

Length of Service and Attrition Rate Among the Teaching Staff in Public and Private Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

The length of service based teaching staff attrition in South West Nigerian universities was looked at from 2014/2015 to 2018/2019 academic sessions, and variables such as academic qualification, academic discipline and gender were covered. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. The study was a descriptive research that adopted the ex-post-facto research design. Seven universities (3 federal, 2 state and 2 private) formed the sample of the study that covered teaching staff from the categories of Assistant Lecturers to Professors in the schools of Humanities, Sciences and Engineering. A checklist was used for the data collection. The data collected from the sampled universities were analysed using rate statistic (Attrition rate). The findings revealed that the length of service produced varied rates of attrition along academic qualifications, academic disciplines and gender perspectives. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: policy and programmes for teaching staff retention which would address both the new and veteran teaching staff should evolve, retention strategies that would be academic qualification biased should be introduced to the school system, academic disciplines driven job resources that would encourage teaching staff retention should be provided and gender based retention policies should be formulated.

Key Words: Length of Service, Teaching staff, Attrition, Universities

Introduction

There is an assumption of a strong relationship between attrition and length of service. Service experience has also been identified by some studies as a predictor of teaching staff attrition in tertiary institutions, apart from state of origin, student enrolment size and academic work load. Also, the most and the least experienced teaching staff are presumed to likely leave teaching (Hanushek et al, 2004).

Apart from age and experience, the descriptive statistics reported by Luekeng et al (2004) pointed out that stayers were more likely to be males than females, and most likely to teach general education rather than special education. Ingersoll (2001) also revealed that males were slightly more likely than females to stay and general education teachers were more likely than special education teachers to stay in teaching. School ownership and type of school also have a relationship with the decision to leave.

Long length of service is a product of choosing a job as a career. The teaching career, the challenges and support it offers may influence teachers' length of service. Retaining

teachers is a career in the school system that will translate to a long length of service, requires the educational system to respond to teaching staff's need for growth inside and outside the classroom, mentoring and induction, professional development, assigning of new roles and responsibility and career ladders. The first few years in the teaching profession are particularly difficult. The period is characterized with heavy teaching staff mobility and attrition among new teaching staff (Luekens- 2004). In a study based on the job movement of all Texas public school teachers from 1993-1996. Hanushet et al (2004) found that mobility was much higher among the probationary teachers (0-2 years of experience) who were almost twice as likely as prime age teachers (11-30 years of experience) to exit Texas public schools and almost four times as likely to switch districts. However, teaching staff with long lengths of service also experience periods of stress, burnout, boredom and dissatisfaction in the teaching career. Also, the work of teachers can be difficult, draining and repetitive with ample evidence suggesting that teachers are expected to do more today than ever before (Hargreaves 2003). There are also reports that some new teachers intend to remain in the classroom only for a short time (Peske et al 2001). Teachers' sense of efficacy- the feeling that they teach students well- will strongly influence their decisions to change schools or to exit the teaching career altogether; although induction has been identified as one of the methods through which schools may help new teachers to develop efficacy and subsequently, retain them in the classroom.

Huberman (1993) discovered that some teachers with five to ten years of experience encountered the emergence of a sense of routine and the lowering of energy and interest. His data further suggested a danger zone "From seven to fifteen years of experience" in which teachers in his sample were most likely to consider leaving teaching. 43% of the sample cited fatigue, routine, frustration and nervous tension" as the reasons for the exit. This study was hinged on the job embeddedness theory, an innovative and emerging research construct that offers a method of discovering why people stay in an organization. It was propounded by Mitchell, Holton et al Erez in 2001. Job embeddedness theory postulates that employees have many connections and links within their organizations and the communities the organization is sited. As a result, they feel so fully integrated in their professional and social environments that they do not want to lose or sacrifice the links and connections for an unknown new job or for an unfamiliar new environment. This theory singles out colleagues, relatives and friends as the key members who shape the work and community links of an employees. The job embeddedness theory claims that employees' organizational and community integration depends on parameters such as their personal values, their career aspirations as well as their knowledge and skills. The relevance of job embeddedness is the influence of working connection and community relation that have been built over lengthy periods of time of their service in the school system and personal links and connections.

However, in a study by Li-Ping Tang and Chamberlain (2003) on the effects of rank, tenure, length of service and institution on faculty attitudes toward research and teaching; the case of regional state universities, the results revealed that the length of service had a significant effect on faculty perception of research orientation and how rewards influenced teaching, whereas rank and tenure did not. It was further pointed out that faculty members with twenty or more years of service had the lowest research orientation;

those with ranks lower than full Professors showed the strongest belief that rewards influenced teaching.

Attrition of academic staff and the failure of universities to retain quality academic staff continue to be germane to the changing prospects and potential of knowledge formation and learning. The less satisfied workers tend to resign while the more satisfied ones tend to remain on a job. The overall job satisfaction of university teachers significantly correlates with the length of service in a study which asked if the length of service was related to the level of job satisfaction (Oshagemi 2000). Also, an analysis of satisfaction by length of service and employment status revealed that a long length of service was an indicator of job satisfaction (Kandro and Chandio, 2014). Length of service is the time spent by a worker on his job or performing some other activities beneficial to society. According to Soviet law; the length of service is the basis underlying the right to pensions and vacations. It is used in determining the amount of benefits granted for temporal disability and, in some cases, in setting wages. However, there was a strong correlation between length of service and wages as observed by Kubo (2008) in the study of the resilience of employment relationship and the changing conditions of work in Japan. Length of service has also been identified as a predictor of job satisfaction levels (Sarker et al, 2003).

The length of service of teaching staff based on gender is a pointer to the assumption that there are tasking challenges in retaining male teaching staff who have been in service for less than ten years than others who have put in more years of service, Female teaching staff with long lengths of service are less mobile than their male counterparts.

Statement of Problem

It is a known fact that certain kinds of teaching staff are more likely to easily get discouraged in teaching jobs, and certain schools are also prone to losing teaching staff. But a situation where more experienced teaching staff who have enjoyed long lengths of service leave would create the problem of mentorship and induction of new teaching staff in the university system and threaten quality learning in the university system. Since teaching staff with long length of service and experience are the most important factor in the academic growth of the university and students. Hence, this study took a cursory look at length of service and attrition rate among teaching staff in public and private Nigerian universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the teaching staff attrition situation based on length of service in South West Nigerian universities?
- Does length of service affect attrition of teaching staff based on academic qualification?
- Does length of service affect attrition of teaching staff based on academic discipline?
- Does length of service affect attrition of teaching staff based on gender?

Methods

This study is a descriptive survey research which adopted the ex-post facto research design. The population of the study comprised all South West Nigerian universities. Three federal universities with 1,616 teaching staff out of six universities, two private universities with 275 teaching staff, out of twenty-four universities and two state owned universities with 953 teaching staff, out of nine universities were selected using the multi stage sampling technique. A checklist was used to collect data while rate statistic was used for the analysis.

Results

Table 1: Length of service based university teaching staff attrition situation in south west Nigeria

Length of service	2014/2015 Session			2015/2016 Session			2016/2017 Session			2017/2018 Session			2018/2019 Session		
Federal Universities	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate
1-10 years	845	32	4%	813	7	1%	806	5	6%	81	12	15%	69	1	1%
11 years and Above	771	15	2%	756	5	1%	751	5	1%	746	9	1%	737	0	0%
State Universities															
1-10 years	512	5	1%	507	2	0%	505	3	1%	502	2	0%	500	1	0%
11 years and Above	441	5	1%	436	2	0%	434	2	0%	432	2	0%	430	0	0%
Private Universities															
1-10 years	160	3	2%	157	1	1%	156	4	3%	152	3	2%	149	0	0%
11 years and Above	115	3	3%	112	1	1%	111	3	3%	108	2	2%	106	0	0%

The data in Table 1 showed the length of service of universities teaching staff attrition in South West Nigeria. In the 2014/2015 academic session, the federal universities had 4% attrition rate. The teaching staff who had spent between 1-10 years in the service recorded 4% attrition rate and 11 years and above revealed a 2% attrition rate in the same academic year. The 2015/2016 academic session had 1% attrition rate among the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service university teaching staff per group, while the 2016/2017 academic session had 6% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service university teaching staff) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff). The 2017/2018 academic session had 15% attrition rate among the 1-10 length of service group and 1% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service group. The 2018/2019 academic session had 1% attrition rate among 1-10 years length of service staff and no incidence of university teaching staff attrition among the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff.

The state universities had 1% attrition rate each among the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff in the 2014/2015 academic session, 0% attrition rate each was observed among the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff in the 2015/2016 session. The 2016/2017 academic session had 1% attrition rate (among the 1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 0% attrition rate (among the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff). There was no incidence of attrition in the two groups in the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic sessions.

The private universities experienced 2% attrition rate among the 1-10 years length of service teaching staff and 3% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff in the 2014/2015 academic session. 1% attrition rate each was observed in both the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff in the 2015/2016 academic session. Also, 3% attrition rate was observed per the 1-10 years and the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff in the 2016/2017 academic session. The 2017/2018 academic session also recorded 2% attrition rate each among both the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff while there was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session.

Table 2: Length of service based universities teaching staff attrition according to academic qualification in South West Nigeria

Academic Qualification	2014/2015 Session			2015/2016 Session			2016/2017		
Federal Universities	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate
PhD Holders									
1-10 years	780	30	4%	750	6	1%	744	4	1%
11 years and Above	701	13	2%	688	4	1%	684	3	0%
Masters Degree Holders									
1-10 years	65	2	3%	63	1	2%	62	1	2%
11 years and Above	70	2	3%	68	1	1%	67	2	3%

The data in Table 2 showed the length of service of universities teaching staff attrition according to academic qualifications in South West Nigeria. The federal universities teaching staff attrition pattern revealed that in the 2014/2015 academic session, the PhD holders who had spent 1-10 years in service had 4% attrition rate while the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff had 2% attrition rate. Both the 1-10 years and the 11 years and above length of service PhD holders had 1% attrition rate each, while in the 2016/2017 session, the 1-10 years length of service PhD holders had 1% attrition rate and their 11 years and above length of service counterparts had 0% attrition rate. The 2017/2018 session had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service PhD holders) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service PhD holders) while there was no incidence of attrition among both the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service PhD holders.

The Masters degree holders in the federal universities in the 2014/2015 session had 3% attrition rate each among the 1-10 years and the 11 years and above length of service groups. The 2015/2016 academic session had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service Masters degree holders) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service Masters degree holders). The 2016/2017 academic session experienced 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service Masters degree holders) and 3% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service Masters degree holders). The 2017/2018 academic session experienced no incidence of attrition among the 1-10 years length of service Masters degree holders and 2% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service Masters degree holders, while there was no incidence of attrition among the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service Masters degree holders.

The state universities had 1% attrition rate each among the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service PhD holders in the 2014/2015 session. In the 2015/2016 session, the 1-10 years length of service PhD holders had 0% attrition rate while the 11 years and above length of service PhD holders had 1% attrition rate. The 2016/2017 session had 1% attrition rate each among the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service PhD holders while there was no incidence of university teaching staff attrition between the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic sessions. The Masters degree holders in the state universities had 0% attrition rate among the 1-10 years length of service Masters degree holders and 3% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service Masters degree holders while there was no incidence of university teaching staff attrition between the 2015/2016 and 2018/2019 academic sessions.

However, among the private universities, the attrition rate in the 2014/2015 academic session among the 1-10 years length of service PhD holders was 2% while the 11 years and above length of service PhD holders is 3%. In the 2015/2016 session, there was 1% attrition rate each in the 1-10 and 11 years and above length of service PhD holders. The 2016/2017 session also had 3% attrition rate each in the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service PhD holders. The 2017/2018 session experienced 1% attrition rate each in the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service PhD holders while there was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session.

The Masters degree holders in the private universities had no incidence of teaching staff attrition from 2014/2015 to 2016/2017 sessions as well as in the 2018/2019 session except in 2017/2018 academic session which had 10% attrition rate among the 1-10 years length of service Masters degree holders and 14% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service Masters degree holders.

Table 3: Length of service based university teaching staff attrition by academic disciplines in South West Nigeria.

Academic Disciplines	2014/2015 Session			2015/2016 Session			2016/2017		
Federal Universities	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate
Humanities									
1-10 years	490	5	1%	485	2	0%	483	4	1%
11 years and Above	309	4	0%	305	4	1%	301	2	1%
Sciences									
1-10 years	302	25	8%	273	2	1%	271	6	3%
11 years and Above	130	10	10%	120	2	2%	118	3	3%

The data in Table 3 revealed the attrition rate scenario based on the length of service of the universities teaching staff by academic disciplines in South West Nigeria. Among the federal universities, the teaching staff in the School of Humanities who had spent 1-10 years and 11 years and above in service experienced 1% and 0% attrition rate respectively in the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 academic sessions. In the 2016/2017 academic session, the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service universities teaching staff had 1% attrition rate each. The 2017/2018 academic session had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service universities teaching staff) while the 2018/2019 academic session had no incidence of teaching attrition.

The School of Sciences had 8% attrition rate each in the groups of 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service universities teaching staff. In the 2015/2016 session, 1-10 years length of service teaching staff had 1% attrition rate and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff had 2% attrition rate. The 2016/2017 session had 2% attrition rate among the 1-10 years length of service teaching staff and 3% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff. In the 2017/2018 session, the 1-10 years length of service teaching staff had 3% attrition rate and 6% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff. In the 2018/2019 session, 1-10 years length of service teaching staff had 0% attrition rate and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff had 1% attrition rate. The School of Engineering had 3% attrition rate each in the groups of 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff in the 2014/2015 session. The 2015/2016 session had an incidence of 1% attrition rate each in the two groups of 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff. The 2016/2017 session had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service staff) and 1% attrition rate (11 years length of service staff). The 2017/2018 academic session experienced 1% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service staff) and 0% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service staff) while there was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session.

The state universities' Schools of Humanities had 1% attrition rate each in the groups of 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service universities teaching staff in the 2014/2015 academic session. There was no incidence of attrition in the 2015/2016

session, the 2016/2017 session also had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) while there was no incidence of attrition between the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 academic sessions.

The School of Science had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) in 2014/2015. The 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 sessions had no case of teaching staff attrition while the 2017/2018 session had 1% attrition rate among the 1-10 years length of service teaching staff and 0% attrition rate among the 11 years and above length of service teaching staff. There was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session. The School of Engineering had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 1% attrition (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) in 2014/2015. 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) each respectively while there was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session.

The private universities Schools of Humanities in the 2014/2015 academic session had 3% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 5% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff). The 2015/2016 session had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 5% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff). The 2016/2017 session had 3% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service) and 5% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff). The 2017/2018 session had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 3% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) while there was no case of attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session. The School of Science in the 2014/2015 to 2015/2016 academic sessions had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 0% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) respectively. In the 2016/2017 session, 1-10 years length of service teaching staff had 3% attrition rate and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff had 10% attrition rate. In the 2017/2018 session, both the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff had 3% attrition rate each while there was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 session. The Schools of Engineering in the 2014/2015 academic session had 4% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 2% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff). The 2015/2016 session had no case of attrition while the 2016/2017 session had 3% attrition rate each in the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service teaching staff categories. In the 2017/2018 session, there was 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service teaching staff) and 3% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service teaching staff) while there was no incidence of teaching staff attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session.

Table 4: Length of Service based university teaching staff attrition by gender in South West Nigeria

Gender	2014/2015 Session			2015/2016 Session			2016/2017		
Federal Universities	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate	No on Roll	No Left	Attrition Rate
Male									
1-10 years	447	22	5%	425	6	1%	419	7	2%
11 years and Above	400	10	3%	390	5	1%	385	5	1%
Female									
1-10 years	570	10	2%	560	1	0%	559	2	0%
11 years and Above	200	5	3%	195	1	1%	194	1	1%

The data in Table 4 revealed the length of service based universities teaching staff attrition by gender in South West Nigeria. Among the Federal universities in the 2014/2015 academic session, the male teaching staff who had spent 1-10 years in service had 5% attrition rate and 11 years and above length of service (3% attrition rate) while the female teaching staff had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service) and 3% attrition rate (11 years and above). In the 2015/2016 session, the male teaching staff of both 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service had 1% attrition rate each while the female teaching staff had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service). The 2016/2017 session had no incidence of attrition within the 1-10 years length of service female teaching staff category while 1% attrition rate was noticed among the 11 years and above female teaching staff. In the 2017/2018 session, 2% attrition rate each was noticed among the male teaching staff of 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service categories while the female category also had 1% attrition rate each per group of 1-10 years and 11 years and above. In the 2018/2019 academic session, there was no incidence of teaching staff attrition.

The state universities in the 2014/2015 academic session had 1% attrition rate each across the male and female groups of 1-10 years and 11 years and above service year, In the 2015/2016 session, the male teaching staff had 0% attrition rate each across the 1-10 years and 11 years and above service year categories while the female counterparts had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above service year). The 2016/2017 session the 1% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service male teaching staff) and 0% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service male teaching staff). The female teaching staff had 0% attrition rate (1-10 years service year) and 1% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service). In the 2017/2018 session, there was no incidence of attrition among the male teaching staff while the female teaching staff had 1% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service) and 9% attrition rate (11 years and above service year) while there was no incidence of attrition in the 2018/2019 session.

The private universities in the South West experienced 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service of male staff), 3% attrition rate (11years and above service year for male

teaching staff) while the female teaching staff had 2% attrition rate each along the 1-10 years and 11 years and above service year categories in the 2014/2015 session. The 2015/2016 session had 1% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service male teaching staff), 2% attrition rate 11 years and above length of service for male teaching staff while the female teaching staff had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years service year) and 0% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service). In the 2016/2017 session, the male teaching staff had 3% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service), 2% attrition rate (11 years and above service year). The female teaching staff had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years length of service) and 4% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service). In the 2017/2018 session, the male teaching staff had 2% attrition rate (1-10 years service year) and 4% attrition rate (11 years and above length of service) while the female teaching staff had 2% attrition rate each in both the 1-10 years and 11 years and above length of service categories. However, there was no incidence of teaching staff attrition in the 2018/2019 academic session.

Educational Planning Implication

The length of service based analysis of the university teaching staff attrition pattern in South West Nigeria necessitated the need to come up with strategies that would be suitable for the retention of fresh and veteran teaching staff in the university system so that the work load often complained of by the veteran teaching staff could become bearable, and the motivation of new teaching staff through mentorship and induction by the veterans feasible. The university system can only be optimally efficient if both new and veteran teaching staff are available in the right quality and quantity.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that though very low the length of service based universities teaching staff attrition incidence occurred from 2014/2015 to 2018/2019 academic sessions along the variables of academic qualification, discipline and gender.

Recommendations

1. policies and programmes for university teaching staff retention that would address both the new and veteran university teaching staff needs should be worked on.
2. Retention strategies that would be academic qualification biased should be introduced into the school system.
3. Academic discipline driven job resources that would encourage teaching staff retention should be provided.
4. Gender based retention policies should be introduce

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