in the Southwest are substandard. Again, it has been observed by the researcher that the safety of the academic staff is seems to be taken with gloves hands. To this end, the academic staff appear not to be committed to the cause of the institutions, and they appear not to be courageous enough to face the dangers of the job at their own peril. This may make the productivity of the academic staff to be low.

Also, it has been noticed by the researcher that, counselling is one of the mechanisms that can help curtail stress, and thus improving productivity in an organization. To cope with anxiety and work related stress, there is the need for academic staff to get a good counselling service. This counselling service can be provided either by guidance and counselling department or professional consultants. Workplace counselling may be viewed as the provision of fleeting and scarce psychological treatment for employees of an establishment, which are paid by the employer.

It has been observed that counselling services are rarely utilized by academic staff as the available counselling service available has been limited to students who seek counsel solely with respect to their academic problems. Counselling service when provided for academic staff could help manage their level of stress. The use of counselling services has been observed by the researcher to be dysfunctional in the university system. Most of the academic staff appear not to have access to consistent, up to date and relevant counselling services which could help reduce stressful conditions through the help of the counsellor's recommended professional solution to academic staff various work concerns.

It is against this background that this study examines health and counselling services as correlates of academic staff productivity in Southwest Nigerian universities. The study specifically examined the relationship among health services, counselling service and academic staff productivity.

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between health services and academic staff productivity
2. There is no significant relationship between counselling service and academic staff productivity

II. Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in the study. It was also a correlational study. The population consisted of 8,724 academic staff of the public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The total number of public Universities in Southwest as at the time of this study was 16, out of which 6 Universities were Federal while 10 Universities were State (National Universities Commission, 2021).

The sample for this study consisted of 1200 academic staff who were selected from 6 public Universities (Federal and State) in the Southwest, Nigeria. Multi – stage sampling procedure was used in the selection of the sample for the study. Multi – stage sampling procedure involved selecting subjects from

population in stages. In the first stage, three states were selected using simple random sampling technique. The second stage involved the selection of 2 Universities from each state through stratified random sampling technique so that one federal and one state University were selected from each state. The third stage involved the selection of four faculties from each of the Universities using simple random sampling technique. In stage four, 25 academic staff were selected from each of the Faculties through the use of proportionate sampling technique. The Head of Departments of each selected academic staff was purposely used to assess their productivity.

The data for this study were collected through the use of two sets of self – designed instruments. The first one was tagged Health and Counselling Services Questionnaire (HCSQ) which was administered on the academic staff. The second instrument was tagged Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (PASQ) which was administered on the Heads of Departments.

The Health and Counselling Services Questionnaire (HCSQ) comprises of two sections, A and B. Section A contains items on the bio – data of the academic staff while section B contains 10 items on health service and counselling service. The items in the questionnaire were on a 4-point likert type scale with four options ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

The Productivity of Academic Staff Questionnaire (PASQ) comprises three sections A, B and C. Section A contains items on the bio – data of the Heads of Departments. Section B contains items on the bio – data of the academic staff to be assessed and were completed by the researcher while section C consists of 25 items which elicited information on academic staff productivity in the area of teaching, research and community service. The items in the questionnaire were on a rating scale with five options ranging from Excellent to Poor: Excellent (5), Very Good (4), Good (3), Fair (2) and Poor (1).

To ensure the face and content validity of the instruments, the instruments were subjected to screening by experts in the areas of Tests and Measurement and Educational Management both within and outside Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti. For the face validity, the experts determined at face and content level, the appropriateness of the instruments in measuring what they are supposed to measure so as to ensure that the instruments contained the appropriate items that actually elicited the intending responses on health service, counselling service and academic staff productivity.

The reliability of the instruments was carried out through test re-test method. The scores from both instruments were analysed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation statistics. A reliability coefficient of 0.811 was obtained for HCSQ and 0.803 was obtained for PASQ. The instruments for the study were personally administered by the researcher with the aid of 2 trained research assistants. The researcher made follow-up visits that facilitated proper completion of the instruments where necessary. The researcher’s personal visit to the Universities helped to reduce the difficulty of retrieving the instruments. However, out of the 1200 copies of the questionnaire administered, 1173 were properly filled and returned. This was the number used for analysis. The data obtained for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. All the hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

III. Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between health services and academic staff productivity
 In testing this hypothesis, data on health services were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of HCSQ (item 1 – 5) in the questionnaire. Data on academic staff productivity were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of PASQ (item 1 – 25) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between health services and academic staff productivity

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Health services	1173	9.28	2.85	0.314*	0.000
Academic Staff Productivity	1173	88.69	4.37		

*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the r-cal value of 0.314 is significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.000) < 0.05. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between health services and academic staff productivity. Health services are lowly and positively related to academic staff productivity.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between counselling service and academic staff productivity. In testing this hypothesis, data on counselling service sub-variable of stress management techniques were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of HCSQ (item 6 – 10) in the questionnaire. Data on academic staff productivity were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of PASQ (item 1 – 25) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 levels. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between counselling services and academic staff productivity

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	P-value
Counselling service	1173	9.46	2.82	0.004	0.891
Academic Staff Productivity	1173	88.69	4.37		

P>0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.004 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.891) > 0.05. The null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between counselling service and academic staff productivity.

IV. Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between health services and academic staff productivity. It could be inferred that staff productivity will be above average if the health services provided by the universities are adequate and efficient. The probable reason might be due to the significance of prioritising health care system of the academic staff. In consistency with this finding, Reddy and Anuradha (2013), Dobre (2013) and Kinman (2008) revealed that there is positive relationship between health and safety strategies and productivity. Kinman and Jones (2013) revealed that an organization fraught with poor health and safety management practices, poor training in safety know-how, lack of information on dangerous chemicals and hazardous materials, lack of monitoring and enforcement of safety rules, unavailability of essential safety equipment, will adversely affect employees and the organizational performance.

The study however revealed that there was no significant relationship between counselling service and academic staff productivity. It is inferred that counselling service does not have impact on staff productivity. The probable reason for this finding could be because of the reason given by some scholars who submitted that most academic staff do not see counselling as stress management option. This finding contradicted the submissions of Matolo and Mukulu (2016), Izzat (2014), David, John and Richard (2012) and Chan (2011) who submitted that workplace counselling resulted in a positive impact on the workplace productivity.

V. Conclusion

The study concludes that health services were related to staff productivity of academic staff while counselling service has no way of influencing academic staff productivity.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Agencies saddled with the responsibility of formulating and implementing policies in universities in Nigeria as a whole should formulate and try to implement health policies that will motivate and stimulate better and prompt performance as well as increased productivity of academic staff.
2. The government should provide health insurance for academic staff as this will go a long way to cater for any health challenges that may come up.

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