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**HORIZONTAL OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITIES: A
STUDY OF UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Many university administrators change their occupations of origin to teaching after acquiring relevant additional skill, knowledge and experience in their administrative jobs. This study examined the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria, with respect to how it influences professionalism, effective inter-cadre interface and effective policy implementation in the Registry section of universities. Three objectives and research questions guided the study. The theoretical framework comprised the Work Adjustment and General Systems Theories. The research type is ex-post facto and the cross-sectional survey research design was adopted to study a cross-section of the population of 5,645 university employees. Six sample States were selected through cluster and systematic sampling techniques while the sample universities and respondents were selected through the stratified and purposive sampling techniques. The sample size of 343 respondents was determined through the data saturation method. In-depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion instruments were utilized to gather in-depth data based on the respondents' experiences in addition to official reports. The QSR NVivo software was adopted for the deductive thematic analysis of the data. It was found that horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators reduces the level of professionalism, has an insignificant positive influence on effective inter-cadre interface and reduces the level of effective policy implementation in the Registry section of universities. This study concluded that horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators has a detrimental impact on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria. It is recommended that processes of horizontal occupational mobility should be structured in line with institutionalized policies and attention given to skill vacuum, staff replacement and re-training.

Key Words: Horizontal Occupational Mobility, Development of Universities, Professionalism, Effective Inter-cadre Interface, Effective Policy Implementation.

Introduction

Globally, development at the individual, institutional, sectoral and socio-economic levels is driven by an adequate investment in education (Ogunleye, Owolabi, Sanyaolu, Lawal, 2017). Three levels of education are recognized in Nigeria namely the basic/primary, secondary and tertiary education which is obtained from universities (NPE, 2013).

The academic and administrative cadres are the two major professional cadres in university management. 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. It is also worthy to note that 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).

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 various administrative occupations of origin to become academic staff through an internal job conversion process after acquiring relevant additional skills, knowledge and experience on their jobs. 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). Ladipo (2015) however opined that occupational mobility among university administrative employees is on the increase.

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) who investigated the operations of lateral and vertical movement in firms; Ibok & Etuk (2013) where occupational change among Nigerian bank sales workers was examined; and Forsythe (2018) who studied intra-organizational careers and job switches.

In the education sector, 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 acquired to others due to lack of teaching skill and experience. However, Jaja (2013) did not adopt empirical research methods for the work.

No empirical study had therefore been undertaken to investigate the impact of horizontal 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 Registry. Thus, this study investigated the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria, with emphasis on how the Registry section of universities is affected in the long run.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities in Southern Nigeria. The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To assess the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities in the area of professionalism in the Registry section of universities.
2. To examine the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities with focus on effective inter-cadre interface in the Registry section of universities.
3. To investigate the impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities with regards to effective policy implementation in the Registry section of universities.

Research Questions

1. How does horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators affect the development of universities in the area of professionalism in the Registry section of universities?
2. How does horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators affect the development of universities with focus on effective inter-cadre interface in the Registry section of universities?
3. How does horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators affect the development of universities with regards to effective policy implementation in the Registry section 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 academic and administrative staff of the following twelve (12) universities located in the selected States:

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Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State University, University of Ibadan, Ladoké 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.

Operationalization of Concept

Horizontal Occupational Mobility: A movement involving two occupations with the same grade/level, status and authority, but a different nature of work, i.e moving from the non-teaching administrative cadre to the academic cadre within the 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.

General Systems Theory (GST) (Bertalanffy, 1978): Systems theory analyzes an organization as a whole and not as a composition of single parts and therefore it is adopted to examine the interactions and relationships between the different parts of an organization for the purpose of comprehending how the sub-systems affect each other and the organization as a whole; how an organization is managed; how it functions and the common goals achieved (Mele, Pels & Polese (2010). It also recognizes that a dysfunction in one sub-system of an organization invariably affects the functioning of the whole system (Chikere & Nwoka, 2015). Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a biologist propounded the General Systems Theory (GST) as a version of the open systems theory and stated that in reality, systems are open to their environment and that a system adapts to the change in its environment through the process of evolution (Bertalanffy, 1978) in order to survive.

The General Systems Theory recognizes occupational mobility as an activity which is embedded in a network of social interactions, relationships and interdependence within institutions as well as the exchanges between the organization and the environment; reflecting the implications of such interactions on the learning processes, the ability of the institution to develop and survive, and enabling the organization work as a unified purposeful system composed of interrelated parts to achieve a high-performance workplace in order to meet it needs and that of the environment.

The two theories (Work Adjustment Theory and the General Systems Theory) emphasize the systematic relationship between the actions of actors in organizations and the collective capacity of the organization to adapt to internal and external environments; and the extent to which the outcome of these actions, interactions and relationships contribute to the wellbeing of the overall organizational system itself. 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 university system.

Research Methodology

Cross-sectional survey and ex-post facto research designs were adopted for the study. The study population is 5,645 respondents from 12 public universities located in 6 States in Southern Nigeria which is made up of South West, South East and South South geo-political zones. Cluster and systematic sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample States by arranging the States according to the geopolitical zones. Thereafter, the first and last States were picked from each zone as follows: Ekiti, Oyo, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Abia and Imo States. Stratified sampling technique was utilized to select 12 public universities located in the six (6) sample States as follows: Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State University, University of Ibadan, Ladoké 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.

Furthermore, stratified and purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select respondents from the following categories of university employees: Principal Assistant Registrars (PAR), Deputy Registrars (DR), Deputy Bursars (DB), Senior Lecturers (SL) and Professors (PROF.). A sample size of 343 respondents representing 6.08% of the total population was determined through data saturation method in which sampling stopped at the point where no new idea or theme was gathered.

Primary data for the study were collected through qualitative methods comprising In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). For the IDIs, a total of 49 respondents occupying the following positions were purposively selected and interviewed across the universities: University Principal Officers (UPOs), Management staff (Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department/Directors of Institute/Centre/Heads of Unit, 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. A total of 32 FGDs were conducted comprising 294 respondents who were selected from the following categories of staff: Principal Assistant Registrars (PAR), Deputy Registrars (DR), Deputy Bursars (DB), Senior Lecturers (SL) and Professors (PROF.).

The study utilized QSR NVivo software for the qualitative analysis of the data which 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

Impact of Horizontal Occupational Mobility among University Administrators on the Development of Universities in the Area of Professionalism in the Registry Section of Universities

The data obtained show that a few universities argued that horizontal occupational mobility actually contributes to the level of professionalism in the Registry section of universities as those who changed their occupations gave way for replacements to do a better job as stated by a respondent in FUTO: *We have observed that in the university, some staff were*

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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).

However, based on the data, it was observed that majority of the respondents stated that horizontal occupational mobility leads to loss of job-specific skill, knowledge and experience in the Registry section when very skilled, more experienced and educated university administrators convert to the academic cadre as stated by FGDs in FUYOYE and MOUA: *It leads to a loss of job-specific skill, knowledge and experience.* A respondent in UNIPORT also stated: *If somebody is good enough to be converted to the academic cadre, of course, he is moving away with his good communication skills. He won't be meeting the administrators the much he used to or she used to. He will now be talking to students. You know what that would be. It reduces the level of communication skill in the Registry, even the other one, documentation. Without sounding insulting, you see, there is a terrible drop in written communication skill among the Registry staff (Respondent_7).*

Furthermore, the reports show that the operations of horizontal occupational mobility bring about a decline in the level of learning, skill and knowledge among the administrators as very skilled and experienced university administrators move out with their skill and knowledge. A focus group in FUYOYE stated: *In the long run, there is tendency for a decline in the level of skill and knowledge found among the administrators without proper policy guidelines for the process of job conversion.* This affects the level of competency in the administrative cadre as stated by a focus group from AKSU: *When workers become experienced and having been trained to render administrative services, their exit reduces the level of competency in the Registry.* The incompetency also show in their communication and documentation skills according to a focus group in UNIPORT: *It brings about a drop in the level of written communication and documentation skills among the Registry staff.*

Another respondent from UNIPORT stated: *I have chaired committees/panels where I had to do the writing myself. And there was one particular man that was so happy when he saw what I did. He did the first one and I told him 'come, let me show you something'. When he finished, the man learnt something. He was so happy and he confessed, you know. Again, that is where the problem is because those who can do that, to move, it means it will cost the system something..... You see, what the Registrar does is that she will appoint two administrators to serve as a main and an assistant secretary and the main secretary is somebody the assistant should be learning from. So, the situation where the main secretary cannot write and speak well, what will happen to the other person? So, it has the same effect as we have been saying. If they move to other jobs, not that particular one they actually are, it affects the university. It affects and such skills are not skills you acquire just as you are employed. Acquired means, it would continue over a period of time (Respondent_5).*

The data also show that horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators undermines the processes of effective mentorship; a relationship which exists between an experienced administrator and an inexperienced one aimed at enhancing the mentee's skill and knowledge about a job. This, according to the respondents, undermines the

level of professionalism in the Registry which is evident in their poor job performance as stated by the FGDs in EKSU and MOUA respectively: *It makes the process of effective mentorship difficult; Learning process for the mentee is discontinued after a mentor switches his/her occupation; and FGD respondents from UNIPORT stated: New administrators are expected to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of the older and more experienced staff who are no longer available.*

A respondent from UNIPORT also stated: *Last year, we were all hailing Mr. Amadi (real name withheld) when he gave a lecture at the point of his leaving the university. People were saying 'when can we have this kind of people again?' So, how did he grow to that level? Now that he is leaving, why is it that we are crying because many people are no longer competent? So, if the few who are competent, if the few who are competent keep converting or moving away from that career path, it means others won't learn much because you learn by interaction. If we are in the same office and you do a memo. I am an SAR, and you bring the memo to me and I say 'guy, this memo is not right. Do it this way.' You know memo has choice of words. It is not written in the normal pattern, and you learn that from people who are already great administrators. If they keep moving, it will affect the level of written and oral communication skill as well (Respondent_2).*

The reports also indicate that the level of productivity declines as more skilled and competent administrators exit the university Registry leaving behind vacuums. Furthermore, most of the replacements are inexperienced and incompetent on the job. A focus group in UNIPORT stated: *Replacements may not be competent and experienced on the job.* An IDI report in UI also stated: *The effect of such a movement is very high. When such people become lecturers, what happens to their wealth of knowledge and experience in university administration? A vacuum will be created, of course. The university seldom replaces such people, and even though that happens, the university will be employing green horns in administration through fresh appointments. 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 Registry Department (Respondent_3).*

Impact of Horizontal Occupational Mobility Among University Administrators on the Development of Universities With Regards to Inter-cadre Interface in the Registry Section of Universities

Most of the respondents affirmed that when very skilled, more experienced and educated university administrators move to the academic cadre, work-related interactions and interface with the sub-cadres in the Registry are either minimized, become difficult, or discontinued because the nature of work involved in administration and teaching are significantly differentiated. The effect is that a switcher will no longer perform administrative work collaboratively from the academic cadre because he/she will be in the classroom teaching or conducting research and not engaged in administrative work designated for university administrators. In essence, skill and knowledge transfer to another sub-cadre in the Registry is prevented as stated by a FGD in FUOYE: *The nature of academic work/responsibilities is different from the administrative work and switchers' functions are discontinued in the Registry.* The data show that the spread of knowledge, skill, and innovative ideas across the sub-cadres in the Registry through inter-cadre interface is undermined when such skill, knowledge and ideas

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are lost to the academic cadre through the exit of very skilled and experienced university administrators.

The effectiveness of teamwork is also undermined when competent hands quit their occupations in the Registry thereby creating a skill gap among a group of workers and this leads to low productivity as stated by an FGD in FUTO: *When workers work together as a team, it enhances productivity, but if a skilled and competent worker quits the group, productivity drops.* However, the data reports also show that the Registry benefits from the skills, knowledge and experience of some of the switchers when they occupy tenured leadership positions where they are expected to perform administrative functions from the academic cadre as stated by a FGD in ESKU: *Switchers rarely work with non-teaching administrators except the few who occupy administrative positions.*

Other respondents also stated that the collegiate system of the university also allows administrators to serve in the same committees with switchers from the academic cadre from time to time where the Registry also benefits from their input and contributions as stated by a FGD in UNIPORT: *Interactions among the cadres of the university are boosted through the collegiate system where university employees serve in committees.* These work-related relationships enhance both inclusive decision making processes and effective supervision across the sub-cadres in the Registry. However, the reports show that the contribution of such inter-cadre interface to the development of the university Registry is rather low.

Impact of Horizontal Occupational Mobility Among University Administrators on the Development of Universities In Respect of Effective Policy Implementation in the Registry Section of Universities

Based on the data, it was observed that majority of the respondents affirmed that the operations of horizontal occupational mobility creates skill vacuum especially in critical positions where the career structure does not prepare a suitable replacement within the system to take over the responsibilities of a switcher. This is reported in a FGD in AKSU: *Vacuums are created at critical posts when there are no immediate and suitable replacements.* The data show that it makes effective follow-up and implementation of policies/decisions difficult because ongoing work processes/assignments/projects are most times abandoned and inconsistencies occur. A respondent from EKSU stated: *When workers change their jobs outside the Registry, in most cases, there is no continuity in work and documentation processes and the university cannot develop without proper documentation because it enables designate workers to implement and execute proposed projects (Respondent_3).*

The sustained work relationships which make it easy for a replacement to take over a switcher's previous responsibilities are hampered and this leads to delay in service delivery as stated by an FGD in UNIPORT: *Workflow becomes disrupted and implementation of decisions and policies delayed and the workload becomes a burden for others.* And from FUTO: *Follow-up and implementation of policies and decisions become difficult.*

Furthermore, the data gathered indicate that horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators reduces the level of university knowledge and memory among administrators as the more experienced and seasoned administrators move away with their repertoire of knowledge as stated by a respondent in EKSU: *.....Many of them do not know what to do. In my Department, we have observed that many of them do not know university*

policies like the more experienced ones most of whom had already become lecturers and the effect is that decisions are delayed until confirmation is made from a more knowledgeable person (**Respondent_1**).

However, contrary data reports also show that horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators does not have any negative impact on the policy implementation processes in the Registry in any way because replacements who are familiar with the job take over the previous responsibilities of the switchers and that proper documentation and handover processes ensure that ongoing task, assignments and projects are completed according to a FGD in IMSU: It has not *affected the Registry in a negative way because the replacements already work in the university system and can do the work*.

Majority of the respondents stated that replacements are not always provided and many of the replacements are not competent enough to take over a switcher's previous responsibilities as stated by a FGD in UNIPORT: *Replacements may not be experienced and competent in the job*. The responses also show that inconsistencies and distortions in functions occur as administrators who are not very familiar with the job are quickly brought in as replacements as stated by an FGD in EKSU: *It brings about inconsistencies and distortions in functions*.

Responses from group discussions and IDIs identified the need for adequate training and replacement of staff during the process of horizontal occupational mobility as well as the orientation of staff with regards to the importance of their roles and responsibilities in the overall system and functioning of the university. The provision of incentives and better conditions of service to encourage the administrators to remain in their occupations was also noted as stated by one respondent from UNIPORT: *First is that the overall salary and conditions of service must improve whether academic or administrative. Yes, if you don't pay salaries that are adequate, anytime there's an opportunity elsewhere, the person will move* (**Respondent_5**). Another respondent from RSU: *So, I think the university should sponsor trainings/workshops for staff to enhance their job performances* (**Respondent_7**).

Results and Analysis of the Research Questions

The data revealed that the negative impact of horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators on the development of universities is significant, although, there were contrasting views as regards the usefulness and contributions of the process to the development of universities. Some respondents noted that horizontal occupational mobility has a rather damaging impact on the administrative cadre of the universities given the attractiveness of teaching positions and the rush by most workers to convert from the non-teaching to the teaching cadre thereby destabilizing administrative functions and creating skill vacuums.

This is as workers regularly exit the Registry leaving behind vacant positions with a burdensome pressure placed on the few who are left to manage work processes. Some other staff however stated that it does not create any problem in the Registry and the university because the system should be able to manage its operations the same way internal staff redeployment to other administrative units, retirements and deaths are handled, that is, through the provision of replacements, who sometimes, perform better than their predecessor. The following are the results and analysis of the research questions:

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Research Question 1: How Does Horizontal Occupational Mobility Among University Administrators Affect the Development of Universities in Relations to Professionalism in the Registry Section of Universities?

- It reduces the level of communication and Documentation skills among university administrators.
- It leads to loss of job-specific skill, knowledge and experience in the Registry.
- It undermines effective mentorship and learning processes among administrators.
- It reduces the level of productivity in the Registry.

Research Question 2: How Does Horizontal Occupational Mobility Among University Administrators Affect the Development of Universities in the Area of Inter-cadre Interface in the Registry Section of Universities?

- It enhances inclusive decision making processes across the sub-cadres through the collegiate system.
- It enhances effective supervision across the sub-cadres when the switchers become management staff; However
- It undermines the processes of cross-fertilization of ideas, knowledge and resource sharing among the sub-cadres.
- It undermines effective teamwork among the sub-cadres.

Research Question 3: How Does Horizontal Occupational Mobility Among University Administrators Affect the Development of Universities in Respect of Effective Policy Implementation in the Registry Section of Universities?

- It brings about discontinuation in work processes without a replacement.
- It leads to delay in completion of tasks in the Registry.
- It reduces the level of organizational knowledge and memory among university administrators.
- It undermines succession processes and creates skill vacuums at critical positions/posts in the Registry.

The data highlight three ideas and recurring positions on horizontal occupational mobility, described as follows:

- (i) **Attractiveness of Lecturing:** One of the major reasons for horizontal occupational mobility is the attractiveness of the lecturing or teaching cadre. This is based on the perception that it guarantees improved work conditions, recognition and other associated welfare and growth packages. Respondents in various instances considered this as a pull factor and described such attractiveness as a fundamental factor and basis for horizontal occupational mobility.
- (ii) **Mobility Is Not Encouraged:** The report showed that horizontal occupational mobility is not encouraged and not supported by a majority of the respondents. This is as most argued that it was more beneficial for workers to grow within the structure in which they were employed as a way of ensuring stability within the system and achieving efficiency in the administration of work processes in the Registry section of universities.
- (iii) **Negative Impact on the Administrative Cadre:** The data report also identified the horizontal occupational mobility as being detrimental and having a negative impact on the

universities' Registry section. The effect is considered in terms of the negative impact on the level of professionalism through the regular outflow of competent and experienced staff, the instability it produces within the ranks and functions of the administrative cadre and the ability of the universities to implement policies in an effective manner.

Research Findings

- (i) Horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators has a negative impact on the development of universities in the area of professionalism in the Registry section of universities.
- (ii) Horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators has an insignificant positive influence on the development of universities with regards to effective inter-cadre interface in the Registry section of universities.
- (iii) Horizontal occupational mobility among university administrators has a detrimental impact on the development of universities in respect of effective policy implementation in the Registry section of universities.

Unexpected Findings

- i. The processes of occupational mobility is often politicized and influenced by factors such as godfatherism, favouratism, organizational politics, member affiliations or relationships.
- ii. Factors which undermine the benefit of horizontal occupational mobility are lack of adequate in-service training and incentive; poor conditions of service; occupational mobility without replacement; staff incompetency and an evident gap in the level of recognition accorded the teaching and non-teaching cadres.

Discussion of Findings

Although from a personalized angle, horizontal occupational mobility tends to be desirable and offers some benefits to the workers, nonetheless, its overall implications could be detrimental to the university system. The negative impact on the key identified areas of professionalism, effective inter-cadre interface and effective policy implementation in the Registry section of universities were noted to be substantially higher than the possible advantages accruing from horizontal occupational mobility. The findings of the study revealed that it undermines the stability of the administrative functions thereby leading to lower productivity; reduces the level of skill and knowledge among university administrators; has a significant detrimental effect on work-related relationship outcome and the ability of the universities to implement policies in an effective manner.

These findings are supported by Abbasi & Hollman (2000) who posited that the exit of more skilled, efficient and productive employees leads to the unfortunate retention of the unproductive or inefficient ones in an organization and that this undermines the ability of organizations to implement approved plans as a result of disruption in the flow of customer service and a decline in organizational memory and development; Vavrinova & Krckova (2015) also posited that occupational mobility among employees who possess job-specific human capital will bring about a loss of such skills and knowledge; and Leonard's (2018) position that when gaps are created among employees, it simply implies that the number of competent hands required to work together to achieve a common goal is inadequate and this affects the level of productivity.

Conclusion

The study therefore concludes that horizontal occupational mobility has a detrimental influence on professionalism, effective inter-cadre interface and effective policy implementation in the Registry section of universities on the grounds that it destabilizes the functioning of the system when very skilled, more experienced and educated university administrators convert to the teaching profession.

However, the detrimental impact of horizontal occupational mobility can be ameliorated through effective institutionalized policy framework and attention given to staff replacement.

Recommendations

- (i) Horizontal occupational mobility should be structured in line with strict policies guiding the processes and its outcome within the university system. This implies that the processes of horizontal occupational mobility should seek to identify and first address its consequential effects on the system, such as skill vacuum, staff replacement and re-training.

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