



University teachers' burnout as a correlate of their intention to quit in nnamdi azikiwe university, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated university teachers' burnout as a correlate of their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. The study was guided by one research question and one hypothesis was tested. It adopted correlational survey research design. The population of the study consisted 2,609 lecturers (Assistant Lecturers to Professors) in all the sixteen (16) faculties from the three campuses of the institution. From the population, a sample of 210 university lecturers were chosen through multi-stage sampling technique with combinations of probability sampling techniques including simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and systematic sampling. The instruments for data collection were two different questionnaires developed by the researchers which include: University Teachers' Burnout Questionnaire (UTBQ) and University Teachers' Intention to Quit Questionnaire (UTIQQ). The instruments were validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instruments was obtained using crumbach alpha method of reliability with the reliability indices ranging from.89 to.81 for (UTBQ) and (UTIQQ) respectively. The instruments were distributed using direct delivery method (DDM) by the researchers and out of the 210 questionnaires distributed 200 of them were retrieved and used for the study. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the research question as well as the test of null hypothesis. At the end of the analysis results found that: there is a high positive relationship existing between university lecturers' burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between university lecturers' burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. At the end it was recommended that the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Education should look into the welfare of the university lecturers in order to make the job more attractive and discourage the lecturers from quitting their job. It was also recommended that the management of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria should prone down the work load of their lecturers as well as the cumbersome nature of the criteria for their lecturers' advancement in order for the lecturers not to be burnout and the resultant quitting of their job.

Keywords: University, lecturers, teachers, burnout, intention etc

Introduction

University education is one of the major sectors with the responsibility of training and supply of human resources in Nigeria. University teachers are major players in the mandate of the universities to supply the human capital needs of the country. They are also called university lecturers. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the two concepts will be used interchangeably. These lecturers have great responsibilities to educate the students in both learning and character. In doing these, the university teachers use research as one of their tools to equip themselves in order to keep abreast of new knowledge in their various fields as well to solve societal problems. These are in-line with Anyebe's submission in (2014) who opined that university teachers are not only involved in teaching but also in research and are expected to carry out community services. All these make their work to be too demanding and full of expectations. Irrespective of these, university teachers are faced with so many challenges ranging from poor school facilities, poor research incentives, no or poor office accommodations and the likes. Preechawong, Anmanatrakul, Pinit and Koul (2021), assert that the nature of teaching job is such that exposed teachers to various issues such as changing educational policies, students' misbehavior, administrators poor understanding, lack of supports from colleagues as well as poor facilities.

As if what they are going through are not enough, the university lecturers are subjected to the "popular publish or perish" policy of NUC- the Nigerian universities regulatory body. It is no longer a news that in some universities one has to publish up to 40 articles with other numerous criteria before one can be promoted to the rank of Professor. In Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, for example, in addition to other requirements, the management has gone further to introduce defending of at least 3 of one's articles during appraisal for promotion to the ranks of Senior Lecturer and above. The researchers are of the opinion that these numerous responsibilities and expectations from the lecturers can lead to some social or mental issues one of which can be university teachers' burnout.

Teacher burnout is a condition where teacher becomes excessively stressed and tired as a result of excessive work responsibilities and expectations. As opined by Calderon, Villalba, Sariano and Cabanillas (2025) [2] burnout is said to be occupational disorder and is associated with psychological problems such as anxiety and depression which interfere with performance. To Maslach and Jackson cited in Modigan and Kim (2021) burnout is a psychological process that develops as reaction to prolonged work stress. The authors further explained that burnout is comprised of three dimensions which include: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced feeling of personal accomplishment or self-efficacy.

While emotional exhaustion comprises of feeling of being emotionally exhausted because of one's work, depersonalization also called cynicism is when the individual feels impersonal or indifference towards his/her clients or colleagues. In the case of university teachers, the clients are the students, parents and guidance and the lecturer may begin to be indifferent to these clients and coworkers in the office. On the other hand, reduced feeling of personal accomplishment or efficacy has to do with when the lecturer no longer feels he/she is competent enough and successful at work. Regrettably, according to Chang (2009) ^[3] burnout seems to be relatively common among teachers without exception of university teachers. As opined by Halimah, Yuliharsi and Rivai (2023) ^[6], too many responsibilities of university teachers can make teachers feel burnout and this can lead to poor teachers' commitment to their job.

Often times we have heard of some university lecturers not allowing their supervisees to graduate in due time. Such lecturers were accused of not giving enough time and attention required to get their supervisees ready for defence in due times. The researchers are of the opinion that this could be impact of university teachers' burnout, specifically depersonalization aspect of burnout. As opined by Okuoyibo, Obasi and Martins (2023) ^[10] the excessive workload in the midst of poor salaries experience by university teachers can contribute to their emotional exhaustion which is an aspect of burnout. Among the possible impact of university teachers' burnout could be intention to quit their job.

According to Treglown, Zivkov, Zaora and Enrham (2018) teachers' intention to quit is the desire of the teacher to stop working for his/her present organization. The authors went further to assert that intentions are the key to determinant of quitting. Moreover, Knudsen and Roman cited in Madidan and Kim (2021) confirmed that intentions to quit are related to attrition in tertiary institutions. In the area under study, shortly after a lot of resources have been committed in 2019-2020 to recruit lecturers for the various department and faculties of the institution, in the year 2023 and 2024 there were staff audits in the wave of human capital flight otherwise known as brain drain that the school experienced among its staff. These were carried out in order for the management to ascertain who and who was still working with the citadel of learning. These exercises also cost enormous resources to be carried out thereby compounding the effects of university teachers' quitting their job as witnessed by the school in the wave of so many lecturers leaving the system for outside the country. This is evident by the special adviser on public relations and special duties to the Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Prof, Charles O. Esimone who said in Punch newspaper on the 27th November, 2023 that there was massive shortage of lecturers in the institution because of so many university teachers that left UNIZIK for outside the countries. Certainly, the implication is that those lecturers who left the system will have to be replaced. Unfortunately, replacing teachers not only has financial implications but also has resultant implication on the students' progress academically (Knudsen and Roman cited in Madigan and Kim, 2021). The authors further noted that intention to quit strongly correlate quitting from one's organisation.

In the work of Omoniyi (2013) ^[12], it was found that lecturers are exposed to too many stresses with sources ranging from poor research incentives and placing research

output at the forefront of their career progress. Others include poor or no office accommodation, too much workload, peanuts as salaries. Moreover, all these are happening in the face of Academic Staff Union of Universities' (ASUU) demands for university revitalization and improved welfare package for more than 20 years unattended to. Thus, the researchers are of the view that in the face of these challenges bedeviling university lecturers and their wave of quitting their job in Unizik that lecturers' burnout could correlate their intention to quit their job. Moreover, after extensive literature reviewed by the researchers there was no empirical study carried out on university teachers' burnout as a correlate of their intention to quit their job in any university neither was any done in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Therefore, the reason the study investigated university teachers' burnout as a correlate of their intention to quit Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between university teachers' burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Question

What is the relationship between university teachers' burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between university teachers' burnout and their intention to quit Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria.

Method

Research Design

The study adopted correlational survey research design. According to Nworgu cited in Emengini (2021) a correlational study is one which seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. Therefore, in this study the design was used to clarify through the use of correlational coefficients if university teachers' burnout predicts their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra state, Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe University is also known as UNIZIK and is one of the 43 federal universities in Nigeria. The school is located in three campuses which are: Awka campus, situated in the capital city of Anambra State. This is followed by Nnewi campus, situated in a town called Nnewi popularly known as Japan of Africa and then the Agulu campus, all-in South-Eastern Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 2,609 lecturers (Assistant Lecturers- Professors) in all the sixteen (16) faculties from the three campuses of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State. This population of the study was gotten from the statistical unit of personnel department (2024) ^[8], Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample of the study comprised 210 university teachers chosen through multi-stage sampling technique with the combination of probability sampling techniques including simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and systematic sampling. At first, the researchers used simple random sampling to select two campuses from the three campuses of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, including Awka and Nnewi campuses. Then the researchers went further to select 8 faculties from the two campuses i.e. 2 faculties of Medicine and Health Sciences and Technology from Nnewi campus and 6 faculties from Awka campus including faculties of Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Management Sciences and Social Sciences using stratified random sampling with 50 percent of the faculties in the campuses selected.

At the third stage, the various departments in these faculties were randomly stratified with 50 percent of the departments in the faculties selected for the study. The departments under their faculties include: faculty of Arts: departments of English language & literature, History & International Relations, Philosophy, Music and Theatre Arts. In faculty of Education, department of Adult and Continue education 2, Early Childhood and Primary Education 3, Educational Foundations 10, Educational Management and policy 14, Guidance and Counseling 4, were selected While in Engineering faculty, Agric & Bioscience 2, Chemical Engineering 6, Civil Engineering 3, Electrical Engineering 5 and Industrial Production Engineering 6 lecturers were selected respectively. Departments of Architecture 6, Buildings 3, Estate Management 4, Quantity Surveying 2 and Geomatic and Surveying 3 were selected from the faculty of Environmental Sciences respectively. In Management Sciences, Departments of Accountancy 14, Business Administration 10, Marketing 4 and Public Administration 7 lecturers were selected respectively; while in Faculty of Social Sciences departments of Economics 10, Mass Communication 10 and Sociology and Anthropology 8 lecturers were respectively chosen. In Faculty of Health Science and Technology, the researchers selected departments of Medical Laboratory 6, Medical Rehabilitation 5 and Nursing Sciences 2 lecturers respectively; While in Faculty of Medicine, in the departments of Community Medicine 3, Internal Medicine 4, Obstetric and Gynecology 5, Pediatrics 4 and Surgery 6 lecturers were selected respectively. That brings it to the total of 210 lecturers selected for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instruments for data collection were two different questionnaires which include: University Teachers’ Burnout Questionnaire (UTBQ) and University Teachers’ Intention to Quit Questionnaire (UTIQQ). The two instruments have two sections each which are section A and B. Section A of University Teachers’ Burnout Questionnaire solicited for personal information of the respondents like the rank of the lecturer; while section B of the same instrument has 10 items measuring University teachers’ burnout. In same vein, section A of University Teachers’ Intention to Quit Questionnaire collected data on lecturers’ personal information; while section B of the same instrument has 10 question items measuring university teachers’ intention to quit. The two instruments were rated on four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validation of the Instruments

The instruments were validated by three experts from faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Some observations and corrections were made in the initial draft of the instruments and the corrections were affected for the final draft of the questionnaires.

Reliability of the Instruments

The reliability of the instruments was carried out using Crombach alpha method of reliability. In doing that, the researchers took fifty (50) copies of the instruments each to a federal university in South Eastern Nigeria, University of Nigeria Nsuka (UNN) precisely. The questionnaires were distributed to lecturers in the university and were later collected back by the researchers. Collected and analyzed data during this process showed that the University Teachers’ Burnout Questionnaire yielded reliability coefficient of .87 while the University Teachers’ Intention to Quit Questionnaire yielded reliability coefficient of .81. These were indications that the reliability coefficient of the two instruments were high enough. Suwannoppharat and Kaewa-ardcited in Omenyi and Emengini (2021) [11] noted that reliability coefficients of .69 and above are acceptable for any research study. Therefore, the reliability coefficients of the two instruments were considered satisfactory for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The data for the study were collected using Direct Delivery Method (DDM) of data collection. In doing this, the researchers distributed the instruments to the respondents and waited for them for some hours and collected them back from the respondents. The one’s that were not collected that same day were later collected on appointment with the respondents. At the end, out of 210 questionnaires distributed 200 of them were returned and used for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient to analyse the data collected for the study. Thus, both research question and hypothesis were answered and tested respectively with Pearson Product Moment Correlational Coefficient. Therefore, the interpretation of correlational coefficient by Onunkwo as cited in Emengini, Omenyi and Nwankwo (2020) was adopted for the study. They asserted that:

- 0.8 to 1.0 = very high positive relationship
- 0.6 to 0.8 = high positive relationship
- 0.4 to 0.6 = average relationship
- 0.2 to 0.4 = low relationship
- 0.0 to 0.2 = very low or no relationship

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Results

Table 1: Pearson r on the Correlation between University Teachers’ Burnout and their Intention to Quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Source of Variation	n	r	Remark
Burnout Intention to Quit	200	.74	High Positive Relationship

Table 1 shows that there is a high positive relationship existing between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. This is evident by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r , which is .74

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Test of Significance of Pearson correlation between University Teachers’ Burnout and their Intention to Quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Source of Variation	n	r	p-value	Remark
Burnout Intention to Quit	200	.74	.00	Significant

Analysis on Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The calculated r (.74) had P .value <0.05 . The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion

This study found that there is a high positive relationship between university lecturers’ burnout and their intention to quit Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Thus, it was found that there is a significant relationship between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit their Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. These findings corroborate that of Danaee and Rifin (2022) and Preechwong *et al.*, (2021) [13] and Faloye, Abasilim and Agboola (2014) [5] who found that there was positive and significant relationship between burnout and intention to quit among researchers in medical organization in Malaysia, among vocational education teachers in Thailand and police officers in Ondo State, respectively. Even though the research methods and respondents employed by these researchers whose works corroborate the present study’s finding are not same, there exists corroboration in their findings. The reason for that could not be far from the fact that once a staff is chronically stressed from his or her job as a result of too many job demands as well as expectations under poor welfare, to the extent that the employee now become emotionally exhausted, depersonalized in his work and begins to question his/her competence in the job the next thing will be to start thinking of ways to exit the frustration by leaving for better job with better job demands and job environment.

Conclusion

Based on the interpretation of the analysis done for the study and discussion of the results, it is concluded that the relationship between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit is positive and high. It was also concluded that there is a significant relationship between university teachers’ burnout and their intention to quit their university.

Recommendations

At the end the following recommendation were made by the researchers

1. The federal government through the federal ministry of Education should look into the welfare of the university lecturers in order to make the job more attractive and

- discourage the lecturers from quitting their job for better ones abroad.
2. Also, the management of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria should prone down the work load of their lecturers as well as cumbersome nature of the criteria for their lecturers’ advancement in order for the lecturers not to be burnout and the resultant quitting from the institution.

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