

## **Impact of Lecturers' Involvement in Committee Assignments on their Overall Productivity in Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria**

**BY**

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### **Abstract**

*The study investigated the impact of lecturers' participation in committee assignments on their overall productivity in universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The sample consisted of 100 lecturers from the two public universities in Enugu State, using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher developed questionnaire titled "Lecturers Staff Membership of Committees and their productivity questionnaire. Data obtained from the study was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and t-test statistical tools. The results of the analysis showed that lecturers' involvement in committee assignment affected their level of effectiveness in teaching and research. It further showed that lecturers who were actively involved in committee assignments were less effective in teaching, research and community service than those who were less involved. It was suggested among others that in order to prevent neglect of primary responsibility; a restriction should be placed on the number of committee on which individual lecturers can serve.*

## Introduction

Universities in Nigeria are established for the accomplishment of specified goals and objectives which are normally contained in the laws establishing them as well in the National policy on education (2013). In pursuance of these goals, the institutions are expected to engage in teaching, research and community service as well as being store houses for knowledge. For these goals to be practically achieved, the institutions make use of human, material and financial resources. The human resource is made up of academic, administrative, technical and the unskilled staff. These views were equally shared by Aguba (2006) and Aguba (2009) respectively.

The lecturers according to Oyerinde (2005) are better placed to realize the direct objectives of the institutions because they teach, carry out research and are fully involved in community service. The other non teaching staff in these institutions provide support services to these academic staff, for them to be successful in carrying out their primary responsibilities.

Nigerian universities have become increasingly complex in terms of students population, academic programmes offered, staff composition, administration and management. This complexity therefore calls for sound and rational decision making through wide participation of all interest groups. In order to do this effectively, authorities in these institutions have to create certain committees, the bulk of membership of which is made up of academic staff.

As observed by Nwachukwu (1988) a committee is a device for achieving co-ordination of activities and sharing information among various departments and divisions of an organization. Committee decisions therefore help to promote better co-ordination in an organization. The use of committees was actually entrenched in the laws establishing Nigerian tertiary institutions. For instance, the university of Ibadan Act of 1962 states that anybody or persons established by the act shall without prejudice, have power to appoint committees consisting of members of that body and subject to the provisions of sub-

section (7) of this act to authorize committee established by it to exercise, on its behalf, such of its functions as it may determine.

The committee system is popular in lecturers because of the belief that the institution administration should be decentralized to take care of the increasing complexities of the system. The committee system is expected to promote rational decision making, democracy, good governance and effective management.

In the management of higher institutions, committees play very important roles in the decision making process. This is because as a democratic establishment, higher educational institutions decisions on governance must reflect the opinion of a cross section of the staff, if such decisions are to be accepted. This is why many institutions in the country have established many committees to assist management in arriving at useful and meaningful decision that can facilitate the proper management and growth of the higher educational system (Ikenwe, 1988).

As observed by Ede (2000) and Dauda (1986), the management of higher educational institution is a complex one, and requires participation through the committee system because of its bureaucratic tendencies. Most universities in Nigeria use the committee system extensively and expect that it will ensure that rational decisions are made since those involved are from diverse disciplines (Ajayi and Alani 2001). Though, the multidisciplinary approach to decision making is acknowledged, there is also a belief that tertiary institutions in Nigeria are over-governed by committees, which shows that decisions that could have been more easily taken by individual officers are referred to committees (Alani, 2002).

Scholars like (Alani 2002, Ejiogu 1985, Login 2002) have also observed that there are too many committees in tertiary institutions with some of them having overlapping terms of reference and over- involvement of academic staff in committee assignments is to the detriment of their primary assignments of teaching, research and community service. Other criticism levied against the committee system *in* Nigeria tertiary institutions is lack of

true representation of the entire institution community, arising from the non-democratization of the appointment of committee members. Others include conflict of interest, time constraints as well as interference by the institutional Authorities.

As observed by Ebi (2007), there have been frequent cries by most members of the higher institutions communities that the committee system may not necessarily be the best method of effectively managing an educational system. It was argued that the disadvantages of the committee system on institutional management appear to outweigh the advantages. There is therefore the need for the simplification and streamlining of committee structure in educational institutions .

### **Problem of the study**

It has been observed that in most Nigerian tertiary institutions, academic staff that are expected to be primarily involved in the pursuit of teaching, research and community service are over involved in committee assignments. This eventually affects their teaching and research activities. In realizing this fact, some academics therefore believe that time spent on committees deliberation is time lost to teaching and research. So they show little or no interest in committees' assignment. Those who do not share the belief, engage in committee assignments at the detriment of their primary responsibilities. It is as a result of this, that this study examines the effect of academic staff over involvement in the committee system on effective teaching and research in Universities in Enugu State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses related to the problem of this study were tested:

1. There is no significant influence of committees' assignments on the statutory duties of lecturers.
2. There is no significant difference in the effectiveness in research activities of academic staff that are involved in committee assignments and those who do not.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This is a descriptive survey research which examines lecturers perception of their membership of committees as it affect their teaching and research activities in universities in Enugu State.

### **Study Population**

The population for the study was the entire academic staff in the two government owned universities in Enugu State.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample of the study consisted of 100 academic staff randomly selected from the two public universities in Enugu State. In each of these institutions, 50 academic staff were chosen using stratified random sampling technique. The basis for the stratification was designation, gender and institutional type.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument used to generate the relevant data was a 4-option likert scale type of instrument designated Lecturers' Membership of Committees and their productivity Questionnaire which was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of two sections, A and B. Section A, sought information on personal data of the lecturers (gender, age, marital, status, education, designation) while section B consists of 18 items designed to assess the lecturers' Perception of their membership of committees and their effectiveness in teaching, research and community service. The research was placed on the scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree and Strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on each of the items.

### **Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

The instrument was face-validated by giving the draft to some experts in research process and questionnaire construction for their constructive criticisms, suggestions and advice. For the reliability of the instrument, the items were tested using test-retest reliability. After two weeks, the items were re-administered to the same respondents using Pearson

product moment correction co-efficient to determine the reliability of the instrument resulting in 0.92 at 0.05 levels of confidence. With this result, the instrument was adjudged to be reliable.

### Method of Data Collection

The relevant data for the study were personally collected through the help of research assistants. The exercise was concluded within one month.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were first transformed to percentages to ensure comparability and then analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation co-efficient and t-test statistical tools to test hypotheses 1 and 2 respectively. The hypotheses were tested at 95 percent confidence level.

### Analysis of Data and Results

**Ho 1:** There is no significant influence of committee assignments on teaching effectiveness of lecturers.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical tool was used. The result of the analysis is presented below:

*Table1*

*Influence of committee assignments on teaching effectiveness*

Variable	N	X	SD	r-cal	r-critical
Lecturers' Committee assignment		13.25	3.84		
	100			0.89	0.20
Teaching effectiveness		8.06			

Significant at 0.05

Degree of freedom 148

Table 1 above shows that the r-calculated value of 0.89 is greater than the r-critical value of 0.20 given at 148 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected. It then means that there is a significant influence of committee assignments on effective teaching of lecturers.

**Ho 2:** There is no significant difference in effectiveness in research activities of lecturers who are involved in committee assignments and those who are not involved.

To test this hypothesis, t-test statistical tool was used and the result of the analysis is presented in the table below:

Table 2: Difference in research activities of academic staff involved in committee assignment and those not involved.

Variable	N	X	SD	r-cal	r-critical
Staff involved in committee assignment	45	12.32	4.63		
				3.29	1.96
Staff not involved in committee assignment	55	10.08	2.41		

Significant at 0.05

Level of significance 148

Table 2 above indicates that the calculated value of 3.29 is greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 given at 148 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is hereby rejected. It then means that there is a significant difference in the research activities of academic staff involved in committee assignments and those not involved in committee assignments.

## **Discussion of the major findings**

In the table 1, the result of the analysis shows that the perception of the lecturers reflects a significant influence of committee assignment on their teaching effectiveness. This means that when lecturers are overloaded with committee assignments, it will have effect on their primary assignment of teaching. This corroborates Alani (2002) who observed that over involvement of lecturers in committee assignment is at the detriment of their primary assignment of teaching.

In table 2 the result showed a significant difference in the research activities of academic staff involved in committee assignment and those not involved. This means that lecturers who are not over involved in committee assignments are likely going to be more involved in research than those who are involved in committee assignments. This is in line with the writing of Logging (2002) that there are too many committees in tertiary institutions with some of them having overlapping terms of reference and over involvement of academic staff will be detrimental to their research activities and community service.

## **Recommendations**

In order to enhance the effectiveness of lecturers in carrying out their primary responsibilities of teaching, research and community service, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. There is the need to harmonize some committees in institutions so as to eliminate the replications of consideration of issues in different committees and optimize the use of the time spent by academic staff in committee assignments.
2. Restriction should be placed on the number of committees; an individual lecturer can serve on.
3. A reasonable allowance should be paid to academic staff serving on committees, this will therefore serve as motivating factors to work extra hours in ensuring the success of the committees.
4. Serving on the institutional committees should be through democratic process, so as to enhance members' commitment to assignments.



5. Serving on various committees should be rotational on all academic staff. The idea of appointing a particular set of people on committees, based on certain considerations like ethnicity, religion, campus politics may be counterproductive.

**Conclusion**

This study examined the influence of academic staff participation in committee assignments on their effectiveness in teaching and research activity in universities in Enugu state. The study revealed that the involvement of lecturers in committees take a lot of time that could have been spent on active teaching, research and community service, and that academic staff who are not actively involved in committee assignments were more effective in teaching and research activities than their counterparts who are actively involved in committee assignment. The role of committee system in effective administration of institutions cannot be under-estimated; care must therefore be taken, so that lecturers membership of various committees will not be detrimental to their effectiveness' in the performance of their.

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