

INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT STAFF SUPERVISORY SKILLS ON ACADEMIC STAFF JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated influence of management staff supervisory skills on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study made use of descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 8,364 academic staff members from the 14 public universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for the study comprised 386 academic staff which was gotten based on Taro Yamene. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. A structured instrument titled 'Management Staff Supervisory Skills Questionnaire (MSSSQ)' was used for data collection. The instruments were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of six research assistants. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer research questions at 2.50 and above was accepted, while mean scores below 2.50 was not accepted. Chi-Square (χ^2) statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that management staff classroom visitation skill has significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria as well as management staff classroom observation skill has significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities. It was concluded that regular supervision of academic staff members and provision of the necessary professional guidance has positive influence on staff job performance. Finally, it was recommended among others that vice chancellors through the deans and heads of departments should be encouraged to regularly visit classrooms to have first-hand information of what actually goes on in the class between lecturers and students.

Keywords: Staff, supervisory skills, job performance

Introduction

The role of educators has undergone dramatic shifts in the recent past. As such, academic staff members, especially the new recruits, may not have mastered or developed sufficient skills for effective teaching; hence, there is a need for classroom instruction to be supervised. According to Osakwe (2010) supervision is concerned with the provision of professional assistance and guidance to lecturers and students geared towards the achievement of effective teaching and learning in the school. The vice-chancellor, as a supervisor, provides a professional guidance to lecturers to improve their competencies for effective teaching process to enhance the learning and growth of students.

Instructional supervision involves activities which are carried out with the aim of making teaching and learning process better for both learners and the facilitator (Asuru, 2012). It is a process of assisting lecturers to improve their classroom instructional ability and management of students to achieve the goals and objectives of the school. Kalagbor, Adeley and Koko (2017) are of the view that for university goals and objectives to be achieved, vice-chancellors as heads of university education have to be involved in instructional supervision. As they do this, they interact with lecturers who are members of the university. The administrators' effectiveness in university management is, therefore, measured by the ability to influence positive lecture commitment and success in classroom management. Thus the need for effective instructional supervision in all educational institutions cannot be over emphasized.

According to Osakwe (2010), management staff instructional supervision assist lecturers to creditably perform the duties of preparation of lesson plan and notes, lesson delivery, effective use of diverse methods of teaching in the classroom, use of instructional materials, keeping and maintenance of institutional records and effective classroom management. Through effective supervision, management staff can provide meaningful feedback and direction that could assist lecturers to perform their duties well.

Supervision, whether internal or external, is a conscious effort directed towards finding ways of improving the outcome of each educational institution. It is an interaction between at least two persons for the improvement of an activity. It is also a combination of processes, procedures and conditions that are consciously designed to advance the work effectiveness of individuals and groups (Ityav, 2007). The author further asserts that supervision means the process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with students. This means that supervision is the process of stimulating growth and helping academic staff members to achieve excellence in teaching.

Supervision is the interaction between two or more persons towards the improvement of instructional activities in the school system (Olawolu, 2012). The author posits that supervision is a kind of formative, supportive and training process designed to improve and re-mould attitude of academic staff members and students to promote growth and development towards maintaining the established standard of education. This implies that supervision is a form of school administrator-subordinate relationship where a leader guides the day-to-day operation of the institution by stimulating, directing and coordinating the workers and their efforts, creating or cultivating good working personal relations such that everyone involved can collectively bring out his/her best ability to perform all the functions towards achievement of set goals. In a nutshell, supervision seeks to stimulate, guide, oversee and appraise all elements that would lead to enhanced instructional quality and improve staff performance.

Management staff who are the university administrators ensure effective supervision by interacting academically and socially on a regular basis with academic staff members and students within and outside the classroom. The primary aim is to monitor the implementation of curricula and ensure desirable increase in employees' capabilities, upgrade their conceptual knowledge and teaching skills and offer them support in their work to facilitate better performance in teachers' pedagogical practices and students' learning outcomes in a school setting (Olagboye, 2014; Adetula, 2015). Supervision provides a vehicle and structure which allows schools, departments as well as individuals (management staff, academic staff and students) within them to respond effectively to curriculum and instruction to achieve the stated educational objectives.

Supervision has the potential to strengthen the management staff capacities for managing human and material resources. Management staff as university administrators needs to visit the classroom from time to time to supervise instruction in the institution to ensure a uniform standard of education. Ugboko (2012) states that the vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, deans of faculties and heads of departments are members of the management team whose responsibility is to provide a variety of supervision skills for academic staff members to see the need for change, plan for change and practise new behavior for effective teaching and learning.

Supervisory skills are the ways, methods, strategies and techniques in which the supervisor or the vice-chancellor uses to guide and assist the supervisee on how to go about his/her duties. They are the actions taken to mentor and monitor subordinates or teachers and provide supportive and conducive atmosphere for improvement in the instructional process (Gishiwa, Barde, Bulus, Abba, Aliyu & El-Jajah, 2019). To accomplish this task, university administrators must have an intimate knowledge of the psychology of human learning, have a command of the various theories of instruction, be acquainted with the sources and uses of instructional media/ materials, be familiar with evaluation techniques, be skilled in individual and group counseling, and have a good knowledge of Nigerian educational system and goals (Adetula, 2015). Uduak and Eze (2015) add that involvement of heads of departments or subject specialists is imperative in providing professional assistance to the supervisees. The supervisor who is a specialist in the faculty of arts might have limited knowledge of the contents and methodologies of teaching science courses.

There are several supervisory skills. Kajo (2011) and Ekpoh and Eze (2015) outline some skills available for instructional supervisors that would help academic staff members to improve on their jobs and facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. These skills include: self-appraisal skills, classroom visitation, classroom observation, inter/intra school supervision, teaching practice, clinical supervision, micro-teaching, workshop and demonstration skills.

Classroom visitation skill is one of the processes by which the supervisors (management staff) visit the classroom to assess teachers' and students' actions. Nwaogu (2010) defines classroom visitation as a procedure by which the educational leader who possesses wisdom can be of great assistance to learning by students. The essence of such visitation is to practically oversee the conduct of classroom practices and teaching methods adopted by academic staff as well as instructional materials usage to enhance students' understanding.

Another supervisory skill used by management staff to enhance academic staff members' job performance in universities is classroom observation. Classroom observation skill is one of the stages of clinical supervision. The management staff purpose of observation

is to capture realities of the lesson objectively and comprehensively enough to enable the supervisor and teacher to reconstruct the lesson as validly as possible afterwards to analyze it (Goldhammer, Anderson & Krajewski, 2013). Classroom observation has two concerns, the first being the academic staff members' task to teach the lesson effectively. The second is the supervisor's task to invent or document the occurrence during the lesson as accurately as possible.

During observation, the supervisor takes note of the facilitator's knowledge of the subject being taught, evidence of adequate planning and preparation for the lesson, lesson presentation, facilitator's personality and the extent of students' participation or interaction with the facilitator. Classroom observation forms the basis for providing constructive advice on how to improve the quality of classroom instruction (Ayeni, 2012; Ayeni & Akinola, 2018).

Academic staff members' job performance refers to the extent to which academic staff are committed to pedagogical delivery and display of moral uprightness and academic excellence in the teaching profession (Uko, Umosen & Caleb, 2015). Job performance is concerned with overall ability of academic staff members to exhibit the right attitude to work, being committed and dedicated to the teaching roles and making deliberate efforts toward the attainment of educational goals and objectives (Iloh, Nwaham, Igbinedion & Ogor, 2016). The authors further note that the indicator of academic staff members' job performance is evaluated in their ability to make deliberate effort to enhance students' academic performance, possession and display of in-depth knowledge of their subject matters, presentation of lessons in a well-organized manner and effective classroom organization and control.

Management staff supervisory skill is one major instrument that seems to enhance academic staff members' better output. Egwu (2015) asserts that supervision and job performance of academic staff can be increased considerably if more attention is given to their evaluation and recognition. Good relationship with academic staff at the work place creates a feeling of affiliation and job performance in the institution. University management staff supervises and monitor the work and behaviour of academic staff members to improve individual staff competencies no matter how proficient they are deemed to be and provide students with quality learning.

Statement of the problem

Academic staff members' job performance in recent times has been found to be weak leading to poor academic performance of students in public universities in North Central Nigeria. This seems to indicate that instructional supervision is not regularly carried out by university management staff to provide professional guidance and assistance. This makes academic staff members unable to improve on their instructional delivery. Public university management staff in North Central Nigeria seem to spend more of their official hours on other administrative duties to the expense of supervision of instruction. The poor attitude toward supervision of academic staff members in the classroom is becoming alarming. Some administrators are observed to be actually out of touch with modern supervision skills. They appear to have estranged themselves from the actual instrumental realities of the classroom. As a result, their activities as supervisors tend to be of very little value to academic staff members and students. In a similar vein, some academic staff members seem to have developed negative attitudes towards supervision. Thus, they may not benefit much from the exercise. Job performance of academic staff members in public universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria to an extent depends on management staff supervisory role as staff

members abandon their jobs to indulge in trade and other personal activities on the bases that they have not been paid salaries for months.

It is also observed that management staff have been reluctant in visiting the classrooms to observe for themselves what is transpiring between academic staff members and students as regards effective teaching and learning. These may have affected academic staff members' job performance in one way or the other. This position is supported by earlier studies by Amah (2015) and Effiong (2016) that indicated that most university administrators devote themselves only to office work, thereby neglecting the very important aspect of monitoring academic staff members' classroom activities. The issue of academic staff members performing poorly in public universities in North Central Nigeria today has reached the point where effective use of relevant supervisory skills would be explored and employed to curb the menace. It is against this background that this study investigated the influence of management staff supervisory skills (in the areas of classroom visitation and classroom observation) on academic staff members' job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of management staff supervisory skills on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the influence of management staff classroom visitation skill on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. Establish the influence of management staff classroom observation skill on academic staff job performance in public universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of management staff classroom visitation skill on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria?
2. What influence does management staff classroom observation skill have on academic staff job performance in public universities?

Hypotheses

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

1. Management staff classroom visitation skill has no significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. Management staff classroom observation skill has no significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities.

Research Method

The study employed descriptive survey research design. It is a design by which a group of people or items are studied in their natural settings by collecting, analyzing and interpreting data from a sample considered to be a representative of the entire population (Emaikwu, 2019). The survey strategy adopted for this study has an important characteristic of providing accurate information when it is carefully and effectively used. The area of study was North Central Nigeria. It is one of the six geo-political zones in the country which is also

known as Middle Belt. It comprises six states, namely Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The population of the study comprised 8,364 academic staff members (4,898 academic staff members and 3,466 academic staff members from federal and state universities respectively) from the 14 public universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for the study comprised 386 academic staff from 13 public universities in North Central Nigeria. This was based on Taro Yamene (1964) in Emaikwu. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. According to Emaikwu, (2019), multi-stage sampling is a sampling technique in which different sampling techniques are used at different stages for drawing a sample from a specified population for a particular research. A structured instrument titled 'Management Staff Supervisory Skills Questionnaire (MSSSQ)' was used for data collection. The instruments were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of six research assistants. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The decision was based on the real limit of numbers. A cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making arising from the analysis. Mean scores from 2.50 and above were considered to have positive response and the item taken as having accepted, while mean scores below 2.50 were considered to have negative response and the item not accepted. Chi-Square (χ^2) statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Question One: What is the influence of management staff classroom visitation skill on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: *Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Management Staff Classroom Visitation Skill on Staff Job Performance in Public Universities*

S/N	Items Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	Classroom visitation helps lecturers to improve on their teaching methods.	382	100	152	78	52	2.79	0.98	Agree
2	Management staff visits to classroom help lecturers to develop problem-solving skills during teaching.	382	123	108	89	62	2.76	0.77	Agree
3	Classroom visitation helps lecturers on how to manage students' indiscipline in the classroom.	382	95	178	80	29	2.89	0.87	Agree
4	Classroom visitation does not enhance lecturers' use of instructional materials in the classroom.	382	82	86	135	79	2.45	1.05	Disagree
5	Lecturers' consciousness of classroom visitation	382	99	132	102	49	2.74	0.97	Agree

enhances their logical presentation of lessons.		
Cluster Mean	2.73	Agree

Table 1 shows that the mean ratings of items 1-5 are 2.79, 2.76, 2.89, 2.45 and 2.74 with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.98, 0.77, 0.87, 1.05 and 0.97 respectively. From Table 2, the respondents agreed that classroom visitation helps lecturers to improve on their teaching methods. Respondents were also of the opinion that management staff visits to classroom help lecturers to develop problem-solving skills during teaching. The respondents further agreed that classroom visitation helps lecturers on how to manage students' indiscipline in the classroom. However, the respondents disagreed to the item which stated that classroom visitation does not enhance lecturers' use of instructional materials in the classroom. Moreover, the respondents agreed that lecturers' consciousness of classroom visitation do enhance their logical presentation of lessons. The cluster mean of 2.73 was above the cut-off point of 2.50. This means that the management staff classroom visitation skill have influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Question Two: What influence does management staff classroom observation skill have on academic staff job performance in public universities?

Table 2:
Mean Score and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Management Staff Classroom Observation Skill on Staff Job Performance in Public Universities

S/N	Items Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6	Classroom observation helps lecturers develop better lecturer-students relationship skills.	382	63	192	68	59	2.68	0.93	Agree
7	Observing lecturers teach in the classroom enables them to present their lessons properly.	382	78	156	85	63	2.65	0.94	Agree
8	Observation of classroom activities does not enable lecturers' to develop classroom management skills.	382	52	68	142	120	2.14	0.81	Disagree
9	Classroom observation helps lecturers to work on classroom evaluation during teaching.	382	99	109	92	82	2.59	0.79	Agree
10	Management staff classroom observation makes lecturers jittery and this reduces their	382	105	165	59	53	2.84	0.98	Agree

free flow in lesson presentation.		
Cluster Mean	2.58	Agree

Table 2 shows that the mean ratings of items 6-10 are 2.68, 2.65, 2.14, 2.59 and 2.84 with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.93, 0.94, 0.81, 0.79 and 0.98 respectively. Item by item analysis showed that respondents were of the opinion that classroom observation helps lecturers develop better lecturer-students relationship skills. Respondents also unanimously agreed that observing lecturers teach in the classroom enables them to present their lessons properly. The respondents disagreed with the item which stated that observation of classroom activities does not enable lecturers to develop classroom management skills. In addition, the respondents opined that classroom observation helps lecturers to work on classroom evaluation during teaching. Moreover, their responses showed that management staff classroom observation makes some lecturers jittery and this reduces their free flow in lesson presentation. The cluster mean of 2.58 is above the cut-off point of 2.50. This means that management staff classroom observation skill have influence on academic staff job performance in public universities.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Management staff classroom visitation skill has no significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Table 3:

Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Management Staff Classroom Visitation Skill on Academic Staff Job Performance in Public Universities

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	Total	df	χ^2 cal.	P-value	Remark
Observed	95	178	80	29					
					382	3	22.042 ^a	.000	Sign.
Expected	95.5	95.5	95.5	95.5					

$P=.000 < 0.05$; $df=3$; and χ^2 -calculated = 22.042^a

Table 3 shows that $P < .05$ with 3 degree of freedom. This showed that the null hypothesis which stated that management staff classroom visitation skill has no significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria was therefore, rejected. This result clearly shows that management staff classroom visitation skill has significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Management staff classroom observation skill has no significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities.

Table 4:

Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Management Staff Classroom Observation Skill on Academic Staff Job Performance in Public Universities

Responses	SA	A	D	SD	Total	df	χ^2 cal.	P-value	Remark
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Observed	78	156	85	63					
					382	3	56.660 ^a	.000	Sign.
Expected	95.5	95.5	95.5	95.5					

$P=.000<0.05$; $df=3$; and χ^2 -calculated = 56.660^a

Table 4 shows that $P<.05$ with 3 degree of freedom. This showed that the null hypothesis which stated that management staff classroom observation skill has no significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities was therefore, rejected. This result implies that management staff classroom observation skill has significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities.

Discussion of Findings

This research work investigated the influence of management staff supervisory skills on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria. The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

The first finding revealed that management staff classroom visitation skill has significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities in North Central Nigeria. This finding agrees with Ekpoh and Eze (2015) who reported that a significant relationship exists between classroom visitation technique and teachers’ job performance. The result further showed that teachers are more prepared when they know that their activities are under supervision, but more relaxed and tend to perform below average when they know that the superior is not visiting to observe them. In addition, Sule, Arop and Alade (2012) discovered that there is a significant influence of principals’ classroom visitation and inspection on teachers’ job performance. The researcher discovered during the fieldwork that lecturers’ consciousness of management staff classroom visitation do enhance their logical presentation of lectures and this enhances classroom discipline in the universities.

The second finding revealed that management staff classroom observation skill has significant influence on academic staff job performance in public universities. This finding is consistent with Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) who found that there is a high positive correlation between classroom observation technique and teachers’ job performance in secondary schools. This implies that principals’ regular observation of teachers’ instructional delivery in the classroom in terms of mastery of the subject matter, application of teaching strategies and aids, classroom management and organization among others have positive influence on teachers’ job performance. Similarly, Mavindu (2013) reported that 86% of principals conducted classroom observation, 98% checked teachers’ records of work and 99% ensured adherence to the timetable. It was found that the frequency of principals’ classroom observation and checking of teachers’ records significantly influenced secondary school students’ academic performance. In addition, Sule, Ameh and Egbai (2015) reported that there was a significant positive influence of instructional supervisory practice of classroom observation on teachers’ role effectiveness. The result also indicated that there was a significant positive influence of instructional supervisory practice of checking of teachers’ lesson notes on teachers’ role effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study found that Management staff supervisory skills in the areas of classroom visitation and classroom observation have significant influence on staff job performance in public universities. Thus, regular supervision of academic staff members and provision of the necessary professional guidance has positive influence on staff job performance in terms of making deliberate effort to enhance students' academic performance, possession and display of in-depth knowledge of his or her subject matter, presentation of lecture in a well-organized manner, effective classroom organization and control, participation in curricular activities, regularity and punctuality to lecture, discipline, motivation and counseling of students among others.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Vice chancellors through the deans and heads of departments should be encouraged to regularly visit classrooms to have first-hand information of what actually goes on in the class between lecturers and students. This would also provide the avenue for vice chancellors to help lecturers develop better lecturer-students relationship skills.
2. Management staff should endeavour to regularly observe lecturers' classroom instructional delivery and provide professional guidance and assistance to them where necessary. This can be done effectively by the deans and particularly the heads of various academic departments.

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