Beginning teacher educators development and faculty workload management of Universities in Cross River State of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the beginning teacher educator’s development and faculty workload management of universities in Cross River State of Nigeria. The study was expecting to provide the baseline information on the faculty workload management of universities in enhancing the job training of beginning teacher educators for improved task performance. The survey inferential design study has two null hypotheses to guide the study. “Beginning teacher education development and Workload Management Opinion Survey (BTEDWMOS)” was self-developed, validated by two measurement evaluation experts, tested for reliability (with an index of 0.83), and administered to 84 newly employed (1-3 years) academic staff drawn from the population of academic staff in the faculty of education of the two universities using purposive sampling technique. The data obtained were analyzed using percentage counts, population t-test and independent t-test statistics. The findings revealed that the development of the beginning teacher educators were
significantly high. The development of the beginning teacher educators were not significantly different in gender and age while it was significantly different in work experience, qualification and computer literacy on faculty workload management. It was concluded that faculty workload management could be used to engender the level of development of the beginning teacher educators in the universities. It was, therefore, recommended that the right type of teachers be recruited to ensure increase productivity and professional standards.

**Key words:** Workload, management, development, beginning teacher.

**Introduction**

Personnel administration in any institution does not only provide a panacea for low quality staff, but also enable the personnel to effectively utilize resources for the system to realize its objectives. The qualified staff efforts are often engage in the workable units of the system with appropriate task co-ordination in order to avoid over and under utilization. According to Peretomode (1991), academic staff of universities are expected to propel knowledge, diverse skills and opportunities to ensure optimum performance in academic research and scholarly activities. In the course of professional development of the university beginning teacher educators (new employees), they are expected to cope with their primary responsibilities of teaching, research activities and community development service (FRN, 2004).
Moreso, Obi (2004) holds succinctly that management of universities should ensure that new members of staff are not over-loaded with work. This implies that their engagement and utilization should be done with transparency to ensure early professional learning and development of sense of belonging to their new academic life. Basically, it is the basis of faculty workload management by the universities that would afford the beginning teacher educators opportunities of effective on-the-job development for the achievement of university objectives.

The statement of problem

The problem of this study centres around the noticeable excess workload prevalent among the university academic staff in Nigeria. This culminates in inefficiency and under achievement of the university educational objectives. The beginning teacher educators are often over-utilized in work assignment with poor sense of belonging to their early professional learning. This phenomenon is a great concern to teachers, universities and government requiring to be redressed through re-engineering of the faculty management system of universities. Several efforts have been made to ameliorate this problem of excess workload but the results are still discouraging. Many studies have been carried out on various aspects of faculty workload management system but little or none was investigated into the place of beginning teacher educator’s development on faculty workload management system. This is necessary now in order to assess the possibility of improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of the beginning teacher educators through the use of reinforcers. The question
remains, can faculty workload management system alleviate the plight of poor staff development among the university beginning teacher educators? This study was designed to find an answer to this poser.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to determine how on-the-job development of university beginning teacher educators impacted on their opinion of faculty workload management. To meet this general objective, the study focused on the following specific objectives:

1. Identify the causes of beginning teacher educator’s poor on-the-job development towards faculty workload management of universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

2. Ascertain efforts being made by the beginning teacher educators to acquire knowledge, functioning skills and desirable attitude through development towards academic workload management of universities in Cross River State.

3. Classify the demographic characteristics of beginning teacher educators development towards faculty workload management of university system in Cross River State, Nigeria.

**Statement of Hypotheses**

The purpose of the study was translated into two main research questions which gave rise to two null hypotheses which were tested in the study. The research hypotheses were:

1. The development of university beginning teacher educators on academic workload management is not significantly high.
2. The development of university beginning teacher educators on academic workload management is not significantly influenced by the demographic characteristics (gender, age, experience, qualification and computer literacy).

**Literature Review**

Effective utilization of teacher educators in universities can be achieved through assigning reasonable workload to them. According to Obi (2004) faculty workload management is the harnessing of the faculty staff skills, energies, talents, competencies, beliefs and other characteristics in order to achieve the organizational objectives. Faculty workload management of university beginning teacher educators implies a management technique which ensures that the responsibilities of new academic staff in education faculties are diligently handled to bring about proper utilization of human potentials and ensure optimum performance in the system. The new education faculty staff are not to be over-loaded or under-loaded with academic work to make them effective and efficient in meeting their early professional learning needs in academics.

The dimension of task (academic workload) of teacher educators include the amount spent in working, number of classes taught and number of students in each of the classes (Akwuegwu, Udida and Nwi-ue, 2007). This means that the teacher’s workload for any one task can be operationally expressed as the number of times a task has to be completed multiplied by the amount of times taken to complete the task. The extra workload which comprises of set of activities in formal and informal job descriptions in the system adversely
affects productivity of the new employees. This may likely reduce their expected professional standards (Grenberg, 2010). However, these employees may successfully take up extra workload when they perceived that top management are open to employees’ suggestions and their initiated change (Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

Also on rare cases, work under-load among the new teachers would result in lost of interest and challenges in the task assignment. Mullins (2006) and Obi (2004) agree that this situation can discourage increased productivity. It becomes logical for educational managers to apply strategies which will make job to be more interesting and challenging in order to meet job enrichment and enlargement. Therefore, at all times, the managers should plan, organize, direct, co-ordinate and control activities in order to ensure effective staff developmental outcome.

The beginning university teacher educators are made to fit the specification of the education level through on-the-job development. Babalola (2009) asserts that on-the-job development is a method of staff education and training which is aimed at updating the job attitude, skills and knowledge of work force. Beginning teacher educators become the trainees (mentees) with supervisors (mentors) to make effective teachers out of every supervision. These trainees are to take instructions, guidance and carry out demonstrations under superior academic staff (mentors) to inculcate values and improve upon working capacity of the new employees.
According to Rosenthal (2010), such training could be stressful because it sometimes accompany unpleasant emotions, tension, frustrations, anxiety and depression based on work of the teachers. Ozigi (2011) notes that the responsibilities of university academic staff are enormous. He suggests that educational leaders should make use of essential functions such as assessment of the right staff, motivation, time-tabling and rapport in assigning reasonable workload to prevent being distressed.

Demographic differences are often attributable to developmental stereotypes prevalent in human societies and global cultures. Demographic factors such as gender, age, work experience, qualification and technological compliancy are relevant to staff development (Etuk, 2006 & Rosenthal, 2010). Studies which seek to scientifically establish the differences among organizational members provide conflicting results (Ekanem, 2009). However the conflicts were resolved in respect to work values. Etuk (2006) and Ozigi (2011) indicate that the quality of job surroundings, quality of teachers, knowledge of the employees, motivation and technology were valuable variables, imbued with opportunities for greater productivity and achievement of objectives.

The theoretical basis of the study can be explained with reinforcement theory of Thorndike as cited by Biehler (1971). The theory states that response followed by satisfactory stimulus or by the annoying stimulus will be conditioned. The implication of the theory to this study is that effective development (stimulus) of beginning teacher educators will be evidenced in job enrichment and achievement of university objectives. The efficient
acts will be conditioned in them through effective workload management (condition) of the system.

The scope of this investigation was delimited to the new employees (1-3 years) among the academic staff in the faculty of education of the two Universities studied. The study was justified in its acting as an inspiration to new staff capacity building in the faculties towards greater efficiency and attainment of objectives. Government, administrators and students would equally find the study useful as quality teacher educators are yearned for among stakeholders in contemporary Nigeria.

**Methodology**

This study adopted a survey inferential design. It was carried out in Cross River State of Nigeria. It is one of the six states that constitute the south-south geo-political zone and lying on the eastern axis of the country. It covered two universities, one owned by the federal government while the other one is owned by the state government. The academic staff employed within the first three years (for the year ended 2010/2011) in the faculty of education of the universities made up the population. A sample size of .84 new academic staff (beginning teacher educators) was purposively drawn from the population. Further breakdown of the sample showed that 51 of the new teacher educators were from university of Calabar while 33 of them were from Cross River State University of Technology Calabar.

Data collection was carried out using a researcher-developed instrument titled “Beginning Teacher Educators Development and Workload Management Opinion Survey”
The instrument had two sections, A and B. Section A elicited demographic data while 10 items in section B measured areas of beginning teacher educators development and workload management in the universities. The items were also arranged in four-point likert scale with response categories scored as strongly agree-4 agree-3 disagree-2 and strongly disagree-1. The instrument was face-validated by experts in measurement evaluation while a trial test gave reliability Cronbach alpha index of 0.83. The figure indicated that the instrument was reliable for use in achieving the research objectives.

Copies of the instrument were self-administered by the researcher and two research assistants. The questionnaire copies were returned without any mortality rate. Statistical technique of percentage, population t-test and independent t-test were applied to analysis the data generated for this study.

**Data Analysis and Results**

**Hypothesis One**

The development of university beginning teacher educators on workload management is not significantly high. The only variable applicable in this hypothesis is the development of university beginning teacher educators. The data obtained were statistically analyzed using percentage and population t-test (test of one sample mean). Results were presented in tables I and 2.
### TABLE 1

Percentages of response to university beginning teacher educators development on the faculty workload management issues (n=84).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/n</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Yes Agreement</th>
<th>No Disagreement</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academic workload management can be enhanced with proper engagement and utilization of beginning teacher educators in development.</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I need knowledge and functional skills to cope with developmental job responsibilities on workload management.</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The use of ICT for workload reduction to store/retrieve information and to teach/instruct students does not make sense to me, I will never use it.</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The development of teacher educators involves engagement of right type staff (numbers and qualifications) in teaching, researching and community services in the universities.</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Staff motivation is not necessary in workload management since the teachers’ engagement and utilization increased productivity in the new staff course of development.</td>
<td>31.00</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I need to follow the organizational structure and principle of unity of command for effective responsibility reporting on workload management system.</td>
<td>66.00</td>
<td>34.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of data analysis presented in table 1 have shown generally that the sampled beginning teacher educators’ development was high towards the workload management in the universities. For example 71 percent of the teachers agreed with the statement that workload management can be enhanced with proper engagement and utilization of beginning teacher educators in development. Also 68 percent of them agreed that knowledge and functional skills were necessary with developmental job responsibilities towards workload management. All other statements, as shown in table 1 attracted percentages of agreement/disagreement ranging from 60 percent to 82 percent from the respondents that indicated high level to the workload management. These percentages also
indicated that the development of the beginning teacher educators were having high level effects on the workload management and thus, achieving the desire results.

**TABLE 2**

**Population t-test analysis of whether beginning teacher educators development towards faculty workload management is significantly high**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall development towards workload management</td>
<td>29.31</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>8.281*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized mean</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05, df=83, critical t = 1.965.

The result in table 2 further confirmed that the development of the beginning teacher educators towards workload management was high. The overall observed mean value (29.31) representing the beginning teacher educators development towards workload management was compared with the expected mean of 15.00 (obtained by multiplying the mid-point between agree and disagree (1.5) by the number of the 10 items.

This yielded a significant calculated t-value of 8.281 with the critical t-value of 1.965 at 0.05 alpha level and 83 degree of freedom. This result agreed with and summarized the findings in table 1. The null hypothesis was rejected. The interpretation was that the development of the university beginning teacher educators on workload management was significantly high.
Hypothesis Two

The development of university beginning teacher educators on workload management is not significantly influenced by the demographic characters. The independent variable was the developmental demographic characters of the university beginning teacher educators, while the dependent variable was the workload management. The independent t-test statistical analysis technique was used to compare the mean score of the two groups. A summary of the result was shown in table 3.

TABLE 3

Independent t-test analysis of influence of beginning teacher educators’ development demographic characters towards faculty workload management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29.29</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33.79</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Below 30 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.16</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above 30 years</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>38.89</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Years of work experience</td>
<td>Below 2 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.81</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>5.62*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>Below PhD</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>24.28</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36.91</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>5.92*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The result presented in table 3 (upper part) have indicated that the development of male and that of the female beginning teacher educators were not significantly different (t=1.71; p>0.05). Also, the development of beginning teacher educators where ages were below 30 years and those above 30 years appear not to be significantly different (t=1.66; p>0.05). The null hypothesis was therefore accepted given the fact that the obtained t-values (1.71 and 1.66) were found to be lower than the critical t-value 1.97 at 0.05 alpha level of significance and with 82 degree of freedom.

The years of work experience of the beginning teacher educators was a significant factor in their development towards workload management (t=5.62; p<0.05). The development of beginning teacher educators with qualification below PhD (with $\bar{X} = 24.28$) was significantly more positive than those of them with PhD qualification ($X=36.91$). This revealed that academic qualification was also a significant demographic factor of development (t=5.92; p<0.05). Relatively the development of beginning teacher educators who were not computer compliance ($X=25.23$) and those who were computer compliance ($X=37.73$) was significantly positive towards workload movement (t=5.67; p<0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected given the fact that the obtained t-values (5.62, 5.92 and 5.61) were

| 5 | Computer literacy | Non-compliance | 62 | 25.23 | 5.57 |
|   |                  | Compliance     | 21 | 37.73 | 4.83 | 5.61* |
|   |                  | Total sample   | 83 | 29.31 | 6.81 |

*p<0.05, df=82, critical t-value = 1.97.
found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.97 at 0.05 alpha level of significance and with 82 degree of freedom.

Therefore, the development of the university beginning teacher educators on workload management was influenced by the years of work experience, qualification and computer literacy and not by their gender and ages. The implication was that the development towards workload management can take place better in the beginning teacher educators with higher levels of work experience, qualification and computer literacy while gender and ages of the teachers may not matter.

**Discussion of Results**

The outcome of the analysis of hypothesis one disclosed that beginning teacher educators sampled exhibited a significant high level in their professional development towards faculty workload management. Their high level was reflected in the area of their willingness to acquire knowledge and functional skills, use of computers, interest in teaching/researching/community services, and effective responsibility reporting. This finding was similar to research results of Obi (2004) and Ozigi (2011). In these various studies, the respondents showed high level responses in their training programme towards workload management. Most of the teacher educators expressed their willingness to control their daily academic activities through time table to ensure attainment of educational objectives and prevent being distressed (Rosenthal, 2010).
The uniqueness of the findings of the study was derived from the fact that academic tasks and career have educational requirements for entering into jobs and processing on the jobs. The structure of the teacher educators’ schooling matched up with those of the work organization. This was encouraging since the right type of staff tends to prove the act of “putting the right peg in the right hole”. Workload was therefore appropriately shared to them in their early professional learning to ensure effective and efficient performance.

Also, the analysis of response to individual items were quite revealing, and explained some low levels shown by some of the beginning teacher educators. As high as 40 percent of them felt they do not have the right sense of belonging in their development process. 35 percent of them still thought application of computer for workload reduction was not necessary, therefore they should be left alone. These findings were similar to those of Rosenthal (2010) and Obi (2004). The studies revealed low level responses towards workload management system.

These studies are not too surprising since attitude to work can be reinforced. The new staff could be properly engaged and utilized to arouse interest, ensure job enrichment and job enlargement. Good behaviour patterns could impact positively on the teachers’ development for proper work performance.

The result of hypothesis two indicated that the development of the beginning teacher educators in terms of gender and ages were not significantly different. In other words, the
development of the teacher educators when considering their gender and ages had little or nothing to do with the workload management system.

A plausible explanation for this finding was that the task responsibility can best be adjusted in terms of knowledge (concepts and insight) and existing skills (competence, recognition) of the employees. The staff development requires commitment and time management by the new teacher educators to promote productivity (Akwuegwu and Nwi-we, 2006). Closely akin to this was the fact that the world has been transformed to an age where the activities are knowledge driven. Based on these realities both male and female teacher educators irrespective of their ages should be computer literate to stand the chance of reducing workload to ensure increase productivity and professional standard.

Furthermore, the result revealed that the development of the beginning teacher educators in terms of experience, qualification and computer literacy were significantly different. The implication of this was that, the beginning teacher educator who acquired more experience, qualification and computer literacy had what it takes to meet up the demands of workload management. This was so because professional development of the new employees provided them the opportunities to update knowledge, valuable skill and desirable attitude which are relevant in their job assignment (Babalola, 2009). This marked the turning points (events and experiences) which shape and indeed accentuate the way which turning point experience liberate or constraints their employment. Teacher educators often being regarded as the single most important learning resources available to the learners were
given opportunities to improve teacher quality. The fall out of this was that teachers were expected to use the systematic routines of the workplace as well as the un-systematized, often tacit, routines to achieve the ends within the institutions. The self-efficacy or the employees’ estimate of their capacities to perform is a function of the extra role (workload).

The development of the beginning teacher educators depends on the faculty workload management system to provide quality manpower needed by the university to remain afloat in a competitive economy. The level of the faculty workload management system determines the level of development of the beginning teacher educators in the universities studied. Therefore, one cannot operate more than the knowledge and skills possessed by the teachers in the institutions of learning. This accounts for why the development of beginning teacher educators influences the faculty workload management system of universities in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the development of university beginning teacher educators on faculty workload management was significantly high. Furthermore, their development in terms of work experience, educational qualification and computer literacy were significantly high, while those of gender and age on faculty workload management were significantly low. Therefore, the ability of beginning teacher educators who benefited from early professional development to update their knowledge, functional skills and desirable attitude appear guaranteed. Also, faculty workload
management system proved that university as a prime human capital institution could be made to groom new employees’ self-efficiency for achievement of objectives.

**Recommendations**

1. Faculty of education of universities should emphasize on faculty workload management for effective development of beginning teacher educators to be efficient and effective on their job assignment.

2. Universities should factor computer studies into the early professional development programme of teachers. This will enable them to satisfy the needs of workload management system, and reduce the workload of the new employees and the administrators.

3. Enough qualified teachers should be recruited in faculties of the universities. This will facilitate engagement and utilization of the new employees since workload sharing among them can result in effective and efficient performance.

4. The university work structure and principle of unity of command should be strictly observed in the reporting chain of responsibilities. This will strengthen the relationship between beginning teacher educators (as mentees) and senior members of academic staff (as mentors) to ensure increase productivity and professional standards.

5. There should be further research aimed at tracking the beneficiaries of faculty workload management system of universities in Cross River State of Nigeria with a
view to determining how well it can encourage development of new employees' vis-à-vis the cost involvement.

References


