



An Assessment of the Staff Strength of the University for Development Studies in the Light of the Standard Recommended by the National Council for Tertiary Education for Teaching Staff in Ghana's Public Universities

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the staff strength of the University for Development Studies (UDS) in the light of the standard recommended by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) for staffing in Ghana's public universities, with an emphasis on Teaching Staff (TS). The study uses the University's 2020/2021 Academic Year payroll data, which was analyzed with Microsoft Excel 2016 for Windows. The study found that, apart from the Lecturer rank that had a staff surplus of 65, the rest of the ranks consisting of Professor, Associate Professor and Senior Lecturer ranks did not meet the recommended standard by NCTE. The study also revealed that the number of female TS was much lower than that of their male counterparts for all ranks. The paper recommends that University Management should encourage all TS to publish more articles in reputable journals along with community service and teaching; in order to facilitate their promotion to higher ranks. The University should target candidates with final degrees for further recruitment in order to reduce the long waiting period required for staff with a master's degree to rise to higher ranks.

Keywords: Higher Education, Teaching Staff, Public Universities, NCTE, UDS

INTRODUCTION

The nature of universities as Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) has changed considerably over the years [1-2] and these changes include funding regimes, educational technologies, greater diversity of students and their expectations as well as academic programmes diversity to keep pace with industrial needs [3-4]. Universities have also experienced significant growth in student numbers with concomitant demand for academic staff [5]. Despite the growth in the number of students, governments in many countries consider the importance of quality in university education and consequently have established national quality assurance agencies and boards [6-8, 3]. These boards and agencies are expected to ensure that the education offered by institutions of higher education meets the current and future expectations of students and those of employers and or industries [9]. and for this to happen, the staff of IHL

must provide quality service to students. Quality service provision in IHL has always been an issue of importance to educators, researchers and governments.

Many governments, including that of Ghana, are concerned about the standard of education at all levels [10]. In Ghana, the Government has established the National Accreditation Board (NAB), following the passage of the Provisional National Defense Council Law 317, 1993 (PNDC Law 317, 1993) as amended into NAB Act 744, 2007 to ensure and maintain the quality of education at the tertiary level comparable to others anywhere in the world. Apart from NAB, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) was established with primary responsibility for ensuring the relevance of academic programmes to national development and the labour market [11]. This is because government, as a major stakeholder in education, is concerned with churning out graduates who meet the needs of industry and are capable of transforming the economy. The employability of graduates is therefore a major concern not only for the government but also for industry [12-13]. Universities are, therefore, expected to strive for the employability of graduates from their institutions through quality in university education [14-15]. The quality of the service provided to students is determined by the quantity and quality of the staff of an institution. The quality of graduates produced by a university is determined by the quality of services both curricular and co-curricular that are provided to the graduates when they are being trained.

Thus, compliance with the standard on TS by IHL is legitimate and universities should strive to achieve this standard, if not for anything but, for institutional competitiveness. It is in line with this notion that this study was conducted. The overall objective of the study is to assess the extent to which the UDS has met the standards recommended by the NCTE for TS. It is envisaged that the outcome of this study could probably lead to institutional transformation to make the University competitive in the global economy. Therefore, the study assessed the staff strength of UDS vis-à-vis the NCTE Standard for TS.

LITERATURE REVIEW

University staff can be classified as TS and Non-Teaching Staff [16]. TS in universities worldwide generally play a tripartite role in teaching, research and community outreach. These roles are accomplished through the recruitment, training and retention of quality TS at the University coupled with other factors such as university administration, student quality, infrastructure, and financial resources just to mention but a few [17]. The quality of a tertiary institution or IHL is said to be directly proportional to the quality of its TS. This is because TS nurture the production of graduates, products from research and community service [18].

There is also a need for adequate TS to match with the growing number of students in higher education institutions. The caliber of TS is important to ensure quality educational service through imparting knowledge to students [19]. This implies that TS should meet the aspirations and expertise of their respective departments alongside national expectations while balancing the demands of teaching, research and other administrative responsibilities [20].

A TS may be defined as an employee in an educational institution who officially provides guidance to others in the attainment of knowledge, skills and abilities that are required for the transformation and future development of an individual and society as a whole. A TS serves as a catalyst to facilitate the acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills while fostering

acceptable social attitudes into the learners for the immediate and future development of any society [21]. In this sense, TS should be responsible for the quality of teaching as opposed to group responsibility [22]. This is based on the fact that qualified academics can foster successful and quality teaching in IHL. It is imperative that the number of TS in IHL meets the minimum standard to impart knowledge required by learners [23]. In other words, the number of TS in IHL should meet the established standards prescribed by the NAB and NCTE in the case of Ghanaian IHL context. This assertion is exemplified by the guidelines for National External Quality Assurance Systems of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) which in part stated that “Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so” [24 p.343, 3 p.76].

There is growing concern about the quality of TS exemplified by empirical research that TS are critical to the learning of students. To guarantee and safeguard the quality of tuition offered to students, TS should have some insight in their area of teaching. Therefore, there is a strong justification for national quality assurance agencies to demand accountability from IHL on the quality of their TS [25].

The function of the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), among others, is to recommend national standards as well as norms such as setting benchmarks and norms on staffing, financial costs, accommodation and utilization of time for the endorsement or approval of the Minister in charge of the Ministry of Education and to see to it that any approved national standards and norms by the institutions are implemented [12].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Setting, Population and sampling

The study was conducted at the UDS which is located at Tamale and Nyankpala in the Northern Region. The University has a pro-poor focus and its teaching methodology is a problem-based approach. The University currently runs programmes which consist of science, humanities and business. Data for the study were obtained from the Payroll Section of the University's Finance Directorate during the 2020/2021 Academic Year on August 1, 2021. The decision of the researchers to use the payroll data was as a result of the accuracy and up-to-date records maintained by the Payroll Section. The aspects of the payroll list that were considered for the analysis were limited to the names of staff, staff identification numbers, job titles, dates of appointment and dates of birth. The total number of the University's staff at the time of the data collection on August 1, 2021 was 1,692.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Microsoft Excel 2016 for Windows and presented in both tabular and pictorial forms. The presentation was done in the order of Staff by Category, TS as well as general staff strength in the light of NCTE standards. In presenting the number of staff by category, staff were divided into Senior Member, Senior Staff and Junior Staff irrespective of whether they were teaching or non-teaching. On TS, the paper focuses mainly on staff rank, age distribution and gender; because these variables will establish comparison between the University's staff strength and the NCTE recommended standard.

The analysis of TS by rank was based on the following categorization: Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers to determine the number under each category. The data analysis also considered the age distribution of TS according to the following age ranges: below 30 years, 30 - 40 years, 41 - 50 years, 51 - 60 years and above 60 years. The paper also presented the gender distribution of the TS.

Finally, the paper compared the current number of TS with the NCTE standard on staffing. The NCTE standard (f) on a particular TS rank (e) of a given institution is defined as a given percentage multiplied by the total number of TS of the institution. The NCTE recommended standards for computing for Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers are 10%, 15%, 35% and 40% respectively of the total number of the TS of the University. In this paper, this standard was employed for comparing UDS staff strength with the NCTE standard on staffing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

General Overview of Staff Profile of the University

The total number of employees of the University was 1,692 at the time of the study and consisted of three broad categories of staff, namely Senior Members (674), Senior Staff (463) and Junior Staff (555). Many (40%) of the staff were Senior Members followed by Junior Staff (33%) and Senior Staff (27%) as presented in Figure 1.

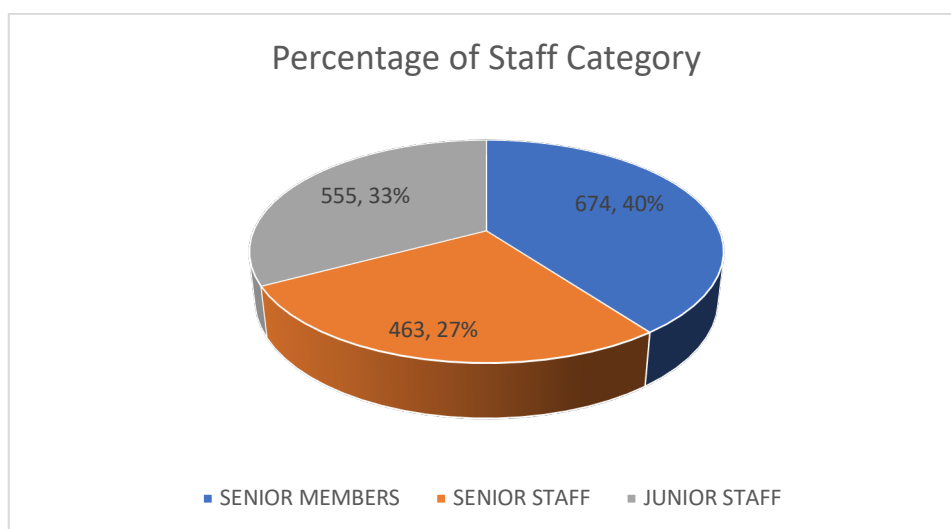


Figure 1: Percentage of Staff Category
Source: Field Survey, 2021

Teaching staff by Rank

Of the total number (674) of senior members of the University, 575 were TS constituting 85%. Lecturers constituted the majority (38%) of the TS, whilst the Senior Lecturers, the Assistant Lecturers and the Associate Professors together constituted 60%. Two per cent of the TS were in the Professor category as illustrated in figure 2.

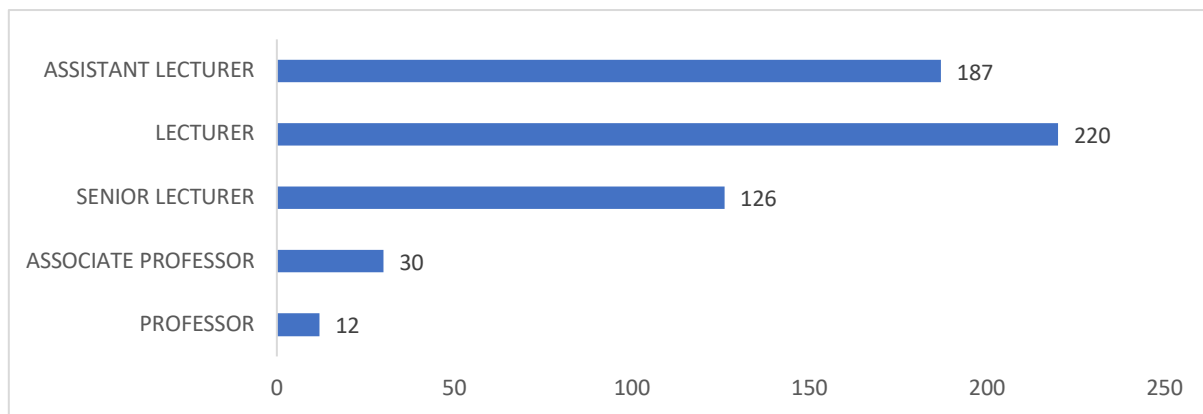


Figure 2: Number of Teaching Staff by Rank
Source: Field Survey, 2021

Age Distribution of Teaching Staff

Most (39.3%) of the TS were in the age range of 41-50 years, followed by 30-40 years (39.2%), 51-60 years (16.5%) and above 60 years (4.0%). Only 1% of them were under 30 years of age. This implies that, the University could have the majority (78.5%) of its TS who aged between 30 and 50 years in active service for the next 10 to 30 years. The aged academics (51-60 years) who represent 16.5% of the total number of TS formed the largest number of professors in the University. Given their role as key mentors of the University, it can be inferred from the data that there is a deficit in the number of mentors to provide academic leadership and counselling to the young academics.

Number of Teaching Staff by Gender

The data from Table 1 indicate that the percentage (83) of men far exceeds (17%) that of women. Of the total number of 12 Professors and 30 Associate Professors, only one is female. Similarly, the number of female staff at all levels of the TS is far from adequate. This undesirable trend appears to be a smack in the face of gender equity and equality. This calls for further enquiries to establish reasons for this trend.

Table 1: Number of Teaching Staff by Gender

GENDER	RANK/STATUS					
	Professor	Associate Professor	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	Assistant Lecturer	Grand Total
Male	11	30	111	179	147	478
Female	1	0	15	41	40	97
Total	12(2%)	30(5%)	126 (22%)	220 (38%)	187 (33%)	575 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Staff Strength in the Light of the NCTE Norms/Standards

Teaching Staff Pyramid

The operations of UDS, like any other tertiary institution in Ghana, are governed by the regulatory standards set by the NCTE. The regulatory standards are part of the measures taken to moderate the activities of tertiary institutions to ensure quality teaching and learning. One of the important regulatory measures of the NCTE is the recommended percentage of the

various categories of staff over the total number of staff of tertiary institutions in Ghana. It is against this background that the paper examined UDS staffing in the light of the NCTE recommended staffing standard.

It is worthy of mention that the NCTE standard on staffing does not include the Assistant Lecturer rank in its computation and ipsofacto, the paper took out the Assistant Lecturer rank, which numbered 187, from the subsequent analysis bringing the total number of TS to 388.

It is clear from Table 3 that the number of Professors in the University is 12. This contrasts with 39 based on the NCTE recommended 10% of the total number of TS (388) resulting in a deficit of 27. The number of Associate Professors is 30 instead of 58 (15% of 388) as prescribed by the NCTE, which also resulted in a deficit of 28. The Senior Lecturer rank also fell short of 10. The study's finding, however, indicates that only the Lecturer's rank has a surplus of 65 staff.

Table 3: NCTE Standard on Staffing Compared with UDS Staff Strength

Rank of Staff	Staff Pyramid		Staffing		
	UDS Actual	NCTE Standard	At Post	Required	Difference
	e	f	i=e	j=f	k=f-i
Professor	12	39	12	39	27
Associate Professor	30	58	30	58	28
Senior Lecturer	126	136	126	136	10
Lecturer	220	155	220	155	(65)
Total	388	388	388	388	-

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study shows that Senior Members of the University make up the majority of staff whilst Senior Staff make up the least. With respect to the TS rank, only the Lecturers' rank outstripped the NCTE required standard, the rest of the ranks fell below the recommended standard. Most of the TS are in the age range of 40-41 years. The number of female TS was much lower than that of their male counterparts for all the ranks.

For the University to achieve its objective of becoming one of the highly-rated public tertiary institutions in the country and to function in accordance with the national standards, the paper recommends that the University should make conscious efforts to incorporate gender mainstreaming in the recruitment process to address the gender imbalance in the TS category. The University should encourage TS, especially those in the Lecturer rank, to vigorously embark on publishing articles and other academic papers in reputable journals alongside community service and teaching since the combination of these requirements are prerequisites for promotion to the higher ranks. Subsequent recruitment of staff should, at least, target candidates with terminal degrees to cut down the usual long waiting period required for staff with master's degrees to ascend to higher ranks.

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