

INFLUENCE OF RECOGNITION AND ADVANCEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of recognition and advancement on the performance of administrative staff of public universities in the North-Central States of Nigeria. The study was guided by 2 research questions and 2 research hypotheses. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 7,592 administrative staff in public universities and the sample for the study consisted of 759 administrative staff of public universities in the North-Central, Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection was a 12-item questionnaire titled 'Influence of Recognition and Advancement on the Performance of Administrative Staff Questionnaire' (IRAPASQ). Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-square was used to test the 2 null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. From the analysis of the data, findings of the study revealed that recognition and advancement significantly influence the performance of administrative staff of public universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that Vice-Chancellors should continue to ensure that administrative staff advances on their job as at when due to be able to maintain committed and dedicated staff of public universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Keywords: *Recognition, Advancement, Job performance, Administrative staff*

INTRODUCTION

The education is a vital tool for the social and economic development of the world. This is because education is regarded as the bedrock of any development in all fields of endeavour. It is essential then that the ideal

education for any community should be broad-based for the purpose of making it possible for individuals to develop their potentials.

All over the world, education is seen and assumed to be the only avenue through which a nation's growth is assured and so people have realized the importance of this in life (Ehiametalor, 2005). Ehiametalor further argues that the perception among the Nigerian people is that only university education can guarantee a good future. The university is the apex educational institution in Nigeria today and it is the highest level of human capital development, hence, the need to pay more attention to this level of education. In the university, there are two major categories of staff. These are the academic and non-academic staff. The administrative staff are non-academic staff and are concerned with the administrative functions of the university and they play complementary role to the academic staff. The administrative staff carry out the day-to-day administrative functions such as planning, personnel administration, recruitment, validation and verification of students' records, mobilization of graduating students for National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), preparation and signing of testimonials, processing of applications, registration of fresh and returning students, preparation of students' academic transcripts and record keeping. From the forgoing it is clear that the jobs of the administrative staff are enormous.

Ochai (2012) views administration as a process of working with and through others to efficiently accomplish organisational goals. In other words administration involves the mobilization and coordination of both human and material resources with a view to achieving organisational goals and objectives. These resources include human, material, equipment, finance, space and work techniques.

Job performance of a staff in any organization is of paramount importance in achieving organizational goals. Research has shown that no organization can exist unless its workers are highly productive. McShane and Glinow (2005) opine that performance is a goal directed behaviour under an individual control that supports organizational objectives. Olorunsola (2012) argues that the un-committed attitude of

administrative staff is an indication of lack of job satisfaction. This unhealthy attitude to work, he observes, is common when newly admitted students are to be screened. He also notes that these students may continually come to the administrative block for weeks without being screened making it difficult for the students to settle down to their academic work. Staff job performance may be directly related to recognition or reward in an organization. Harrison (2013) asserts that recognition is the action or process of identifying the effort or input of an employee. Employee recognition is however not only in gifts and remunerations. It could aim at connecting employees to the institutional core values and objectives. The traditional approach of recognition is the type that is carried out through gifts and monetary appreciation. Strategic employee recognition is a planned systematic recognition of staff which is seen as not only to improve employee retention and motivation in the institution, but also to positively influence his financial situation. Allen and Helms (2002) are of the view that staff satisfaction may be directly related to financial reward or gain. Effective appraisal of administrative staff practices and employees' reward programmes which lead to positive financial outcomes often lead to good performance by staff. This could make staff to be innovative, come up with new ideas, better administrative models and better ways of doing things. However, innovations are not just ordered by the Vice Chancellors or Registrars but it can be as a result of satisfaction which is linked with motivation (Mullins, 2005). Careful management of staff through proper reward of their efforts over time could bring about innovations by the administrative staff.

Advancement is a motivational strategy that can enhance job performance of staff. Mullins (2005) posits that staff advancement could be related to performance and may or may not be in the form of promotion. However, advancement could be in form of promotion when one is given a higher responsibility with monetary increment. When it is without promotion, the opportunity to participate in higher decision making position alone could motivate and improve staff productivity in the university. When a staff is given the opportunity to advance on the job, this may reflect in his/her drive to excel and accomplish more

challenging tasks. The individuals' need for advancement, growth, increased responsibility and work itself could be the motivating factor towards job performance. For instance, the appointment of senior staff as directors and heads of departments, sectional or unit heads may not attract promotion or salary increment, but it could enhance the level of confidence and dedication of the staff by the management of the university. Sometimes, such advancements are done to get staff close to management and also to put in their best on the job.

Statement of the Problem

There have been growing concerns by stakeholders over the way and manner works were being performed by administrative staff in public universities in the North-Central States of Nigeria, this seems to suggest that there are issues. Over the years, the attitudes of administrative staff towards the performance of their duties live much to be desired. These categories of staff are considered very crucial in the day-to-day administration, but there seems to be a general displeasure among the administrative staff of public universities about their wellbeing. This may have emanated from poor recognition of hard work, advancement earned by some staff through obsequiousness, poor work environment, favouritism on issue of training, denial of some allowances, inconsistent conditions of service and arbitrary policies. It is obvious that these issues dampen the morale of workers in the performance of their duties.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the recognition and advancement on the performance of administrative staff of public universities in the North-Central States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Establish the influence of staff recognition on job performance of administrative staff in public universities in the North-Central States of Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the influence of advancement on job performance of administrative staff in public universities in the North-Central States of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of recognition on administrative staff's job performance in public universities?
2. How does staff advancement influence administrative staff's job performance in public universities?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Recognition of staff does not significantly influence administrative staff job performance in public universities.
2. Advancement of staff does not significantly influence administrative staff job performance in public universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in public universities in the North Central zone of Nigeria comprising the following states; Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, Abuja. The population of this study consisted of 7,592 administrative staff from all the 13 universities in the North Central Zone. Applying Purposive sampling technique, 10% of the 7592 population of administrative staff of public universities in the North Central Zone was proportionately selected making a total of 759 respondents. The respondents were chosen because they were knowledgeable about the variables under study and could supply useful information on the research instrument. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Influence of Recognition and Advancement on the Performance of Administrative Staff Questionnaire (IRAPASQ). The instrument was a 12-item questionnaire structured on the 4-point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2 and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items on the questionnaire were developed using information obtained from literature reviewed and was based on the two research questions that guided the study. This scale was chosen because the flexibility of the

scale renders it appropriate for measuring the variables of the study. In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts. An expert from Educational Management of the Benue State University and two experts from test and measurement from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi and the validity was trial tested on Administrative staff of the University of Abuja and yielded an Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.73. This indicates that the instrument is reliable. The research assistants were trained and employed in the distribution of the questionnaire and collection of data. This was done to ensure that entire questionnaire were duly completed and returned.

Results

The results are presented in tables 1- 4 according to research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question One

What is the influence of recognition on administrative staff job performance in public universities?

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Influence of Staff Recognition on Job Performance in Public Universities

Item No	Item Description	N	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
1.	Disrespect for staff positively affects job performance	730	2.03	1.00	Disagree
2.	Commendations for job accomplishment encourages staff to do well in their jobs	730	2.86	1.01	Agree
3.	Identification of initiatives in staff enhances job performance	730	3.14	0.77	Agree
4.	Appreciation enhances ones job performance	730	3.19	0.84	Agree
5.	Acknowledgement of staff efforts increases job performance	730	3.30	0.73	Agree
6.	Praises positively boost job performance	730	2.99	0.94	Agree
Cluster	Mean		2.92	0.79	Agree

Source: Field work (2016)

Table 1 showed the mean scores and standard deviation scores of influence of recognition on administrative staff job performance. The table revealed that items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 had the mean scores of 2.86, 3.14, 3.19, 3.30 and 2.99 with the corresponding standard deviations of 1.01, 0.77, 0.84, 0.73 and 0.94 respectively. The mean scores are above the cut-off point of 2.50 which showed agreement that recognition influences administrative staff performance with a cluster mean of 2.92. This is above the cut-off point of 2.50. However, item 1 had the mean score of 2.03 with standard deviation of 1.00 which is less than the mean cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that disrespect for staff does not positively influence job performance. From the analysis therefore, it can be concluded that the variable of staff recognition has influence on staff job performance.

Research Question Two

How does staff advancement influence administrative staff job performance in public universities.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Influence of Staff Advancement on Administrative Staff Job Performance in Public Universities

Item No.	Item Description	N	\bar{x}	SD	Remarks
7.	Opportunity for staff advancement negatively affects job satisfaction	724	2.79	1.16	Agree
6.	Opportunity to handle greater responsibilities enhances staff job performance	730	1.82	0.73	Disagree
7.	Opportunity to participate in decision making influences staff job performance	730	3.21	0.78	Agree
8.	The endorsement of one's ability boosts staff job performance	730	3.20	0.73	Agree
9.	Opportunity for progression enhances staff job performance	730	3.29	0.79	Agree
10.	Prospect of promotion	730	3.39	0.76	Agree
Cluster Mean			2.95	0.83	Agree

Source: Field work (2016)

Table 2 showed the mean scores and standard deviation of influence of advancement on administrative staff job performance. The table revealed that item 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 had mean scores of 2.79, 3.21, 3.20, 3.29 and 3.39 with the corresponding standard deviations of 1.16, 0.78, 0.73, 0.79 and 0.76 respectively. The mean scores are above the cut-off point of 2.50 which showed agreement that advancement influence administrative staff job performance with cluster mean of 2.95. However, item 8 had a mean score of 1.82 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.73. The mean score is less than the mean cut-off point of 2.50. This

implies that administrative staff disagreed with the assertion that opportunity to handle greater responsibilities enhances staff job performance. From the analysis therefore, it can be concluded that administrative staff of public universities generally agreed that advancement has influence on their job performance.

Hypotheses Testing:

Data from respondents are computed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of Significance using chi-square test. The results are presented on Tables 3 - 4.

Hypothesis One: Recognition of staff does not significantly influence administrative staff job performance in public universities

Table 3: Chi Square Test of Influence of Staff Recognition on Administrative staff Job Performance in Public Universities

	SA	A	D	SD	Df	χ^2	P-Value	Alpha Level
Observed	173	278	173	106	3	83.03	0.00	0.05
Expected	182.5	182.5	182.5	182.5				

Table 3 reveals that since $\chi^2 = 83.03$ at $df = 3$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that recognition of administrative staff has significant influence on job performance in public universities.

Hypothesis Two: Advancement of staff does not significantly influence administrative staff job performance in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi Square Test of Influence of Advancement on Administrative Staff Job Performance in Public Universities

	SA	A	D	SD	Df	χ^2	P-Value	Alpha Level
Observed	94	569	65	2	3	1115.62	0.00	0.05
Expected	182.5	182.5	182.5	182.5				

Table 4 reveals that since $\chi^2 = 1115.62$ at $df = 3$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$. Since the chi-square value 1115.62 is greater than the P-value, the null hypothesis

is not accepted. This means that advancement of administrative staff has significant influence on job performance in public universities in the North Central.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the foregoing, the analysis of data was discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. The finding showed that staff recognition has significant influence on administrative staff job performance in public universities in the North Central Zone. This finding agrees with that of Barton (2002) who established that commitment of all employees to job performance is based on recognition. Lawler (2003) also agreed that prosperity and survival of organizations is determined by how human resources are treated. On the contrary, the finding is at variance with that of Mutia and Sikalieh (2013) who found that rewards and recognition did not satisfy staff for the jobs they do. That, those staff felt they were neither rewarded nor recognised for their work. Low compensation was rather cited as a major source of poor motivation among the employees. Consistent with this study, most organizations have gained immense progress by fully complying with their business strategy through a well balanced recognition programmes for employees. The value placed on employees shows through their recognition. Staff recognition is significant because a staff whose hard work is acknowledged or rewarded either through commendation, award or otherwise, would be motivated to do more. The staff is given a feeling of worth and self esteem. Any behaviour that is reinforced is repeated; one that is punished is dropped or eliminated. It could be concluded therefore, that recognition is significant to administrative staff job performance.

The finding also revealed that advancement has significant influence on administrative staff job performance in public universities. This finding agrees with that of Mustapha and Zakaria (2013) who reported that there was a positive significant relationship between promotion opportunity and job satisfaction. It also agrees with Ibukun (2004) who supported that the individual's need for advancement and increased responsibility at work are the motivating factors toward job performance.

Advancement is significant to job performance of administrative staff because any administrative staff who is promoted as at when due, and he or she is given the privilege to act in higher responsibility would have a feeling of commitment and would be propelled to be dedicated to such responsibility. This indicated that staff advancement does have influence on their commitment and dedication.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn. There is significant influence of recognition and advancement on the performance of administrative staff of public universities in the North-Central States of Nigeria. It is also concluded that although advancement has influence on staff job performance, 'opportunity to handle greater responsibilities does not enhance staff job performance'.

Furthermore, it is concluded that staff advancement has influence on their commitment and dedication as there is a significant influence of advancement of administrative staff on their job performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- i. Reward for hard work should be encouraged among administrative staff of public universities. Therefore, recognition should be sustained through, appreciation, acknowledgement and reward to make administrative staff more efficient and effective.
- ii. Human beings like to advance on their job therefore; Vice-Chancellors should be encouraged to continue the good work by providing enabling environment that will allow administrative staff to advance on the job in order to maintain committed and dedicated staff.

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Olatunde, Olubunmi Helen,

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