

An Assessment of the Level of Job Security of Academic Staff in Selected Federal and State University in South-South, Nigeria

Tantua, Ebikebina (Jr.) Ph.D

Department of Office and Information Management
Rivers State University of Science and Technology,
Port Harcourt, Rivers State,
Nigeria.

Tantua.ebikebina@ust.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigated the extent to which the jobs of lecturers are secure in selected Federal and State University in South-South Nigeria. The theoretical basis for this study is the Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory. The application of the Taro Yamen sample size determination 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 lecturers jobs are not secure and also their participation in their union (ASUU) activities reduces job security by 9.30%. It also revealed that antagonism and victimization of academic staff as well as ASUU activists is an ongoing occurrence. This study recommends that lecturers jobs should be secure by ensuring that laid down discharge rules are strictly adhered to, raising a standing reconciliation committee to handle grievances and face-offs, 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 same time among others.

Introduction

Job security is a tangible variable that everyone seeks during employment with any institution. It ensures that one is committed to the organizational objectives and goals and reaps the commensurate rewards as well as benefits. It is all about seeking a sense of stability in personal development, career progression and overall career development during the course of employment at a particular institution.

Armstrong (1995) describes job security as an employees confidence that they will keep their current job as long as they went to. Job security provides stability in career. It enables the employee perform his/her best and has peace of mind. The individual offers his dedication and commitment to his tasks in the institution and focuses his skills and capabilities on being a consistent performer. It also enables the employee to devote non-

office hours to community service, hobbies and other activities. The employee would also have financial security and meet family commitments.

All lecturers in Federal and State Universities supposedly belong to an umbrella body called the Academic Staff union of universities, ASUU. The co-existence between the management of universities in the South-South, the government and lecturers have not been cordial. Lecturers and some non-academic staff constructively criticize the policies of the universities where they work. Governments too, have continued to ignore agreements in enters into with the Academic staff union. These have made their relationship frosty and have led to face-offs, disagreements and strikes.

The management of universities and government respond by antagonizing and victimizing lecturers. Governments alone are not guilty of the harassment, victimization and termination of lecturers' appointment. Anele (2011) pointed out that some Vice Chancellors stop salaries, deny them 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 promotions of ASUU activists among others”. Pp64.

Ahiauзу and Adoki (1986) remarked that the Nigeria manager does not tolerate opposition in the work place. 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 lecturers and staff who criticize their policies. Vice Chancellors hand pick members of their investigation and disciplinary committees and use the committee to subject their perceived enemies and the perceived enemies of their 'kitchen cabinet' to more than three trials for the same offence just to set a guilty verdict. Some Head of Departments and senior teaching staff do not feel comfortable employing and retaining lecturers with a first class degree or retaining staff that have more degrees than themselves and would do everything possible to get that staff's appointment terminated because they feel threatened.

Experience has shown that the Vice Chancellor has more powers and influences the Governing Councils 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

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 the Vice Chancellor and therefore some Head of departments 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 adjunct ship to get negative reports about their perceived enemies to victimize him/her.

Promotion for the perceived enemies of the Vice Chancellor/Management and the perceived enemies of his kitchen cabinet are been stifled. Their papers for assessment sometimes get missing in transit or are deliberately delayed. In some cases too, assessment papers are kept on the shelves for months unknown to the lecturer without sending them out for assessment just to victimize the lecturer.

The National Scholar of April (2005) pointed out that ‘By 1978, every radical lecturer had been penciled down for hoarding, serious harassment, imprisonment, exile or assassination...’ Dr. Patrick Wilmot and Dr. Bela Usman 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 criticized her policies. A follow up was the making of check-off dues voluntary by the Babangida Administration to make the union weaker. Also in 1996, the then ASUU president, Dr. Assisi 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 the RSUST 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 were paid their withheld salaries and re-absorbed, while those who did not sign had their appointments terminated by the Governing Council. The sacked ASUU activists and other lecturers proceeded to the National Industrial Court, but all they had were adjournments upon adjournments. They had to seek a political solution to the problem since it was obvious they might not get justice from the courts.

Tantua (2015) carried out a study on ‘Trade Union Activism among Academic Staff and Career Advancement in selected South-South Universities in Nigeria’ and certain

interesting revelations were brought to limelight. The management of the randomly selected 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.

According to management of the universities, the disposition of the lecturer over the years in his stay in the university also plays a role. 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.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – Ralf Dahrendorf’s Conflict Theory

Conflict theory was adopted for this study and the reason for this choice of theoretical framework is based on the fact that society is always in a state of continuous and perpetual bargaining, the resolution of one conflict tends to breed another (Ekpenyong, 2003).

Conflict is an unavoidable aspect of everyday life. Whether it be with others, yourself or an organization; conflict is an inevitable aspect of life experience. Conflict can occur when people have opposing personalities or hold differing ideas. It may arise when people disagree about which tasks they must complete. People can also clash when they disagree about the best way to achieve their goals (Giddens, 2000).

According to Peil (1976), conflict theory has various roots, such as Marxian theory, the work of Georg Simmel, Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser and also the work of the disciples of the Frankfurt School including Herbert Marcuse and Jorgen Habermas. But Ralf Dahrendorf’s work suits the study.

Ralf Dahrendorf, like other conflict theorists contend that social practices continue because powerful groups have the ability to maintain the status quo. Change has crucial significance, since it is needed to correct social injustices and inequalities. Leaders are only interested in longevity and not always responsive to the needs and demands of membership and seem more concerned with maintaining their own positions and power as long as it is in their interest (Schaefer, 2001).

Dahrendorf stressed that in organizations, there should be a career structure in which personnel should be hired on merit, promoted when due and should be given security of tenure to protect them from outside pressure. Authority is not a constant as far as Dahrendorf’s was concerned, because authority resides in positions and not persons. Authority within each association is dichotomous; thus two and only two conflict groups can be formed within an organization. Those in authority and those in positions of subordination have certain interests that are contradictory in substance and direction. This sums up the Dahrendorf’s theory of conflict.

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) were used for this study. The 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 River State University of Technology; Past and Present ASUU Executives, floor members of ASUU, and Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) members of the selected universities.

The application of the Taro Yamen sample size determination 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.

The 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 also 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 validity 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 those in the south-south zone of Nigeria. A test-retest method was adopted. In measuring the level of job security based on the feelings that the respondents have that they are going to hold their present jobs as long as they want to; 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). The first part of the scale (left side) indicates a positive strength, while the second part (right side) indicates a negative strength.

Research Objective

To highlight the extent to which participation of academic staff in trade union activities affects their job security.

Here, job security is regressed against active trade union participation.

Table 1.1: Model summary for active trade union participation and job security.

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .305 ^a | .093 | .090 | .48920 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Active Trade Union Participation (Tolerance)

From the regression model summary table above, multiple correlation coefficient (R) = 0.305 indicates a weak positive linear relationship between the independent variable, active trade union participation, and the dependent variable, job security. Coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.093 indicates that about 9.30% of the variance in job security can be explained by variations in active trade union participation. This figure measures the goodness of fit of the model and because of the low value of 9.30%, this model is said to be not a good fit.

Table 1.2: Coefficient of active trade union participation as a function of job security
Coefficients^a

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | Sig. |
|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | |
| 1 (Constant) | 2.546 | .063 | | 40.357 | .000 |
| Active Trade Union Participation (Tolerance) | -.135 | .025 | -.305 | -5.438 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Job Security

Table 1.2 above shows that for 1 unit change in active trade union participation, job security decreases by 0.135 units. This result is significant as the p-value (= 0.000) is less than α (= 0.05) making the variable, active trade union participation, an important and reliable predictor of job security.

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 (= 29.571) 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 active trade union participation significantly influences job security among academic staff of universities in South-south Nigeria.

Therefore a co-efficient of determination (r^2) of 0.093 showed that about 9.30% of the variance in job security can be explained by variations in active trade union participation, which was found to be a reliable predictor since its F statistics returned significant, F calculated being more than F tabulated.

Hypothesis: Trade union participation and Job security

H0: There is no significant relationship between active trade union participation and Job security in the South-South universities.

Table 1.3: Result of Spearman correlation coefficient on trade union activism and Job Security**Correlations**

| | | | Trade Union Activism (Tolerance) | Job Security |
|----------------|--|--|--|-----------------|
| Spearman's rho | Active Trade Union Participation (Tolerance) | Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N | 1.000 .291 | -.325** .291 |
| | Job Security | Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N | -.325** .291 | 1.000 .291 |

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

Source: SPSS ver. 20.0 Output window

A low coefficient score of -0.325 resulted because job security was low as long as participation 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 promotion.
- 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.

Therefore, a co-efficient of determination (r^2) of 0.093 revealed that about 9.30% of the variance in job security can be explained by variations in trade union participation, which was found to be a reliable predictor since its F statistics returned significant.

Also the correlational study for the hypothesis revealed that there was a weak negative significant relationship between trade union participation and job security. A low coefficient score of - 0.325 resulted because job security was low as long as participation was high.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has shown, using the major findings as a basis that lecturers jobs are not as secure as we think. Also there is a high rate of victimization as perceived by colleagues. Lecturers participation in their union activities reduces our job security by 9.30%. Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made, Lecturers jobs should be secure by ensuring that there should be no victimization and also

laid down discharge rules are adhered to, raising a standing reconciliation committee to handle grievances and face-offs, unbiased and fair appointment of lecturers into senate and other offices, removal of the Vice Chancellor as a member of A&PC and Governing Council so that he does not become the prosecutor and judge at the same time as well as increment in ASUU check off dues.

References

- Ahiauazu, A.I. and Adoki, N.W. (1986). Managers purpose to workers participation. A Nigeria study. *Managerial psychology*, Vol.7, No.1.
- Akinmayowa, J.T. (1993). *Man in organization*, Hotline prints and publishers, Benin City, Bendel State.
- Akinmayowa, J.T. (1993). Lecture notes on mean in organization, unpublished lecture notes, university of Benin, MBA 1993 class.
- Ananaba, W. (1976). *Trade Union movement in Nigeria*, Ethiopia publishing corporation, Nigeria.
- Anikpo M.O.C. (2011). *The 2009 ASUU strike, Issues, intrigues and challenges*. Freedom press and publishers, Port Harcourt.
- Auster, C.J. (1996). *The Sociology of Work: Concept and Cases*, Pine Forge Publications, California, USA.
- Awake, May 8, 2004 Issue.
- Cole, G.A. (2001). 5th Edition, *Personnel and Human Resources Management*, Continuum Educational publishers, London.
- Ekpenyong, S. (2003). *Elements of sociology*. African Hentage publishers, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Giddens, A. (2000). *Sociology; 3rd Edition*, polity and Blackwell publishers Ltd, Canbridge, London.
- Gigigiri, B.K. (1999). *Industrial organizations; a sociological perspective*. Springfield publishers. Port Harcourt.
- Haralanbos and Hotborn (2004). *Sociology, Themes and Perspectives*. University Tutorial Press, Britain.
- Jega, A. (1997). *Leadership factor in the Nigerian Trade Union movement and world historical experience*. Wakilipress Ltd, Kano.
- John, M. (2014). "Indices for the appointment of principal officers in South-South Universities in Nigeria". Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, university of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- Njoku, C.H. (2012). *Trends in ASUU struggle and strike in the university of Port Harcorut. 2000 – 2009*. unpublished M.Sc thesis.
- Oshunsina, O.O. (2011). *The state and Trade Unionism: A case study of FCT. Nigeria*, unpublished M.Sc Thesis, University of Port Harcourt.
- Peil, M. (1976). *Consensus and conflict in Africa societies: An Introduction to sociology*. Longman publishers, London.
- Ritzer, G. (2008). *Sociological Theory*, McGraw-Hill publishers the United States of America.
- Schaefer, R.T. (2001). *Sociology, 7th edition*, McGraw Hill publishers, New York, United State of America.

- Schaefer, J. (2014). “The vocational shrink – An analysis of the ten levels of workplace disillusionment. Assesses on 16/7/2014.
- Tantua, E.J. (2015). “Trade Union Activism among academic staff and career advancement in selected south-south universities in Nigeria”. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, university of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Taro Yamen (1967). Statistics: An introductory Analysis, 2nd Edition, Harper and Row Publishers, New York.
- Ukeje, B.O., Okorie, N.C. and Nwagbora, U.A. (1992). Educational Administration; Theory and practice, Totan publishers limited, Owerri, Nigeria.