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University-Candidate Demographic Index, Resulting from Academic Staff Promotion: Case Study of South-Eastern Nigeria Universities

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Abstract:

It has been observed that some departments and/or faculties in the Southeastern Nigeria Universities experiences low interest of students applying to be admitted. An outcome of this simply implies nonchalant attribute of some lecturers acquiring higher certificates and/or poor staff promotion. This research work examines candidates (undergraduate and postgraduate) demographic index resulting from poor academic staff strength of southeastern universities in Nigeria. This study adopted a survey sampling method resulting from 2810 academic lecturers from 5 southeast Nigeria universities. Descriptive statistical index of mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, F-test and Z-test hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance indicated that a significant amount of lecturers ranging from Graduate assistant and Assistant lecturers are much in position in the sampled universities. The reliability index of the rating scale using Cronbach Alpha techniques indicated low outcome of undergraduate and postgraduate student's interest, both in teaching and supervision. The results of this research project suggested the need for university lecturers to embrace staff development by acquiring higher certificates, as well as the need for staff promotion.

Keywords: Nigeria education, staff promotion, lecturers, quality assurance

1. Introduction

An emphasis of staff promotion in the University community is of great importance towards the reputation of faculties and/or departments in the University community. It has been observed that most institutions find it very difficult in staff promotion. Also, in some scenarios, the university community accommodates staffs that has low desires towards obtaining greater certificates or strictly adhere to the rules that holds staff promotion. The possible outcome of this is simply total negligence of diffusion (Louis, 2017). Diffusion, which refers to the spread of something within a social system, is currently of most interest in the field of sociology. It is only recently that sociologists interested in diffusion have begun to pay close attention to it and account for it explicitly in the formulation of models (Lee and Hung, 2014). Most early sociologists traced the diffusion of a single innovation over a geographical area like a University, state or a region. The motivating interest of the early sociologists was primarily in the diffusion of innovations that contributed to social change.

The term diffusion is sometimes used in an alternative sense to denote increasing incidence: Something diffuses when more and more people do it. But treatment of diffusion as an outcome makes it uninteresting, since practices rise and fall in frequency for every possible reason (Akmolafe, 2013). We focus on diffusion as a kind of causal process and seek to map some major lines of argument and important findings. Innovations are also culturally understood as progressive, strengthening the hand of change agents. And since the innovations are risky and uncertain, adopters carefully weigh the experience of others before acting.

Diffusion studies thus generally investigates the introduction and adoption of an innovation. Diffusion processes do not always involve adoption of new behaviors (Abbas, 2017). In fact, they may include abandonment of a recently adopted behavior or resistance to change. For example, it has been observed that, contrary to expectations, class-based political alignments do not always take hold at a pace that is commensurate with the advances of industrialization. Instead, traditional political allegiances, based on language or ethnic identities, may remain dominant long after industrialization has created the structural conditions for class-based politics. This type of phenomenon has been studied widely in political sociology to understand the stubborn persistence of non-class-based allegiances and ethnic enclaves.

Diffusion arguments go in and out of style in sociology as in other disciplines. There is the greatest continuity in interpersonal studies of contagious and influence, but even here their fortunes are tied to relevance to empirical problems.

Interest in diffusion processes is also a function of broader intellectual movements, such as the role of social science in supporting the spread of modernizing innovation. Another area for exploration centers upon institutional innovativeness is within a college or university, are there programs or disciplines with a propensity for experimenting with innovation.

Campus centers for teaching and learning might serve as the nexus for showcasing innovative teaching practices through institutional awards centered on instructional excellence. Faculties who distinguish themselves by pedagogical creativity in their disciplines are a valuable resource who might form a core for faculty learning communities. Presentations by faculty at professional conferences and in scholarly publications about their ideas and outcomes of inclusive instruction can address unique disciplinary elements with which their colleagues can identify. Opportunities for peer-to-peer communication by means of interpersonal communication channels are important in advancing the change process of knowledge to persuasion and adoption. To the university management and community, it will practically explain to them the influence between demographic variables and the reputation of staff promotion. The influence will mean that academic staff shares their knowledge of undergoing some delay in promotion and the consequences arising from it when they have positive attitude about knowledge sharing. Therefore, in an effort to make academic staff share their knowledge, management should implement supportive knowledge management culture, norms and practices that build positive attitude in the organization.

The University management should start providing a good structure that would increase academic staff promotion. This can be achieved through a positive and timely appraisal of staff certificates and/or publications, number of conferences attained both national and international. Therefore, management should pay more attention on how to cultivate academic staff's ability. For instance, management can offer an appropriate educational training for this purpose. Therefore, management should provide and implement supportive plans and culture for the employees (Ajzen, 1991). This can be achieved through processes such as meetings, colloquiums, and intellectual discourse sessions. The management will find the need to provide appropriate technology for this purpose like academic portal, web site, and e-mail settings. Forming an informal network such as community of practice is the other way that management can do to improve subjective norm.

The result of this finding will be beneficial in upholding the dignity of faculties and/or departments. It is essential to examine and to have a better understanding of individual factors which affect staffs not obtaining certificates that should lead to their promotion. Consequently, by recognizing the influencing factors and improving them, it will be possible to answer the question "why would the lecturers not to be promoted and thereby share their knowledge with others?" and by improving the new knowledge sharing technologies it will be possible to answer how they can exchange and share their experiences and knowledge within the university community and to the society, which help to enhance economic growth and development.

Lack of staff promotion which has resulted to deficiency in knowledge sharing in universities is a common occurrence for both administrative and teaching department. Knowledge sharing in the administrative department can benefit the universities in many ways, such as the administrative services, alumni services and the development of the strategic planning, as well as for teaching department knowledge which will enhance the research process, curriculum development process (Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2011). Thus, knowledge sharing can affect the whole success for any university.

The success of knowledge sharing occurred when Universities create a knowledge sharing culture and environment that support and encourage employees to work together (Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2011). However, early studies found that universities have already an embedded knowledge sharing culture (Fullwood, Rowley & Delbridge, 2013). And the academic staff perceptions toward knowledge sharing are different than other organizations, since the academic staffs are totally aware of how knowledge sharing is important and how it can benefit on themselves and their university (Kim & Ju, 2008).

Knowledge sharing concern more about the desire of individuals to share with each other's the knowledge they have acquired or created (Davenport & Prusak, 2000). On another hand, knowledge retention as an opposite of knowledge sharing among the academic staff could be a big problem, since academic staff are promoted and evaluated based on their individual performance (Maponya, 2005). Therefore, a strong motivation for knowledge retention will be accrued among academic staff in order to achieve their own goals (Maponya, 2005). To overcome this retention among academic staff, higher management in universities must eliminate any kind of barriers that affect the knowledge sharing activity, in order to increase academic staff performance toward university success and achievement (Muhammad et al., 2011).

Past finding shows that knowledge sharing in the organization can be affected by different factors these factors can be classified into internal and external barriers. The internal barrier comes from the individually-driven considerations such as attitude, intention and behaviour towards knowledge sharing. The external barrier comes from the organizational context, such as the environment and culture, working condition, management support, organizational structure and technological challenges (Riege, 2005). Therefore, determining the factors that can affect knowledge sharing among academic staff is crucial, particularly in South-East Universities, Nigeria.

1.1. Academic Ranking of Lecturers

Academic rank/expertise is one factor that may have influence on lecturers' knowledge sharing behaviour. Teaching expertise is the height attained by academic staff in getting adequate knowledge and skills in terms of pedagogy, teaching style, method and subject matter that enhance his teaching effectiveness. Shim and Roth (2009) described experts as those who no longer rely on rules, guidelines, or maxims, intuitively grasp situations based on deep tacit

understanding, use analytic approaches only in a novel situation or when problems occur; and have a vision of what is possible. They suggested that experts understand situations as integrated wholes rather than as discrete parts.

However, it does not indicate that the professors are encyclopedia of knowledge, and that they have monopoly of knowledge. Never the less the professors could still gain knowledge from younger generation. It is pertinent to ascertain the extent to which junior colleagues could benefit from the wealth of experience of senior colleagues.

Recent development has witnessed the emergence of new economies where knowledge has become a valuable resource and asset (Jessica, Cheng & Lau, 2008). Also, the emergence of this knowledge-based economy has given rise to placing emphasis on knowledge management processes. Despite the increasing emphasis on knowledge management processes, knowledge sharing (KS) is considered the most crucial aspect (Bock & Kim, 2002). In the context of higher education, universities are considered as knowledge-based organizations due to their role as the epitome of knowledge development and management.

A clear example would be the sharing of knowledge among academic staff, which would enhance the capability and quality of research undertaken by the universities. It is a norm and culture in an academic institution that the senior academic staff shares knowledge and expertise with junior academics to improve the symbiotic processes of learning and teaching respectively (Goh & Sandhu, 2013).

In knowledge sharing context, studies have found that academic rank of lecturers' intention significantly affects knowledge sharing behaviour (Alajmi, 2011; Minbaeva and Pedersen, 2010). Moreover, studies have found that attitude, subjective norms, and self-efficacy of the different ranks of lecturers significantly affect intention (Alajmi, 2011) and that controllability and rank does not affect intention. Based on these contradictions, the present study was carried out in South-East Universities in Nigeria.

2. Materials and Method

The total sampled population of the study was 2810 academic staff (lecturers) from the 5 state owned universities in South-east geo-political zone of Nigeria (Source: Need Assessment Report of Public Universities (NARPU), 2015). The study was carried out in state universities in the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. South-east geo-political zone is made up of five States; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States. The area is bounded by the geopolitical zones of South-South in the south, North-Central and North-East Zone in the north. With a population: 40,000,000 (40 million) inhabitants, the latitude of the center of the Southeast region is 6° 27' 9.7" (6.4527°) North with the longitude of center as 7° 30' 37.1" (7.5103°) East. The South East zone is characterized by both rural and urban areas with inhabitants who are mainly indigenous Igbos and are civil servants, traders, farmers and craftsmen. This zone is relatively densely populated and a relatively high literacy level. Also, the people of the zone have a high level of commercial and business tendencies or dispositions. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, F-test and z-test at 0.05 level of significance was used in monitoring academic staff promotion of lecturers.

3. Results and Discussion

Academic Rank	N	\bar{X}	S
Professor	35	114.80	10.734
Reader	36	115.83	12.127
Senior Lecturer	91	121.20	8.182
Lecturer I	54	123.13	10.572
Lecturer II	54	120.16	13.874
Assistant Lecturer	45	113.27	8.889
Graduate Assistant	35	119.83	7.898

Table 1: Academic Rank of Lecturers

The findings of the study on the influence of academic rank of lecturers on their knowledge sharing behaviours revealed that among the factors that influences knowledge sharing of lecturers is their academic rank. The study shows that the lecturers in the middle of the rank (lecturer I, senior lecturer, and lecturer II) had more knowledge sharing behaviours than those at the top of the rank (professors and readers). This implies that some lecturers in the middle echelon of academic rank share their knowledge more than the other counterparts in the university. At this rank bracket (Lecturer II – Senior Lecturers) these lecturers are very conscious about their promotions, attend conferences more and share knowledge gained among themselves more. They in fact devote more time to enhancing their knowledge to aid them in their work as lecturers and personal needs. Whereas those at the highest echelon devote more time to knowledge dissemination for public lectures series than knowledge sharing among themselves, the younger lecturer is more naïve and have not acquired as much knowledge to share rather they are more devoted to knowledge gaining.

The inference revealed that the influence of academic rank on knowledge sharing behaviours of lecturers is significant. This finding is contrary to the findings of Ismail and Yusof (2009) and Mogotsi, Boon and Fletcher (2011) that the ranks of academic staff had no impact on their knowledge sharing behaviour.

4. Conclusion

The finding of this research study is in line with the findings of Lawal, Oriogu and Ogbuyi (2017) that academic rank correlates significantly with the knowledge sharing of the lecturers in the Universities studied and/or the reputation

of the faculty or department. The differences in the findings could be attributed to the type of population used by the studies of Ismail & Yusof and Mogosti et al. Whereas the present study used lecturers who are conscious of promotion at given levels. There is a need for staff promotion and enhance more qualified students seeking to be admitted into their choice of study.

5. References

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