

A Survey of Selected Demographic Variables of Career Administrators in Universities in South East, Nigeria

¹Uche Calista Vita-Agundu, ²Pamela K. Asogwa and ³Valery Chizoba Nnamaga

¹Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nsukka, Nigeria

²Department of Language Studies, Enugu State College of Education (Technical),
Enugu, Nigeria

³Staff School, University of Nigeria Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria

Abstract: This survey research examined selected demographic variables of career administrators in universities in South East, Nigeria. The study was carried out in South East, Nigeria. The population of this the study comprised all the 533 career administrators. A sample of 498 career administrators in universities in South-East Nigeria was used for the study. A total of 498 copies of the demographic questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and 344 were returned. Frequencies (F) and percentages (%) were used to answer research questions. The interview schedule was analyzed using qualitative analytical parameter known as content analysis. Findings showed that majority of the career administrators are graduates/first degree holders and have a qualification in management/administration, thus, they are professionally qualified, managers/administrators. Therefore, the government in collaboration with the supervising agency of universities and university management should encourage the rotation of staff, consider their demographic variables as applied in the study.

Key words: Career administrators, demographic variables, Nigeria, universities, supervising, rotation

INTRODUCTION

There is growing concern about the job performance of career administrators and how demographic variables influence their performance. Demographic variables are characteristics of a given population. They are peculiarities of a group. Demographic variables are the attributes that can be applied to a human population that include such information as gender, age, qualification, marital status, rank, occupation, ethnicity, location to name a few (Ugwuanyi, 2014). The employee's demographic characteristics can impact on their work behaviour and productivity in an organization. Diverse demographic characteristics mould and delimit the patterns of thought processes, the patterns of feelings, reasoning and mould actions of an individual which impact on the overall attitude (Adigwe, 2005). Palakurthi and Parks (2000) reiterate that changes in demography are one of the factors that affect work performance nevertheless, there have been many empirical findings by previous researchers on the relationship between specific demographic variables and job performance of employees outside the location of the present study with contradictory research results. However, the demographic variables to be considered in this study include the level of education, designation and area of specialization of career administrators. There have been many attempts by researchers to establish whether

specific demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, rank, ethnicity, location among others are predictive of job performance of principals, teachers and other professions but little or no attention has been given with particular reference to level of education, designation and area of specialization of university career administrators.

Level of education is the academic credentials or degrees an individual have obtained (Becker, 1964). Level of education as applied in this study is the different levels of educational qualification or academic credentials/degrees possessed by the career administrators in universities. The educational levels of career administrators in universities have been classified to first degree (B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed), Master's degree (M.Sc/M.A/M.ed) and Doctoral degree (Ph.D). The level of education received by an individual may influence his/her competencies in the work environment. Ugwuanyi (2014), state that staff with varying qualifications may display varying competences and attitude to work. Higher educational qualification by staff may attract more skills and knowledge and ability which could contribute significantly to their levels of performance on the job. Most organizations use education variable as an indicator of a person's skill level or productivity. It is expected that the highly professionally qualified and certificated people may perform certain tasks better when compared with the less educated ones. Ng and Feldman (2009) found a

positive significant relationship between the level of education and core task performance including creativity and citizenship behaviours. On the contrary, Sonny and Scherman (2014) observed no significant relationship between the level of education and worker's performance on a given job.

Designation is the position or the job title of an employee. Smedley and Whitten (2006) reveal that senior hospital staff performs better than the junior staff and concluded that the major factor affecting staff performance included job position, level of education and other demographic variables. Similarly Jorfi *et al.* (2011) assert that job position is the most important factor that can impact positively on performance in educational administration. In agreement, Lee and Benedict submit that there is a high correlation between performance and holding top positions among staff. This implies that when people are on a higher position their performance increases. In contrary, Roebuck *et al.* (2008) describes the area of specialization as the course, subject or specific field an individual studied or majored in while undergoing an academic programme. Area of specialization in this research means one's field of study from a higher institution. The area of specialization of career administrators in universities for the purpose of this study has been grouped into sciences, arts, social sciences, management/administration, education, engineering and technology. Area of specialization may provide different skills and attitude that may impact on different levels of performance of university career administrators. Kantor (1997) found a significant correlation between the area of specialization and job performance of employees which contradicts the findings of Lawrence (2004) of no relationship between the two variables. The main purpose of the study was to survey some demographic variables of career administrators in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a survey research design. The study was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. The population of this the study comprised all the 533 career administrators within ranks of Administrative Officer, Assistant Registrar and Senior Assistant Registrar in the universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria. The population is made up of 140 for Enugu State, 116 for Anambra State, 1114 for Abia State, 35 for Ebonyi State and 128 for Imo State. A sample of 498 career administrators in universities in South-East Nigeria was used for the study. A direct delivery and retrieval method was employed in the administration of the instruments to the respondents. The research assistants were properly briefed by the researcher on the modalities

of administration and retrieval of the instruments to avoid losing anyone. A total of 498 copies of the demographic questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and 344 were returned. The researcher alone interviewed the unit heads with the interview schedule using an electronic device (tape recorder) to record the proceedings of the interview. Frequencies (F) and percentages (%) were used to answer research questions. The interview schedule was analyzed using qualitative analytical parameter known as content analysis. The tape recording was transcribed verbatim after each interview. The adequate interpretation of the interviewee's statement was ensured. The transcript was studied and the contextual importance or connotations was extracted and used as excerpts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1: What are the educational qualifications for career administrators in public university in South-East, Nigeria? The result in Table 1 revealed that 214 (62.2%) of the career administrators had first degree, 110 (32.0%) had masters while 20 (5.8%) had Ph.D. From the result, it can be deduced that most of the career administrators in public universities in South-East, Nigeria had first degree. During the oral interview, it was discovered that the basic qualification for career administrators was first degree. It was also discovered that the level of their job performance was not related to the level of education they acquired even though one can acquire self-actualization.

Research question 2: What are the areas of specialization of career administrators in public universities in South-East, Nigeria? The results in Table 2 show that 69 (20.1%) of the career administrators specialized in science and arts, respectively 64 (18.6%) specialized in social science, 71 (20.6%) specialized in management/administration, 51 (14.8%) specialized in education, 18 (5.2%) specialized in engineering/technology while 2 (0.6%) were in other specializations. From the results, it is understood that majority of the career administrators in public universities in South East, Nigeria had qualifications in behavioural sciences. From the interview scheduled, some of the respondents were of the view that career administrators area of specialization influences his/her performance on the job while other contradictory responses was that an administrator respective of his/her field of study performs well, provided he or she is a graduate. However, it was a majority view that area of specialization is one of the contributing factors for one to excel as a career administrator.

The finding of the study showed that all the career administrators in universities had at least first degree while some had higher degrees. This meant that all the

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of educational qualifications in public universities in South East, Nigeria (n = 344)

Educational qualification	Frequencies	Percentage
First degree	214	62.2
Masters	110	32.0
Ph.D	20	5.8
Total	344	100.0

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of the areas of specialization of career administrators in public universities South-East, Nigeria (n = 344)

Educational qualification	Frequencies	Percentage
Science	69	20.1
Arts	69	20.1
Soc. science	64	18.6
Mgt/adm	71	20.6
Education	51	14.8
Engr/tech	51	14.8
Others	2	6.0
Total	344	100.0

career administrators are university graduates. The qualifications received may influence their competencies in the work environment. This finding is consistent with that by Ugwuanyi (2014) who submitted that staff with varying qualifications may display varying competences and attitude to work. The interview excerpts provide support for the findings on the education and job performance of career administrators. The findings of the study showed that most of the career administrators in public universities in South-East, Nigeria had qualifications in management/administration, social sciences and arts. This result could be because university management must have specifically recruited staff in these fields of study. This meant that anybody with first degree irrespective of the area of study could be employed as a university career administrator. Hence, professionally qualified managers/administrators would perform their official tasks better than those who are less qualified. The interview excerpts provide support for the findings on the area of specialization and job performance of career administrators.

CONCLUSION

Majority of the career administrators were graduates/first degree holders and had qualification in management/administration, thus, they were professionally qualified managers/administrators.

IMPLICATIONS

The implication is that they are academically educated and that the minimum basic requirement as an administrator is first degree. In essence, the university management has to stick to this when recruiting staff in this category. Majority of the career administrators also had qualifications in social sciences and arts. The implication is that people in these fields of study may

probably make a better career administrator. The government, in collaboration with the supervising agency of universities (NUC) and university management should encourage the rotation of staff, consider their demographic variables as applied in the study. The university management should employ professionally qualified individuals in managerial/administrative positions to promote efficient job performance.

REFERENCES

- Adigwe, J.C., 2005. Influence of ethnicity, formal reasoning and cognitive styles on students achievement in balancing chemical equations. *Rev. Educ.*, 16: 21-31.
- Becker, G.S., 1964. *Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis with Special Reference to Education*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Jorfi, H., H.F.B. Yaccob and I.M. Shah, 2011. The relationship between demographics variables, emotional intelligence, communication effectiveness, motivation and job satisfaction. *Intl. J. Acad. Res. Bus. Soc. Sci.*, 1: 35-58.
- Kantor, K., 1997. Reading Hypothesis Generating Research. In: *Search and Re-Search: What the Inquiring Teacher Needs to Know*, Brause, R. and J. Mayher (Eds.). Falmer, London, England, UK., pp: 91-111.
- Lawrence, F.P., 2004. The relationship between science teaching characteristics, students achievements and attributes. *J. Res. Secondary Teach.*, 13: 337-337.
- Ng, T.W.H. and D.C. Feldman, 2009. How broadly does education contribute to job performance? *Personnel Psychol.*, 60: 89-134.
- Palakurthi, R.R. and S.J. Parks, 2000. The effect of selected socio-demographic factors on lodging demand in the USA. *Intl. J. Contemp. Hospitality Manage.*, 12: 135-142.
- Roebuck, D., K.W. Sigtler and Brush, 2008. Organization size company type and position effects on the perceived importance of oral and written communicational skills. *J. Manage. Issues*, 7: 77-85.
- Smedley, K. and H. Whitten, 2006. *Age Matters: Employing, Motivating and Managing Older Employees*. Gower Publisher, Farnham, Surrey, UK., ISBN:9780566086809, Pages: 351.
- Sonny, J.C. and D. Scherman, 2014. Managing the career idea: The psychological contract as a framework for understanding career management, organizational commitment and work behaviour. *J. Organizational Behav.*, 26: 821-838.
- Ugwuanyi, J.C., 2014. *Demographic variables as correlates of job satisfaction among academic staff of colleges of education in South East, Nigeria*. Ph.D Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria.