

An Assessment of the Level of Cognitive Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff in South-South Universities in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the level of job satisfaction among academic staff in South-South universities in Nigeria. The theoretical basis for this study was labeling theory by Howard S. Becker. The application of the Taro Yamen formula gave the researcher 381 lecturers as the sample size out of the 8,180 lecturers of the 8 randomly selected universities that formed the population and 174 Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) members out of the 307 members that constitute the A&PC of the 8 randomly selected South-South universities. The A&PC members were interviewed to get a balanced view. The Regression Analysis and the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient tools were used to test the research objective and hypothesis. The finding shows that job satisfaction is reducing. It also revealed that antagonism and victimization of academic staff who opposes the policies of the university where they work is an ongoing occurrence. This study recommends among others that there should be a standing committee to handle grievances and face-offs, promotion of lecturers should be based on laid down criteria, unbiased and fair appointment of lecturers into senate and other key offices, removal of the Vice Chancellor as a member of the Governing Council and A&PC so that he does not become the prosecutor and judge at the same time.

Introduction

More recently, the study of job satisfaction has been intensified because of a concern and increasing awareness for the quality of working life. Job satisfaction is of great concern to individual workers in work organizations. Administrators and managers are also concerned about the consequences of job satisfaction for employee behaviour.

Job satisfaction has been perceived in various ways by different scholars and as a result there is no one universally accepted definition for it. Hiranya–Fernando (2014) see job satisfaction simply as how content an individual is with his or her job, in other words, whether or not they like the job or the individual aspects or facets of the job. Hoppock in Hoy and Miskel (1978) defined job satisfaction as any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to say ‘I am satisfied with my job’. Again, Arnold and Feldman (1986) see job satisfaction as the amount of overall positive affect or feelings that individual’s have toward their jobs.

From these definitions therefore, there is a relationship between individual’s perception of their job situations and their values and expectations. It therefore follows that an individual’s expression of job satisfaction is an emotional affective personal response that results from the

extent to which the various aspects of his job are congruent with his values and expectations. It then follows that an employee in an institution has high job satisfaction when that employee generally likes and values his job highly and feels positively about it (Ukeje et al, 1992). Job satisfaction is assessed at both the global level (whether or not the individual is satisfied with the overall job), or at the facet level (whether or not the individual is satisfied with the different aspects of the job).

Spector (1997) lists 14 common aspects or facets of job satisfaction; appreciation, communication, co-workers, fringe benefits, job conditions, nature of the work, organization, personal growth, policies and procedures, promotion opportunities, recognition, security, and supervision. Hulin and Judge (2003) noted that job satisfaction includes multi-dimensional psychological responses to an individual's job, and that these personal responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (emotional) and behavioural components. Job satisfaction scales vary in the extent to which they assess the affective feelings about the job or the cognitive assessment of the job. Affective job satisfaction is a subjective construct representing an emotional feeling individuals have about their job.

Affective job satisfaction for individuals reflects the degree of pleasure or happiness their job in general induces. Cognitive job satisfaction is a more objective and logical evaluation of various facets of a job. Cognitive job satisfaction can be uni-dimensional if it comprises evaluation of just one facet of a job, such as communication or security, or multi-dimensional if two or more facets of a job are simultaneously evaluated. Cognitive job satisfaction does not assess the degree of pleasure or happiness that arises from specific job facets, but rather gauges the extent to which those job facets are judged by the job holder to be satisfactory in comparison with objectives they themselves set or with other jobs. While cognitive job satisfaction might help to bring about affective job satisfaction, the two constructs are distinct, not necessarily directly related, and have different antecedents and consequences (Ukeje et al, 1992).

According to Akinmayowa (1993), a large number of variables or factors have been found to be associated with job satisfaction. Presently, there are a variety of variables that can lead people to feel positively or negatively about their jobs. According to Herzberg two-factor theory (1957), there are two sets of factors namely satisfiers (motivators) and dissatisfiers (hygienes). With reference to Herzberg's theory therefore, the sources of job satisfaction include achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement.

Ukeje et al (1992), opined that achievement plays a very prominent role in determining employee's job satisfaction. When employees receive rewards or achieve success on their jobs, they are most likely to be satisfied because they would feel a sense of self-fulfillment. Also, recognition like achievement is a source of job satisfaction. The recognition accorded an employee in a work organization helps to make him to be satisfied with his job. In fact, when an employee is recognized as one whose efforts or contributions could ensure the attainment of the organization's goals and objectives, the sense of self-actualization is reinforced in him.

The content of the work, itself is also an important factor in determining the degree of satisfaction employees derive from their jobs. There is evidence that people with more varied jobs are more satisfied. According to Walker and Guest (1952) in Ribeaux and Poppleton

(1985), jobs demand that various forms of responsibilities are assigned to employees and when an employee is assigned well defined tasks that are challenging to him, he feels happy. This factor therefore serves as a source of job satisfaction for the employee. The employee also realizes that his contribution means a lot towards the achievement of the institution's goals and purposes (Ukeje et al 1992).

Career advancement or promotion plays a significant role in employee's job satisfaction. When an individual is promoted to a higher level in an organization, it involves positive change in supervision, job content and even pay (salary). Jobs that are at the higher levels of an organization are likely to provide the worker with more freedom, higher salary, and more challenging tasks. On the whole, Herzberg and his colleagues feel that the gratification of these factors called satisfiers increases job satisfaction (Ukeje et al 1992). Other sources of job satisfaction include pay, supervision, the work group and working conditions.

The amount of money an individual receive for performing certain tasks in an organization plays in important role in determining the individuals job satisfaction. That is because pay or salary is instrumental in fulfilling so many of the individuals needs. We use money to obtain food, shelter and clothing. It also provides the means to enjoy valued leisure interests outside our normal work (Ukeje et al, 1992).

All university teachers in the federal and state universities in Nigeria supposedly belong to an umbrella body called the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU. The co-existence between the governments, the management of universities and the lecturers with their union (ASUU) have not been cordial. Governments have continued to ignore agreements it enters into with ASUU University lecturers also continuously criticise the policies of the Federal and State Governments and also the policies of the university's management where they work. These have made their relationship frosty and have led to face-offs, disagreements and strikes between the government, lecturers and the management of universities.

Governments and the management of universities respond by antagonizing and victimizing lecturers. Governments alone are not guilty of the harassment, victimization and termination of lecturers appointments (Anele 2011). Some Vice Chancellors stop salaries, deny lecturers promotion, and sack lecturers in connivance with the Governing Councils. Anele (2011) went on to stress that apart from government; Vice Chancellors also victimize and antagonize their staff. They hurriedly implement Government anti-ASUU policies and decisions such as immediate stoppage of salaries, non-payment of salaries, signing of attendance registers to consolidate their positions, termination of appointment of union Exco members, refusal to award them degrees (where some academics are involved in higher degree programmes in universities) and manipulation of promotion of ASUU activists among others.

Emezue (2009) stressed that "some university senates have become an extension of the Vice Chancellor's whims and caprices. The result is a senate that acquiesces to every opinion of the Vice Chancellor whether good or bad. Minions are promoted and offered senate positions while hard working and responsible academics are relegated to the background". The Guardian Newspaper of June 23, 2016 pointed out that promotion in some universities in Nigeria is based

on religion, ethnicity, state of origin, gender, membership of open and secret societies amongst others.

Ahiauзу and Adoki (1986) pointed out that the Nigerian manager does not tolerate opposition in the workplace. Management believes the employee should show allegiance to them and not to their union. Anikpo (2011) pointed out that there are some Vice Chancellors who cook up charges to manipulate the promotion of staff and terminate the appointments of ASUU activists and staff who criticize their policies. Vice Chancellors hand pick members of their investigation and disciplinary committees and subject their perceived enemies and the perceived enemies of their 'kitchen cabinet' to four trials for the same offence just to get a guilty verdict.

Tantua (2015) pointed out that most of the investigation and disciplinary panels or committees set up by Vice Chancellors just act his written scripts. The panels are used for witch hunting Vice Chancellor and the university management's perceived enemies. They are out to get staff that criticise the management's policies to get them dismissed and out of the way.

Also some head of departments and senior teaching staff do not feel comfortable employing and retaining lecturers with a first class degree or retaining staff who have more degrees than themselves and would do everything possible to get that staff's appointment terminated because they feel threatened. High flyers are also seen as threats to their ambitions to hold on and consolidate their positions and are therefore targeted.

Experience has shown that the Vice Chancellor has more powers and influences the Governing Council greatly. The Vice Chancellor as the Chief Executive officer of the university controls the funds of the university which includes internal generated revenue, subventions and grants from governments and other institutions. We find Governing Council members begging for contracts and executing same and as a result some of them become 'toothless bulldogs'. Vice Chancellors employ the children and relations of members of his 'kitchen cabinet' as well as the children of governing council members and as a result they watch helplessly as the Vice Chancellors victimize and antagonize their staff since they have compromised themselves. The Vice Chancellors victimize, antagonize and sack staff at will under the watchful eyes of the Governing Council and the academic staff union which appears helpless (Tantua, 2015).

Head of departments are not elected but appointed by the Vice Chancellors. Lecturers do all they can to be in the good books of Vice Chancellors and therefore they serve as stooges to the Vice Chancellors. Head of departments in agreement with Vice Chancellors hand pick external examiners to remark scripts. Some Vice Chancellors in connivance with some head of departments lobby the external examiners who might want adjunctship to get negative reports about their perceived enemies to victimize him/her.

Again some Vice Chancellors adjourn appraisal interviews when they face stiff opposition in their bid to promote their kinsmen and members of his 'kitchen cabinet' and re-schedule the meeting without inviting those who opposed him to ensure that members of his 'inner circle' get promoted. Some Vice Chancellors encourage some lecturers to indulge in plagiarism to gain promotion and promote lecturers close to him with fake publications when the fact of forgery is clearly known to him.

Tantua (2015) pointed out that:

“Promotion for the perceived enemies of the Vice Chancellor as well as the perceived enemies of his kitchen cabinet are been stifled. Their papers for assessment sometimes get missing in transit or are deliberately kept on shelves and delayed. Personnel files of the perceived enemies of the university’s management get missing during appraisal only to re-surface some months after the promotion exercise is over”.

In some other cases, assessment papers are kept on the shelves for months by Vice Chancellors unknown to the lecturers without sending them out for assessment just to victimize him/her.

The national scholar of April (2005) pointed out that ‘By 1978, every radical lecturer has been penciled down for hounding, serious harassment, imprisonment, exile or assassination...’ Dr Patrick Wilmot and Dr. Usman Bala of Ahmadu Bello University had their appointments terminated in 1986 and 1989 respectively for engaging actively in ASUU activities and for criticizing the policies of the government. Also in 1987, Dr. Festus Iyayi, the then president of ASUU and Dr. Peter Agbonifoh, both of the university of Benin, and who were executive members of ASUU had their appointments terminated because they opposed the imposition of Prof. Grace Alele Williams as the Vice Chancellor and also opposed her policies. A follow up was the making of check-off dues voluntary by the Babangida Administration to make ASUU weaker. Also in 1996, the ASUU president Dr. Assibi Asobie was also dismissed from service as a result of actions by ASUU (Ezike, 2012).

The recent happenings in Rivers State University of Science and Technology where the researcher is a lecturer is of interest. The Governor of the State, who is the visitor of the university brought and imposed a Vice Chancellor on the university which was challenged by the Rivers State University of Science and Technology ASUU. A total strike was declared and our branch of ASUU broke into 2 factions. Re-engagement registers were opened for all lecturers to sign if you are still interested in your job and to work with the imposed Vice Chancellor. All those who signed the re-engagement register where paid their withheld salaries and re-absorbed, while those who did not sign had their appointments terminated by the Governing Council. The sacked lecturers proceeded to the National Industrial Court, but all they had were adjournments upon adjournments. They had to seek for a political solution to the problem since its obvious they would not get justice from the courts.

Tantua (2015) carried out a study on ‘Trade Union Activism Among Academic Staff and Career Advancement in South – South Universities in Nigeria’ and certain interesting revelations were brought to limelight. The management of the South – South Universities stressed that ASUU see themselves or the union as a parallel government or administration, and as such the management of the universities do not want any body or union to rob shoulders with them and so they resort to victimization possibly to silence any opposition. The disposition of a lecturer over the years in his stay in the university again plays a role. According to the management of the universities, if any lecturer has been confrontational or has been critical of the policies of the university, then when it comes to promotion and to enjoy other benefits and perquisites of the job, the lecturer

should expect it to be pay back time. The management of south-south universities also gave the alibi of not having enough funds in the budget for denying academic staff their promotion. Forgeries and plagiarism are also used to gain promotion. Some university management compromise due process to promote academic staff. The immediate past chairman of LASU-ASUU, Dr. Adekunle Idrij, pointedly accused Obafunma's administration of circumventing the process of professorial appointments, saying some of the appointees were promoted to the higher academic level with only 13 papers including "lesson notes".

Subjective considerations and sentiments are used to advance unworthy persons in universities, while pettiness has informed the delay or denial of other persons promotion. Fellow of Nigerian academy of letters, Prof. Ayodeji Olukoju pointed out that job satisfaction and morale has dropped. He further stressed strongly that promotion in Nigeria universities even up to professorial level are now based not on merit, but based on religion, ethnicity, state of origin, sex, and membership of open and secret societies. Tantua (2015) pointed out that because of the existence of promotion in universities not in conformity or compliance with the laid down rules and regulations, we now have professors starting with capital letter 'P' and professors with small letter 'p'.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the Labeling Theory propounded by Howard S. Becker in 1963 which attempts to explain why certain people are labelled as good and favoured by their bosses and others labeled as bad and are victimized by their supervisors. It also explains why certain people are viewed as bad and deviant while others engaging in the same behaviour are not. Labeling theory recognizes that some individuals or groups in a system have the power to define labels and actually do define labels and go ahead to apply their convictions on others.

The labeling theory attempts to explain why certain people or employees are victimized, sidelined, antagonized and viewed as deviants, delinquent, "bad kids", "losers", and are marginalized, while others whose behaviour is the same or similar are not seen in such harsh terms and are favoured.

Vice chancellors, managers, head of departments and other employees at the top hierarchy who have subordinates, represent the forces of law and order and are able to impose definitions of conventional morality on others, are the superiors doing the labeling. Their labels creates categories of deviance and expresses the power structure in the organization. By and large, the rules in terms of which labels are defined are framed by the management and the people in the helm of affairs for their subordinates, framed by the wealthy for the poor, and by ethnic majorities for minority groups.

This reason is true of the university system, where superior officers or group of superior officers create an in-group and out-group situation. The work place is now becoming a war zone and employees are victimized at work. The tactics of victimization include antagonism, character assassination, verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, cold shoulder treatment, denial of promotion, missing files, termination of appointment and also death threats among others. Members of the in-group are appointed into key positions and members of the out-group are stagnated no matter how hard they work. More courses are allocated to unqualified teaching staff possibly to sell

books for kick backs. Punishments including dismissal are given to staff in the out-group for the same offences for which there were no queries for members of the in-group.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey method of research design was employed by the researcher. Primary source of data (information acquired directly from the respondents) and the secondary source of data (collection of already existing data) was used for this study. The study population consisted of all teaching staff of the 8 randomly selected universities used for this study which comprised of 4 Federal Universities; University of Benin, University of Port Harcourt, University of Calabar and University of Uyo, as well as 4 State Universities which are Delta State University, Ambrose Alli University, Rivers State University of Science and Technology, and Cross Rivers State University of Technology, past and present ASUU Executives, and Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) members of the selected universities.

The application of the Taro Yamen formula gave the researcher 381 lecturers as the sample size out of the 8,180 lecturers and 174 staff out of the 307 members that constitute the Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) of the 8 randomly selected south-south universities. Two sampling methods were adopted; the simple random sampling and the purposive sampling. The main instruments used for the collection of data include questionnaire, personal interview and observation. Regression Analysis and the Spearman Correlation Coefficient were used for testing and analysing the research objective and the research hypothesis. The test was computed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistical tools were used for presentation and analysis. This also involved the use of frequency distributions and percentages.

In this study, the instrument for primary data collection (questionnaire) was subjected to a face and content validation before professors in my university and its reliability was determined and ascertained through a pilot survey of thirty lecturers drawn from where I teach – Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt other than universities in the south-south zone of Nigeria. In measuring the lecturers participation in the union activities, opportunities for growth, recognition, and relationship with co-workers, the respondents were required to rate the test items on a five point likert scale of; strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1).

Research Objective

To examine the extent to which trade union activism of academic staff influences their job satisfaction.

- Here, job satisfaction is regressed against trade union activism

Table 1.1 Model summary for trade union activism and job satisfaction
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.403 ^a	.162	.160	.60071

a. Predictors: (Constant), trade union activism (Tolerance)

From the regression model summary table above, multiple correlation coefficient (R) = 0.403 indicates a weak positive linear relationship between the independent variable, trade union activism, and the dependent variable, job satisfaction. Coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.162 indicates that about 16.20% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by variations in trade union activism. This figure measures the goodness of fit of the model and because of the low value of 16.20%, this model is said to be not a good fit.

Table 1.2: Coefficient of trade union activism as a function of job satisfaction Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	3.677	.077		47.467	.000
Active Trade Union Participation (Tolerance)	-.228	.031	-.403	-7.486	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Staff Job Satisfaction

Table 4.2 above shows that for 1 unit change in trade union activism, job satisfaction decreases by 0.228 units. This result is significant as the p-value (= 0.000) is less than α (= 0.05) making the variable, trade union activism, an important and reliable predictor of job satisfaction.

However, we need to test the result for overall significance. From the F-distribution table in Appendix G, the critical value obtained at $\alpha = 0.05$, d.f.N = 1, and d.f.D. = 289 is 3.92. Since F (= 56.045) is greater than the critical value (=3.92), and also since, the p-value (= 0.000) is less than α (= 0.05), the decision is to conclude that trade union activism significantly influences job satisfaction among academic staff of universities in South-south Nigeria.

- Therefore, a co-efficient of determination (r^2) of 0.162 showed that about 16.20% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by variations in trade union activism, which was found to be a reliable predictor since its F statistics returned significant, F calculated being more than F tabulated.

Hypothesis Testing: Trade union activism and Job satisfaction

There is no significant relationship between trade union activism and Job satisfaction in the South-South universities.

Table 1.3: Result of Spearman Correlation Coefficient on trade union activism and Job satisfaction

Correlations

			Trade Union Activism (Tolerance)	Staff Job Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Active Trade Union Participation (Tolerance)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.419**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	291	291

Staff Satisfaction	Job	Correlation Coefficient	-.419**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	291	291

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

Source: SPSS ver. 20.0 Output window

A low coefficient score of -0.419 resulted because job satisfaction was low as long as trade union activism was high.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- This section of the study focused on the data generated during the field survey where the researcher subjected them to statistical analyses.
- The researcher used the Simple Linear Regression Analysis and the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient in determining the extent to which trade union activism affects job satisfaction.
- Results from each analysis were tested for significance of alpha (α) = 0.05 level of significance and the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 was the software package employed in analysis of data.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has shown, using major findings as a basis that the more an academic staff engages in trade union activism, the less job satisfaction he/she would experience in universities of South-South Nigeria. Trade union activism significantly affects job satisfaction, and also that there is a high rate of victimization as perceived by colleagues. Empirical analysis used two perspectives to present the nature of the relationship between trade union activism and job satisfaction; the first analysis enabled us to understand that trade union activism have significantly affected job satisfaction.

The second analysis made us understand that the nature of the relationship was negative. What this implies is that the more an academic staff engages in trade union activism, the less job satisfaction would be experienced by that lecturer in universities of South-South, Nigeria. Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made; raising a standing reconciliation/grievance handling committee which should have religious body leaders as its members, unbiased and fair appointment of principal officers and to key positions, removal of the Vice Chancellor as a member of A&PC and Governing Council so that he does not become the prosecutor and the judge of the same time, as well as increment in ASUU check off dues.

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