

PRACTICE OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF NON-TEACHING STAFF OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH-WEST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the practice of job description on the Performance of Non-teaching Staff in Universities in North-west Zone, Nigeria. The population of this study consists of the non-academic staff in seven federal universities in North-west geo-political zones in Nigeria. A sample of 321 was drawn from the population of 1070 of Senior Staff of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff of Universities and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). The instrument used for the study was adapted questionnaire titled "Practices of Job Analysis and the Performance of Non-teaching Staff in Universities Questionnaire" (PJAPNTSUQ). Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and mean scores, while hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that; job descriptions influenced the performance of non-teaching staff of universities in the North-West Zone, Nigeria; factual job contents in terms of form of duties and responsibilities of a specific job are provided to enhance performance of non-teaching staff in the universities in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. It was recommended that Job description provide clear communication between employer and employee, which invariably enhanced job performance of non-teaching staff in the universities in the North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Keywords: influence, job descriptions, performance, non-teaching staff, universities.

Introduction

Universities all over the world are recognized as centers of excellence where knowledge is acquired. They are formal institutions set up by the society to be centers of learning where rich ideas and ideals are disseminated. Universities are ivory towers, where instruction is given and received without undue influence from the outside world (Adedoyin, & Ayodele, 2015). Thus, the universal idea of University is a community of scholars, free to pursue knowledge without undue interference from any quarters. Universities have since their medieval beginnings found to preserve the positive heritage of society. They are committed to promote society's corporate wellbeing and advancement of refining the ability of its members to reason and understand by enquiring into seeking to explain the developmental functions of a man as part of the natural word and by acting as guide and critic in those areas

which can be informed by university's resources of knowledge and specialized skills (Cherono, 2017).

In most institutions of higher learning, students always interact with non-teaching employees for academic and non-academic purposes. It starts from application, registration, examination issues, accommodation issues, and the lecturing schedule in addition to many others. Even though website and other helpful sources give the information according to their needs, it could be argued that students find difficulty when dealing with the non-teaching personnel as compared to the teaching professionals in higher educational institutions (Yuliarini, Nik, & Pranav, 2012). That is why employee performance among non-teaching employees is amply indispensable as it further leads to the quality of treatment they offer to the students and the teaching employees.

A job can be seen as a unit of work comprising related tasks that have been grouped together for the purposes of assigning them to a person to perform (Grant, Fried, & Juillerat, 2010). In the context of this study, a task or job represents the duties and responsibilities of an employee indicating what the employee is accountable for at work place. Job is a logically related group of works, functions of the same level of responsibility and difficulty which are required to be performed by one employee or by a group of qualified employees. It is also a tool that can provide enterprises with the means to deal with individual issues and problems which arise in an enterprise. It is an organizational need, particularly in restructuring exercises comprising of legal requirements and work place labour-management issues in the management of university system (Yuliarini, Nik, & Pranav, 2012).

Job description is a means of tracking accountability of performance and communicating the strategy and goals of organization. It is also under the headings of job title, main purpose of job, main activities, tasks or duties Armstrong, (2011). Aker (2016) posit that job description outlines the job tasks, duties and responsibilities and serves as a guide for the recruitment and selection process going forward in general. Job description can be seen as relating to all the technical, administrative and managerial aspects of the job, the job title, job summary, job duties, tasks and outputs. Byars and Rue (2006) described job description as a written narrative of the tasks to be performed and what it entails. Developed job descriptions are communication tools that are significant in organizations success. Poorly written job descriptions, on the other hand, add workplace confusion, promotes communication gap and make people feel as if they do not know what is expected of them. Job description is a written statement of all facets of the job accompanied (in some cases) by required levels of achievement to attained by person performing the job. Ideally, both employer and employee should sign such a statement to evidence their agreement to the requirement.

Collins and Muchinsky (2014) states that person description is a written statement analyzing the skills, educational attainments and or experience believed to be required by the ideal staff for the vacancy being filled. Attainment can be confused with the required items to obtain a perfect match, or, if not to identify areas where training may be required. Job descriptions are written statements that describe the duties, responsibilities, required qualification and reporting relationships of a particular job. Thus, job descriptions are based on objective information obtained through job analysis, an understanding of the competences and skills required to accomplish needed tasks and the needs of the organization to increase

productivity in work. A positive job description provides an opportunity to clearly communicate to company direction and the employee where he or she fits inside the big picture of an institution. Effective job descriptions will help to align employee direction. Alignment of the people to employee with specific goals, vision and mission spells success for the organization. For the purpose of this study, the manager should assure the inter-functioning of all the different positions and roles needed to get the job done for the customer to increase performance (Kocak, & Eves, 2010).

Moreover, job description is helpful in framing questions to be asked in the selection interviews. It helps during the orientation or induction process and in placement of new employees on job positions or when transferring or promoting co-worker. Hence, effective job descriptions are useful and helpful in the areas of Human Resource Management such as in job grading and classification, career paths and career development, handling grievances relating to duties and responsibilities, work measurement and working improvement, defining the limits of authority, training and development, developing performance standards, making good relationship and conducive environment at workplace between employees and employers/management and customers. Job description is an organized factual statement of job contents in the form of duties and responsibilities of a specific job. The preparation of job description is very important before a vacancy is advertised. It tells in brief the nature and type of job (Bernadette, Nambuswa, & Namusonge 2016).

Effective performance on the part of staffs is essential for the success of the organization. Such performance, to a large extent, will depend on their knowledge, skills, and confidence in organizing ideas on how to carry out the task of the job. Hence, the need for effective job analysis for improving the effectiveness of individuals at work and for the greater responsibilities cannot be over emphasized. Non-academic staff constitutes an important factor in the implementation of university policies and programmes (Muda et al. 2014). Human resource demands continuous development of knowledge and ability through effective job analysis. Non-teaching employees such as drivers, accountants, matrons, cateresses, and security personnel, among others variously play a vital role in national polytechnics and their contribution helps make education more relevant to the needs and aspirations of the society. However, the diversity of this workforce presents challenges of substantial degree to their performance. There have been complaints on the quality, commitment and professionalism of non-teaching employees emerging from four areas: Training, Organization Culture, Work Environment and Motivation. Employee performance affects the overall performance of an organization. Being able to comprehend the factors that affect non-teaching employees' performance is important because an organization will be able to strengthen those factors to improve performance (Bernadette, Nambuswa, & Namusonge 2016).

It is an incontestable fact that for the survival of any organization notably formal organization like the university the importance of job analysis, job performance, job design, job evaluation, job description, job specification, job satisfaction and job motivation on the performance of the non-teaching staff cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, every unit of the University organization requires job analysis as procedure for determining the duties and skill requirements of a job and the kind of person who should be hired for it. Job description which shows or specifies work related responsibilities for workers, job design as the process for

human relations work and transformation of input into outputs, job evaluation as the process of reviewing compensable elements of specific position to determine the value that each one brings to the organization while job specification plays a vital role in getting the desired outcome.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The population of this study comprises the Non-Teaching staff of seven selected Federal Universities in the North-West Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria, totaling 3,210. The Universities were stratified into seven states, namely; Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Bayero University Kano, Federal University Dutsin-ma, Federal University Gusau, Federal University Dutse, Federal University Birnin Kebbi, Usman Danfordio University Sokoto. The respondents were also stratified based on the existing worker unions in the universities: The Unions are the Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU), Non-Academic Staff of Universities (NASU), and National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT). Ten percent of the population was selected for this study. The 10% sample size is line with Ejifugha (1998) that ten percent of a large population is fair enough sample size for a survey. The sample size of respondents for this study was therefore 321. The sample was drawn using simple random sampling technique of fish bowl method to select 147 SSANU, 126 NASU and 48 NAAT across the seven Federal Universities in the North-West Geo-political zones in Nigeria. The respondents in the three unions comprise the Administrative Staff, Confidential Secretaries, Laboratory Technologist, and Library Staff. The number of respondents randomly selected was based on these unions; Ahmadu Bello University Zaria (SSANU 55, NASU 46, NAAT 12), Beyero University Kano (SSANU 23, NASU 20, NAAT 20), Federal University Gusau (SSANU 17, NASU 9, NAAT 1), Federal University Dutse (SSANU 14, NASU 11, NAAT 2), Usman Danfodio University Sokoto (SSANU 20, NASU 11, NAAT 3), Federal University Dutsin-Ma (SSANU 11, NASU 26, NAAT 8), and Federal University Birnin Kebbi (SSANU 7, NASU 3, NAAT 1). Adopted questionnaire: Practices of Job Analysis and the Performance of Non-teaching Staff in Universities Questionnaire” (PJAPNTSUQ) for SSANU, NASU and NAAT was used for this study. The responses of the instrument was rated on 5-point Likert type scale to measure practices of job description and the performance of non-teaching staff of Universities in North-West zone, Nigeria. The questionnaire was tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 Cronbach’s Alpha was obtained. The administration of the questionnaire was done by the researcher and three trained research assistants in each of the schools selected. The data collected were statistically presented using mean scores and frequency counts while the hypothesis was tested using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to determine the influence of job descriptions on the performance of non-teaching staff of Universities in the North-West Geographic Zone, Nigeria.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Bio-Data of respondents

S/N	Bio-data	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Status	SSANU	147	45.7%
		NASU	126	39.3%
		NAAT	48	15.0%
		Total	321	100%

Source: Research Fieldwork (2023)

On the status of the respondents in Table 1 shows that, 147 (45.7%) of the respondents were SSANU, 126 (39.3%) were NASU and the remaining 48 (15.0%) were NAAT from the Non-Teaching Staff in Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. This implies that the majority of the respondents were SSANU since they formed the majority of Non-Teaching Staff in Universities in North-West Zone.

Hypothesis Testing

There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on influence of job description on the performance of non-teaching staff in Universities in the North-Western Geographic Zone, Nigeria;

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the Perceptions of SSANU, NASU and NAAT on Practices of Job Description and the Performance of Non-Teaching Staff of Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	F-critical	P-value	Decision
Between groups	1.764	2	1.435	.882	2.864	.058	H ₀₁ Retained
Within groups	97.944	318	1.572				
Total	99.708	320					

In Table 2, the computed probability of 0.058 was higher than the alpha value of 0.05 set for this study. In other words, the calculated F- ratio value of 0.882 is less than the f-critical value of 2.864 while the calculated P-value of .058 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was retained. It could be concluded that there were no significant differences in the opinions of SSANU, NASU and NAAT on practices of job description and the performance of Non-teaching staff of Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. This suggests that non-teaching staff in Universities believed that job description influenced their performance.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study of research question one showed that job description influenced the performance of non-teaching staff of Universities in the North-West Zone, Going by the respondents' opinions on items 1 to 10 where no respondent had less than 63.3% in respect of disagreement, it is evident that there was a positive perception from the respondents toward

influence of job description on the performance of non-teaching staff of universities in the North-West Zone, Nigeria. It is believed that, job grading, classification and career development for non-teaching staff in the universities are made easy through job description, factual job contents in terms of form of duties and responsibilities of a specific job are provided to enhance performance of non-teaching staff in the universities, job description outlines the job tasks duties and responsibilities for non-teaching staff in the universities and job description serves as written narrative of the tasks to be performed and what it entails in the universities in the North-West Zone, Nigeria.

The result leading to this research question shows the probability is .058 higher than the alpha value of 0.05 set for this study. In other words, the calculated F- ratio value of .882 is less than the f-critical value of 2.864 while the calculated P-value of .058 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained. It could be concluded that there were no significant differences in the opinions of SSANU, NASU and NAAT on practices of job description and the performance of Non-teaching staff of Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. This suggests that non-teaching staff in Universities believed that job description influenced the performance of non-teaching staff in Universities in the North-West Zone of Nigeria. The finding is in line with the finding of Meisler, (2014) who revealed that there is no significant difference on the influence of non-teaching staff in job description, publication culture on effective university management in terms of goal attainment, management of facilities, and management of staff and students. Barry (2003) also concurred that job description is necessarily based on the information obtained through the job analysis interview. It is prepared primarily for defining duties and responsibilities and for job evaluation. This findings concurred with the study of Bernadette, Nambuswa, and Namusonge (2016) that, with the unpredictable environment and intense varied needs of students in tertiary institutions, they are required to reach certain standards by improving their performance to align with such great demands; otherwise, a lot of problems will surface, including running the risk of students' strikes and eventually leading to unexpected costs. Hence it is important for these institutions to improve the performance of their employees.

The human resources are the most significant elements in any organization. It is also useful for such purposes as organization analysis, recruitment, employee placement, performance appraisal and training and development. Likewise Armstrong (2011) posited an accurate up-to-date job description that can help the employer to make inform decision to hire the right candidate. Similarly, the candidate can also get appointed at the job that is right for them and they can analyze their individual capabilities based on the specification available on the job description. A job description has the details of the salary or compensation offered to the candidate, considering the requirements, competencies and evaluating performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the researcher concludes that job description influenced the performance of non-teaching staff of universities. Also, factual job contents in terms of form of duties and responsibilities of a specific job are provided to enhance performance of non-teaching staff in the universities in the North-West Zone of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made: The university management should adopt the identified practices of job descriptions so as to improve the performance of Non-teaching staff in universities. Job description should provide clear communication between employer and employee, which invariably will enhance job performance of non-teaching staff in the universities in the North-West Zone, Nigeria.

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