

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITIES: THE QUESTION OF EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SKILL, KNOWLEDGE AND TALENT AMONG UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

It had been observed that many university administrators change their occupations of origin horizontally and become lecturers after acquiring relevant additional skill, experience and knowledge on their administrative jobs. This study examined how the incidence of occupational mobility among university administrators influences the development of universities in Southern Nigeria, with emphasis on how it influences the distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative cadres of universities. The study adopted the Action and Work Adjustment Theories as theoretical framework. The research type is ex-post facto and the cross-sectional survey research design was adopted to study a cross-section of the study population of 6,025 university employees. Six sample States were selected through systematic sampling technique while the sample universities and categories of employees were selected through the cluster, stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques in order to select a representative sample of the total population. The sample size of 343 respondents was determined through the data saturation method. Qualitative primary data collection instruments comprising In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion were used to gather insightful and in-depth data based on the respondents' experiences and the secondary data included official reports. The QSR NVivo software was utilized for the thematic analysis of the data. The study found that occupational mobility among university administrators brings about a decline in the level of skill, knowledge and talent in the administrative cadre while it enhances the level of skill, knowledge and talent in the academic cadre. It was also found that the inequitable distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the two major professional cadres in the university adversely affects the overall functioning of the administrative cadre. The study therefore concludes that occupational mobility has a detrimental influence on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria. It

is recommended that the processes of occupational mobility among university administrators should be structured in line with institutionalized policies and attention given to skill vacuum, staff replacement and re-training

Key Words: Occupational Mobility, Horizontal Occupational Mobility, Skill, Knowledge, Talent and Development.

Introduction

Education is globally described as an investment in the development of human capital and is recognized as a form of veritable tool that drives development at the individual, organization, sector and socio-economic levels (Ogunleye, Owolabi, Sanyaolu, Lawal, 2017). The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) clearly stated the objectives of the various levels of education in Nigeria including the basic/primary, secondary and tertiary education

The academic and administrative cadres are the two major professional cadres in the university administrative system which had been structured with delineated responsibilities and roles for both professional cadres. While the academic staff perform teaching and research functions, university administrators render administrative services to support the realization of the universities' major institutionalized objectives of teaching, research and community service ((Ladipo, 2015; Kivisto & Pekkola, 2017).

The purpose of these administrative support services is to ensure effective coordination of the university's operations and work processes, including the coordination of the functions and roles in all units and departments; effective policy communication, interpretation and implementation; proper information/records management; availability of sound and reliable professional advice for effective decision-making processes and service delivery. However, university administration had evolved over the years and had been structured in such a way that senior academic employees also perform administrative duties alongside the university administrators who render administrative assistance (Asagwara, 2017).

Globally, an increasing demand for higher skill, knowledge, talent and experience had been observed to be on the increase for the fact that those who possess such higher qualifications are professionals and therefore more productive (Tien, 2016). However, global literature on occupational mobility revealed that workers who are more skilled, educated and knowledgeable have a higher tendency to voluntarily quit their occupations of origin (Sicherman & Galor, 1990; Howes & Goodman-Delahunty, 2015) in order to access better career chances and wages elsewhere (Tien, 2016).

However, it has been observed that an increasing number of non-teaching university administrators acquire higher degrees and develop themselves through training in order to acquire higher level knowledge and skill to enable them grow in their various careers and for enhanced job performance (Jaja, 2013). On the contrary, they convert their administrative occupations of origin to teaching through an internal job conversion process after acquiring relevant additional skills, knowledge and experience on their jobs. Ladipo (2015) opined that occupational mobility among university administrative employees is on the increase. In Yang & Bidwell's (2017) opinion, workers who switch their occupations horizontally within an organization are mostly those with more experience, education and are well trained in their various occupations of origin.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies had been carried out on occupational mobility in different sectors and organizations to determine the effect of occupational mobility on various variables. Such studies include that of DiPrete (1987); Ibok & Etuk (2013); Enyia (2015); Xu (2017); Forsythe (2018). However, in Nigeria, Jaja (2013) did a theoretical work to assess the gains and challenges of university education in Nigeria where he highlighted the challenges universities face through the services of two categories of lecturers described as the contact staff and converted administrative staff. The converted administrative staff are university

administrators who converted their jobs horizontally to become lecturers after reaching their peak in their various professions and without any chance of attaining further upward mobility. In Jaja's (2013) opinion, these categories of lecturers do not perform their jobs satisfactorily because they only possess the knowledge but do not know how to impart the knowledge to others due to lack of teaching skill and experience. Jaja's (2013) work did not involve any empirical research and the focus was not strictly on the issue of horizontal occupational mobility among non-teaching university administrators.

No empirical study had therefore been undertaken to investigate the impact of occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities, with emphasis on how it affects the overall administrative capabilities and functioning of the university administrative cadre. The questions that arises is: how does the incidence of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators influence the development of universities in the long run, in the face of the regular horizontal switches observed among very skilled, more experienced, educated, intelligent and seasoned university administrators? Thus, this study investigated the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria in the area of distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative cadres of universities.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine how horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators influences the development of universities in the area of distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative cadres of universities.

Research Question

How does horizontal occupational mobility influence the development of universities in the area of distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative cadres of universities?

Scope of the Study

This study focused on intra-organizational occupational mobility among university administrators and provides in-depth and insightful literature on the operations, consequences and impact on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria; an area which had been observed to have a dearth of literature.

The study covered twelve (12) public universities located in six (6) selected States from the South-West, South-South and South-East geopolitical zones in Nigeria namely Ekiti, Oyo, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Abia and Imo States. Data were collected from both teaching non-teaching staff of the following twelve (12) universities located in the selected States: Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State University, University of Ibadan, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State University, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Abia State University, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Imo State University.

Theoretical Framework

Work Adjustment Theory (WAT) (Dawis, England and Lofquist, 1964): WAT also known as person-environment correspondence theory has the ability to predict and provide explanations on the various individual responses to issues related to job, satisfaction on the job and how to either remain or quit a job. It also explains how workers react to both internal and external environments in their career lives. Work Adjustment Theory has three assumptions: Abilities – Demand fit which depicts an agreement between an individual's skills/abilities and the skill requirements for the job, Needs – Supplies fit represents an agreement between the needs and expectations of an individual and the rewards from the job while

Adjustment and Accommodation process is where an individual is inclined to choose a job/organization or environment that has a match with his/her expectations/needs..

The Action Theory (Parsons, 1951): A system is made up sub-systems which are inter-related and inter-dependent and help to create a process of mutual exchange of energy and resources which in turn supports the total system of action. The social interactions among actors in a social system is based on voluntarism where an actor makes a choice among several values and change is brought about by the development and learning processes in the system. Parsons (1951) theory focused on four functional prerequisites namely Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Latent/Pattern Maintenance. It recognizes occupational mobility as a social action by actors within institutions; reflecting the impact of such actions on the learning process and development of institutions, and the ability of the interrelated parts in the organizational system to work together to achieve a common goal and high performance.

Work adjustment theory and action theory are suitable for the prediction of workers' job-related actions and the explanation of the impact of their actions on the organization. This aligns with the findings of this study and is supported by the evidence generated on the nature of occupational mobility, its features and its impact on the overall university system.

Research Methodology

Research Design: Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted to study a cross-section of the study population at a particular point in time. The research type is ex-post facto because observations were made based on events which had already taken place. Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were adopted for the study.

Study Population: Southern Nigeria is made up of South-West, South-South and South-East. The total population of the study is six thousand and twenty five (6,025) respondents comprising senior university administrators and senior academic staff selected from twelve (12) public universities located in six (6) sample States in Southern Nigeria.

Sample States and Universities: Six States were selected through systematic sampling technique: Ekiti, Oyo, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Abia and Imo States. Twelve public universities located in the six (6) sample States were selected through simple random sampling technique as follows: Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State University, University of Ibadan, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State University, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Abia State University, Federal University of Technology, Owerri and Imo State University. Table 1 below shows the population distribution among the selected states and universities:

Table 1: Population Distribution among the Selected States and Universities

STATE	SELECTED UNIVERSITIES	SELECTED STAFF POPULATION	
Ekiti	Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE)	690	1,120
	Ekiti State University (EKSU)	430	
Oyo	University of Ibadan (UI)	936	1,286
	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH)	350	
Akwa Ibom	University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	550	975
	Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU)	425	
Rivers	University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	850	1,502
	Rivers State University (RSU)	652	
Abia	Michael Okpara University (MOU)	302	512
	Abia State University (ABSU)	210	
Imo	Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO)	380	630
	Imo State University (IMSU)	250	
TOTAL			6,025

Source: Various University Registry Departments, 2019

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sample Frame: Principal Assistant Registrars (PAR), Deputy Registrars (DR), Deputy Bursars (DB), Senior Lecturers (SL) and Professors (PROF.). The above categories of university employees were selected for the study because they have spent many years in the university and therefore are more experienced; they occupy leadership, managerial and supervisory positions; they take part in decision making processes; they are involved in staff recruitment, and appraisal/evaluation, especially for promotion and job conversion purposes; and they are in a better position to understand and ascertain the impact of occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities. Besides, the study involves an institutional performance analysis and only employees involved in higher level university administration/management are suitable for sampling.

Sample Size: The sample size is three hundred and forty three (343) respondents representing 5.7% of the total population determined through the data saturation method.

Sampling Techniques: Multistage Sampling Technique as follows:

Cluster: Universities located within the same geographical area, i.e. Southern Nigeria.

Systematic Sampling: This was adopted to select the sample States.

Stratified Sampling: Respondents were categorized as follows: Senior University Administrators (Principal Assistant Registrars (PAR), Deputy Registrars (DR) and Deputy Bursars (DB). Senior Academic Staff (Senior Lecturers (SL) and Professors (PROF)).

Purposive Sampling: The respondents were sampled after being identified as belonging to the above categories of staff.

Simple Random Sampling: The respondents were given equal chance of being selected.

Table 2 below shows the sample size distribution among the selected States and universities:

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution among the Selected States and Universities

STATE	SELECTED UNIVERSITIES	SELECTED STAFF POPULATION
Ekiti	Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE)	36
	Ekiti State University (EKSU)	20
Oyo	University of Ibadan (UI)	21
	Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH)	16
Akwa Ibom	University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	32
	Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU)	32
Rivers	University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	54
	Rivers State University (RSU)	40
Abia	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUA)	21
	Abia State University (ABSU)	27
Imo	Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO)	23
	Imo State University (IMSU)	21
TOTAL		343

Source: Survey Data, 2019

Nature/Sources of Data

The primary sources comprised of responses from In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions while the secondary sources included books, journals, articles, university reports/statistics and internet sources.

Methods of Data Collection

Primary sources comprised of In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) while the secondary sources included university statistics on occupational mobility and communiqué.

In-depth Interview (IDI)

A total of forty nine (49) respondents were interviewed across the universities from the following categories: University Principal Officers (UPOs), Management staff (Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department/Directors of Institute/Centre, Deputy Registrars and Deputy Bursars), the Directors of Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QAQC) Unit and the Personnel Officers, Senior Professional Administrative and Technical Staff

(PO, SPATS) of the various universities. Below is Table 3 showing the distribution of the respondents for the IDI according to the selected categories and universities:

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents for the In-depth Interview Based on the Selected Categories of Staff

UNIVERSITY	CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS							TOTAL
	UPO	DEAN	HOD/ DIR.	DR	DB	DIR, QAQC	PO, SPATS	
Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE)	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	5
Ekiti State University (EKSU)	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	4
University of Ibadan (UI)	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	3
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH)	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	3
University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU)	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	4
University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	1	2	2	2	-	1	1	9
Rivers State University (RSU)	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	8
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUA)	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
ABIA State University (ABSU)	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	3
Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO)	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	3
Imo State University (IMSU)	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
TOTAL	2	10	12	11	4	5	5	49

Source: Survey Data, 2019

Focus Group Discussion (FGD): A total of thirty two (32) FGDs were conducted across the twelve (12) selected universities with a total of two hundred and ninety four (294) participants. Table 4 below shows the distribution of respondents for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Based on the Selected Universities

UNIVERSITY	NO. OF FGD	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE)	3	31
Ekiti State University (EKSU)	2	16
University of Ibadan (UI)	2	18
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH)	2	13
University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	3	29
Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU)	3	28
University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	5	45
Rivers State University (RSU)	4	32
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUA)	2	19
ABIA State University (ABSU)	2	24
Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO)	2	20
Imo State University (IMSU)	2	19
TOTAL	32	294

Source: Survey Data, 2019

Methods of Data Analysis

Tables, ladder diagram and charts were used while the QSR NVivo software was utilized for the analysis. Thematic analysis was based on emerging themes and prevailing ideas from the data gathered. The data were prepared for analysis by transcribing the responses into document (text/Ms-word) formats and coded into the QSR NVivo software.

Data Presentation and Reporting

Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE): Occupational mobility is encouraged.

Summary of the FGD Responses: In what ways are the workers’ skills, knowledge, experience and performance affected?

1. It leads to loss of job-specific skill, knowledge, experience and talent.
2. Replacements in many cases perform the job better than the predecessors.
3. It reduces the level of skill and knowledge among the administrators.
4. Vacuums are created when there are no immediate and suitable replacements.

Ekiti State University (EKSU): Encourages occupational mobility because it provides manpower at critical times.

Summary of the FGD Responses: How does horizontal occupational mobility influence the level of skill and knowledge among the administrative and academic staff?

1. It promotes the development of skill and knowledge by individual employees.
2. Acquired skill, knowledge and experience are taken along to the academic cadre.
3. The university benefits from the additional skill and knowledge, especially when the switchers occupy administrative positions as lecturers.

4. Learning process for the administrative mentee is discontinued after a mentor switches his/her occupation to the academic cadre.

University of Ibadan (UI): Horizontal occupational mobility is allowed in rare cases in order to meet the demand for teaching staff. The university converted about thirty (30) administrative employees to lecturers recently.

Summary of the FGD Responses: Comment freely on how the process of horizontal occupational mobility could be effectively managed?

1. It provides internal manpower to meet the needs of the university.
2. It is detrimental to the development of universities when adequate policy framework is not provided to guide the process.
3. Workers should remain in their current occupations except in rare cases.
4. Workers should be promoted as and when due and the conditions of service should be attractive to encourage them to remain in their occupations.

IDI Reports: From your experience in the university, does horizontal occupational mobility have any negative effect on the functioning of the university?

The effect of such a movement is very high. For a person to spend some years doing a particular job, he must have gained relevant experience on that job which will be more beneficial to the university through quality service in the administrative cadre. At the end of the day, more skill and knowledge are channelled to the academic cadre to the detriment of the other cadre(Respondent_3).

In what ways should the University manage the operations of horizontal occupational mobility?

Workers who replace the switchers in the administrative cadre should be trained and properly mentored to effectively take over the responsibilities(Respondent_1).

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH): There is provision for internal job conversion.

Summary of the FGD Responses: How does horizontal occupational mobility influence the level of skill, knowledge, talent and performance among the administrative staff?

1. Administrators who convert their jobs to lecturing are also good in both oral and written communication, documentation skills/processes and other administrative work.
2. A switcher ceases to be a non-teaching administrator and goes away with the acquired skill, knowledge and experience to the teaching cadre.

IDI Reports: Comment generally on the operations of horizontal occupational mobility and how such processes should be effectively managed.

The exit of an administrator will affect his/her original occupation because it is a minus one good hand. If a career university administrator becomes a lecturer in the case of horizontal occupational mobility, this may not affect the university in an obvious negative manner if such movements are done sparingly and irregularly. I think it will sure become a big problem if it becomes more frequent, a situation where the university does not have suitable replacements (Respondent_3).

University of Uyo (UNIUYO): Horizontal job conversion is not encouraged; the prevalence low.

Summary of the FGD Responses: In what ways does horizontal occupational mobility affect the university?

1. It reduces the level of oral and written communication skills among administrators when those with very good skills switch to the academic cadre.
2. It undermines the effective administrative functioning of the university system.

IDI Reports: What are the consequences of horizontal occupational mobility in your university?

The movement of administrators to the academic cadre is detrimental to the system. No magic at all. Yes, the exit of very skilled and more experienced university administrators and the use of fresh hands hampers the development of the university(Respondent_1).

Akwa Ibom State University (AKSU): Horizontal job conversion is not encouraged.

Summary of the FGD Responses: How does horizontal occupational mobility influence the overall administrative capabilities of the university?

1. A high percentage of non-teaching administrators are interested in the teaching job to the detriment of the administrative cadre.
2. When workers become experienced and having being trained to render administrative services, their exit definitely reduces the level of competency in the administrative cadre.

What in your opinion should universities do to reduce the rate of horizontal occupational mobility among non-teaching university administrators?

3. Training opportunities should be provided for university administrators, in addition to other incentives.
4. An effective policy framework is necessary to protect both the interests of the workers and the university.

Do you think that horizontal movement has a negative influence on the development of the university?

Yes, that we know. It really affects the university negatively even though we try to replace them with capable hands, but there is a saying that 'experience is the best teacher' and I add that skills acquired on the job are more valuable to job performance. I don't think we have issues here because in the Board meetings, it is always emphasized. Apart from one moving from one position to another, what if the person dies? So we create policies regarding this, not waiting for circumstance to take place(Respondent_2).

University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT): There is provision for occupational mobility but it undermines the functioning of the university non-teaching administrative cadre.

Summary of the FGD Responses: How do the operations of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators influence the level of skill, knowledge and performance among university administrators?

1. It leads to loss of acquired skill and knowledge to the academic cadre of the university.
2. It requires the retraining of replacements to do the job which does not happen.
3. The level of communication and documentation skills declines among the administrators.
4. Inexperienced administrators are expected to be mentored by very skilled and experienced staff who are no longer available in the administrative cadre.

IDI Reports: How does horizontal occupational mobility affect the functioning of the university?

The administrative cadre of the university is affected, especially when the movement involves very skilled, more experienced and highly educated staff who made 2¹ and first class. Some people come into administration just because there is no job and when they now find out that in the system, there is provision for conversion or movement, they decide to take the academic work. Often times, the reason for the movement is the desire for respect and recognition(Respondent_4).

Rivers State University (RSU): Occupational mobility is allowed but regulated; high prevalence.

Summary of FGD Responses: In what ways does horizontal occupational mobility influence the functioning of the university?

1. It undermines effective mentoring as very skilled and experienced administrators move out to the academic cadre.
2. It creates problems for the university when there are no regular replacements.

IDI Reports: What do you consider necessary for the effective management of occupational mobility?

Replacements are not regular because of Government embargo on employment. Our university uses youth corpsers sometimes to do the work. So, I think the university should sponsor trainings/workshops for staff to enhance their job performances(Respondent_7).

Michael Okpara University of Agriculture (MOUA): Horizontal occupational mobility is regulated in the university.

Summary of the FGD Responses: How does horizontal occupational mobility influence the level of skill, knowledge and talent among the administrative staff?

1. It leads to loss of administrative skills, experience and knowledge such as good communication and documentation skills.

What happens when a job switch takes place?

2. Replacements take care of previous responsibilities.

What factors militate against the effective management of the process?

1. Some job conversions are politically influenced without consideration given to the impact on the administrative cadre.

What do you think the university should do to benefit from the process?

2. Effective management of the process of job conversion is required.
3. Prevalence of the incidence of horizontal occupational mobility is detrimental to the university.

IDI Reports: Is horizontal occupational mobility a welcome development in the university?

Generally, I don't support the idea of staff moving from one occupation to the other, especially from the non-academic to academic cadre. Administrators should be allowed to do their jobs with enhanced capabilities because the university will benefit more from them(Respondent_2).

Abia State University (ABSU): Horizontal job conversion is not encouraged except in rare cases.

Summary of FGD Responses: In what ways is the university affected?

1. Acquired skills, knowledge and experience are lost to the academic cadre to the detriment of the administrative cadre of the university.

What do you think the university should do to benefit from the process?

2. Workers should be motivated to remain in their occupations through training and better conditions of service.

Federal University of Technology (FUTO): Occupational mobility is encouraged.

Summary of FGD Responses: How does the process benefit the university?

1. It provides replacements for vacant positions in the teaching cadre.
2. It provides opportunities for better replacements to take over previous responsibilities in the administrative cadre.
3. When workers work together as a team, it enhances productivity, but if a skilled and competent administrator quits the group, productivity drops.

IDI Reports: Does the university stand to benefit from a switch from the administrative to the teaching cadre?

We have observed that in the university, some staff were not interested in their previous administrative occupations and were just marking time, waiting for an opportunity to move to an area of interest where they became motivated to perform better. So, when such workers move, vacancies are created and the replacements are observed to be better in the job and perform better than their predecessors. So, the movement helps the university system in terms of expertise and productivity(Respondent_1).

Imo State University (IMSU): Horizontal occupational mobility is not encouraged.

Summary of FGD Responses: In what ways does horizontal occupational mobility influence human capital development, application and performance among university administrators?

1. It leads to loss of acquired job-specific skill, experience and knowledge and this affects the level of competency in the administrative cadre.

IDI Reports: Comment freely on the issues surrounding the operations of horizontal occupational mobility in your university:

The prevalence of horizontal occupational mobility is high. Presently, eight persons had been shortlisted to leave the administrative work for lecturing, but the Registrar will replace them eventually. So, it does not have any negative effect on the system in a serious way. There is supposed to be an official memo notifying staff about vacancies and call for

applications but the memo will not come until it is too late. The university is doing everything possible to discourage it. It depends on the Vice-Chancellor. A VC may come in and decides to allow people to be upgraded to positions of their choice so long as they are qualified. It helps the system because when workers are allowed to grow in the university, they become happy and work better in their respective areas. However, my own position is that people should try to be satisfied with where they are. Like the administration is a cadre of employment that has been established by the university constitution. People should be satisfied with their own area and tow that path. If you are an administrator, go to that area and tow that path. If you are a lecturer, go into the lecturing from the beginning. Don't at any point in time begin to now go to where you feel you are protected because of the failure of the system or because you feel the administrative/technical staff feel they are not protected because the person that would have protected you is not protected too(Respondent_2).

Results and Analysis of the Research Question

Research Question: How does horizontal occupational mobility influence the development of universities in the area of distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative cadres of universities?

The study found that the operations of horizontal occupational mobility produce an inequitable distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative cadres of universities. While the level of skill, knowledge and talent declines in the administrative cadre, they are boosted in the academic cadre and this affects the administrative cadre of the university in the following ways:

- It reduces the level of oral and written communication skills among university administrators.
- It reduces the level of documentation skill among university administrators.
- It reduces the level of minutes writing/reporting skill among university administrators.
- It undermines knowledge and learning processes among university administrators.
- It leads to loss of job-specific skill, knowledge and experience in the administrative cadre.
- It undermines the process of effective mentorship among university administrators.
- It undermines the process of skill and responsibility transfer among university administrators.
- It reduces the level of productivity in the administrative cadre.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators brings about a decline in the level of skill, knowledge and talent in the administrative cadre. On the other hand, it enhances the level of skill, knowledge and talent in the academic cadre. This is therefore a case of one cadre's loss is the other cadre's gain. What this means is that in the processes of horizontal occupational mobility, there is no balance and equity in the distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the academic and administrative employees of universities in Southern Nigeria.

It was also found that the inequitable distribution of skill, knowledge and talent among the two major cadres of the university system has a detrimental impact on the overall functioning of the administrative cadre of the university, thereby reducing its competency level. (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000; Vavrinova & Krckova; 2015; Leonard, 2018; Donohoe, 2019; Markowich, 2019). A lot however depends on the level of job conversion that takes place. Reports of the study also revealed that the University of Ibadan converted about 30 very skilled, experienced and more educated university administrators to academic staff a few weeks ago (Tribune, 6th November, 2019). The consequences of this single job conversion on the administrative cadre can only be imagined

In essence, as a major functional sub-system of the whole university system, a malfunction in the administrative cadre definitely affects the entire university system. This aligns with the action theory (Parsons, 1951) which is one of the theories adopted as a theoretical framework for this study. The study

therefore concludes that horizontal occupational mobility has a detrimental influence on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria.

However, the findings of this study also revealed that most of the factors associated with the detrimental impact of the processes of horizontal occupational mobility include inadequate in-service training and incentive, poor conditions of service, occupational mobility without replacement, staff incompetency and the gap in the level of recognition accorded the academic and non-teaching administrative staff. The study posited that the university can also benefit from the processes of horizontal occupational mobility through effective management with adequate attention given to staff replacement.

Conclusion

The outcome of occupational mobility leads to loss of job-specific skill, knowledge and talent in the administrative cadre of universities and destabilizes the functioning of the system when very skilled, more experienced, educated and seasoned university administrators convert to the academic profession. However, such challenges can be managed through effective policy framework in the area of staff replacement.

Recommendation

Horizontal occupational mobility should be structured in line with strict policy guidelines. Essentially, the processes of horizontal occupational mobility should firstly seek to identify and address its consequences on the system in areas such as skill vacuum, replacement and re-training of the administrative employees.

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