

Welfare Policy of Professors and Academic Excellence for National Development in Nigerian Universities: Cost Implication Analysis

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Abstract

This paper is to explore the relationship between welfare of professors and academic excellence in Nigerian universities for national development with emphasis on cost implications. A survey design was adopted for this study. Pearson Correlation was used in analyzing the collected data to test whether or not there is any relationship between one set of variable and another. Findings reveal that lack of welfare for professors have a significant and negative influence on academic excellence and cost management in Nigerian universities. This paper recommends that universities should have a clear and standing policy on welfare of professors and other academic staff so as to enhance academic excellence and also save cost in running the university.

Keywords: Welfare Policy, Nigerian Universities, Professors, Cost Implication

1. Introduction

Institutions of higher learning globally are striving towards achieving academic excellence especially in research, teaching and service to the society. This is because; academic excellence provides solutions to societal problems such as unemployment, poverty and insecurity via quality graduates and research output. This can be achieved if these institutions produce graduates with requisite skills to create jobs rather than seek for jobs, render quality services and provide solutions to the complex challenges in today's changing world through research.

As critical as academic excellence is, it cannot be achieved if the welfare of staff is not given requisite attention. To achieve academic excellence in universities, academic staff who are involved in research, teaching especially professors need to be motivated through good welfare packages. This is because once the welfare of the academic staff is given the required attention; academic programmes are not truncated by series of strikes as seen in developing countries like Nigeria. Abdullahi and Babagana (2015) argued that a motivated worker is easy to spot by his or her agility, dedication, enthusiasm, focus, zeal, general performance in contributing to the achievement of organizational objectives and goals.

However, the issue of welfare of academic staff is always a concern in Nigerian universities. This is evidenced by the series of industrial actions and deaths of academics in the country which mostly borders on welfare and decent work environment. The consequences of this includes: truncated academic calendars, dampened staff morals, de-emphasized academic excellence and sets the pace for turning out graduates that are half-baked which is tantamount to national development. This situation would be averted if

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appropriate welfare policies are in place. The rise in employee turnover in recent times in many Nigerian universities is because of the quest for better welfare.

The argument for the present condition of academic staff as advanced by their employers is that, the university is capital intensive to run. Be that as it may, the applicable financial wisdom is that universities should rather train and maintain their academics since the long term benefits of training and maintaining a Professor outweighs the cost. To produce one professor, it takes an average of between 10 to 18 years of rigorous research and academic training (qualifications) before an academic qualifies as a university professor.

The work of professors in the university is critical to knowledge creation through research. The result of quality academic research work by professors and other academics over the years has been the catalyst of civilization and national development. This is because, they have attained some level of value which is not easily attainable but is needed by the university and society. Cost benefit analysis needs to be employed in packaging welfare policies aimed at given them the desired comfort with a view to draw maximally from their wealth of experience for the benefit of the university and the society at large, encourage young academics to desire to grow to attain such ranks, rather than allowing them to be moving from one university to another in search of greener pastures.

Unfortunately, due to painstaking efforts required to attain this rank, some Professors no longer remain healthy to profess adequately due to unfavourable and substandard work environment. Strategic management requires that their employers should put in place good welfare policies to restore their health to enable them profess adequately. This is usually not the case. Most of these Professors are left to themselves resulting to death and others leaving the university that trained them to another for better welfare packages. Whatever happened, it may cost the university that failed to effectively take care of its professors more to recruits and train a new one or get the service of another one especially during accreditation exercise.

It is imperative therefore, to look at welfare policy in terms of medical care, decent office and house accommodation, vacation and the cost implication of the absence of these policies on academic excellence in the long run in the university system. This paper examines the ugly trend of increased death of professors across Nigerian universities with a view to understanding whether there is a workable policy on welfare of professors with due regard to the cost implication and resultant effect that the absence of it will have on the university system and development in general. What then is the policy in place in Nigerian universities with regard to medical welfare, accommodation and vacation of professors?

Research Objectives

The general objective of this work is to emphasize academic excellence achievable via workable welfare policy of professors.

The specific objectives which are:

1. To find out whether provision of proper medical attention for a professor will contribute to academic excellence in Nigerian universities.
2. Whether decent house and office accommodation for a professor will give him the desired enablement to do his work and add value to the university.

3. Whether vacation provides the necessary rest that a professor deserves which will refresh him to stay healthy and add more value to the university.
4. To ascertain if an analysis of the cost implication of each university policy will improve cost management in the university that dovetail to academic excellence.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does policy on medical care of professors help improve academic excellence?
2. How does decent house and office accommodation for a professor affect his performance viz a viz academic excellence?
3. To what extent does vacation provide rest for a professor which contributes to academic excellence?
4. To what extent does proper cost management translate or contributes to academic excellence?

Research Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between health care policy and academic excellence
2. There is no significant relationship between decent office and house accommodation and academic excellence.
3. There is no significant relationship between vacation policy and academic excellence.
4. There is no significant relationship between policy cost implication analysis and academic excellence.

2. Review of Related Literature

Conceptual clarification, theoretical framework and empirical studies are discussed in this section.

2.1 Conceptual Clarifications

This section discusses the concepts of academic excellence, welfare policy and total quality management.

2.1.1 Academic Excellence

Academic excellence can be looked at from different perspectives. From the perspective of the student, it may mean the demonstration of capability to perform, achieve or excel in scholastic activities. It may also mean scoring high grades and superior performance. The hallmark of academic excellence is knowledge creation aimed at problem solving which brings transformation, growth and development.

To Nwakanma (2018), excellence is working with the best orientation and benchmarking oneself above average. This implies that, a university that has porous policies and choices can not avail its staff and students with the best orientation for the benefit of society. Nwakanma (2018), views academic excellence as the quest for and attainment of that unique ability to solving evolving complex problems of society at all times. Academic excellence is therefore the ability to be well equipped devoid of avoidable distractions in the journey to satisfying needs of society. Though, excellence is not a skill, it's an attitude. Academic excellence is possible only in a conducive environment that instils excellence attitude in people.

2.1.2 Welfare Policy

In a broader perspective, the term welfare refers to an act of seeking physical, mental, moral and emotional well-being of an individual. The Committee on Labour Welfare (1969) as cited by Rao, Patro, and Raghunath (2015) view welfare as facilities and amenities such as adequate canteens, rest and recreation facilities, sanitary and medical facilities, arrangements for travel to and from and for accommodation of workers employed at a distance from their homes, and such other services, amenities and facilities including social security measures as contribute to conditions under which workers are employed.

The extramural welfare amenities are provided outside the establishment such as maternity benefit, social insurance measures, house accommodation, sports and cultural activities, library or reading room, leave travel facilities, workers co-operatives including consumers co-operative stores, co-operative credit societies, programmes for the welfare of women, youth and children and transport facilities. Arising from the above, employee welfare can be seen as the combination of intramural and extramural facilities provided by employers to raise the morale of employees, reduce risk and insecurity, eliminate turnover and absenteeism, and increase production and productivity. Welfare policy in this context refers to strategies (such as good medical care, housing and office accommodation and vacation for professors) put in place by university administrators to enhance academic excellence.

2.1.3 Total Quality Management

Total quality management consists of organization-wide efforts to install and make permanent a climate where employees continuously improve their ability to provide on demand products and services that users will find of particular value. TQM is a structured approach to overall management. The focus of the process is to improve the quality of organizations outputs through continual improvement of internal practices.

University graduates are the output of the university system. Teaching and research by academics enhance the quality of these products in particular and national development in general. The quality of the products and services is a function of the continual improvement of the university's internal practices.

Giving good attention to cost implications is a university's internal practice that ought to be continuously improved. For example, the cost of getting a new customer is five times higher than the cost of maintaining an old customer. This is the same in the situation of professors. When you lose a professor, the vacuum created becomes very difficult to fill in record time thereby increasing the cost of his absence.

Total quality management emphasizes 'getting it right first time' because the cost of doing it all over again may in most cases be more than you would have gotten it right first time. This is a position that should be embraced by organizations wherever operational efficiency is of essence. It has far-reaching implications for the management of human resources. It emphasizes self-control, autonomy, and creativity among employees and calls for greater active cooperation rather than just compliance.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This paper centres on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's Two-Factor and

cost multiplier effect theory. These theories are discussed here in relation to professors' welfare and academic excellence.

2.2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The hierarchy of needs theory was propounded by a psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943. The crux of the theory is that individuals' most basic needs must be met before they become motivated to achieve higher level needs. The hierarchy is made up of five (5) levels viz; physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self actualisation needs. According to Maslow, to get the most (increase productivity) out of your team, you should also make sure you support them in other aspects of their lives outside work. Perhaps you could offer vacation to employees to focus on their families, provide housing accommodations for them and make sure they are paid fairly to help them feel financially stable. This will boost their morale leading their good health, productivity and academic excellence.

2.2.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

This theory otherwise known as dual-factor theory or motivation-hygiene theory was developed by a psychologist Frederick Herzberg in the 1950s. According to Herzberg, motivation and hygiene factors are the only factors that influence employee. Motivation factors are those factors that lead to satisfaction and motivate employee to work harder. Examples include enjoying your work, feeling recognised and career progression while hygiene factors are factors that can lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation if they are absent. Examples include salary, company policies, benefits, relationships with managers and co-workers.

To help motivate your employees, make sure they feel appreciated and supported. Give plenty of feedback and make sure your employees understand how they can grow and progress through the company. To prevent job dissatisfaction, make sure that your employees feel that they are treated right by offering them the best possible working conditions and fair pay.

2.2.3 Cost Multiplier Effects Theory

John Maynard Keynes propounded this theory in 1936. According to the theory, small changes in investment or government spending can create a multiplier effect in total output. In economics, a cost multiplier is the factor by which gains in total output are greater than the change in spending that caused it. It is usually used in reference to the relationship between investment and total national income. John Maynard Keynes believed that any injection of government spending creates a proportional increase in overall income for the population, since the extra spending will have a multiplier effect on the economy.

He developed an equation which was called the mathematics of the multiplier effect which describes the relationship between income (Y), consumption (C) and investment (I): $Y = C + I$. For any level of income, people spend a fraction and save/invest the remainder.

The theory is relevant to the performance of professors because, it explains that when investment (welfare) increases, there is greater increase in returns/income (academic

excellence). This means that, when universities implement welfare policies such as good medical care, housing and office accommodation and vacation for professors, they are motivated to put in their best for greater productivity in terms of academic excellence. Lack of policy for adequate investment in professors will not only discourage them but will also dampen the morale of younger academics which will in turn multiply the cost of university management in diverse ways.

2.3 Empirical studies

In this section, some previous studies that relates to current studies are reviewed below.

Akinfolarin and Ehinola (2014) investigated the motivation and effective performance of academic staff in higher education using descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises of all lecturers and heads of various departments in Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State. The sample for the study was selected from four (4) faculties. The total number of fifty (50) lecturers were selected. Data used for the study were collected through questionnaire measuring it item on a four (4) point likert-type-rating scale and properly analyzed using frequency count and simple percentages. The study revealed that encouragement for creativity and innovation, appreciation on genuine effort, award with impressive titles and acknowledge on achievement enhances the performance of university lecturers.

Masum, Azad and Beh (2015) investigated influential factors that contribute to the enhancement or reduction of academics' job satisfaction among private universities in Bangladesh with special reference to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Variables such as demographic characters, the work itself, pay, work responsibilities, variety of tasks, promotional opportunities, relationship with co-workers and others. The study sampled academic staffs only. Questionnaires and interviews were employed to collect data. The descriptive statistics, Pearson product moment correlation, multiple regression, and factor analysis were used to analyse the data. The results reveal that compensation package, supervisory support, job security, training and development opportunities and policies are positively associated with the academics job satisfaction. This study is related to the present study as it shows how working condition affect job satisfaction.

Abdullahi and Babagana (2015) examined the effects of staff remuneration on the performance of Ramat Polytechnic Maiduguri students from 1995 to 2011 in Borno state. The sample of 45 respondents was drawn from the five schools within the polytechnic. The data collected from the total of 45 respondents through questionnaires were analysed using Pearson's Product Moment correlation and regression analysis. Findings of the study reveal that there is a significant positive relationship between staff remuneration and performance of students.

Jacob and Idah (2014) investigates why there is shortage of academic staff and the failure of universities to retain quality academic staff to continue to be crucial to the changing prospects and potentials of knowledge formation and learning. The survey involved 80 academic staff lecturing at the selected institutions. Data collected from the sampled respondents were analysed using frequency tables and percentages. The study result revealed that job satisfaction, salary, promotion, and leadership are important factors among the academics who took part in this study. Academic staff felt that

salaries, academic promotion and development were the main aspects and with regard to these factors, the respondents felt that their expectations were not met. While academic staff mobility and career progression were the highest priority amongst teaching and research staff, policies and regulations supporting promotions were not clear in the participating universities.

Jian, Mei, Tee, Rahman, and Wei (2012) study seeks to determine the effect of training on performance of academic staffs in selected private higher learning institutions. The variables used in the study include quality performance, loyalty, rewards, attitude, and satisfaction of employees after training. Questionnaires were used to collect data needed for the study from 15 selected colleges and institutions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. The study result shows that academic staff's performance, loyalty, job satisfaction and motivation is associated with training and it affects their work.

Mateko and Nirmala (2017) examined the factors affecting job satisfaction of academic employees, with specific reference to the National University of Lesotho (NUL). Specifically their study seeks to investigate the external factors influencing job satisfaction of academic staff; the internal factors influencing academics' job satisfaction; and to identify strategies that promote job satisfaction among academics. The study sampled 374 academic staff, which comprised of 162 females and 212 males, employed in seven faculties. A five point Likert scale and interviews were used to collect data needed for the study. Chi-square tests were used to analyse data. Findings show salaries as a factor influencing job satisfaction.

3. Methodology

This study used a survey research design. The sample of this study consists of professors and university registrars randomly selected across disciplines from Nigerian universities. The choice of professors was that they have stayed in the university enough to be able to access the welfare policies captured in this study and whether they are satisfied with their university's policy concerning those variables. The Registrars were included because as custodians and administrators of the university laws and policies they will provide effective information on welfare policies.

Data was collected from the sampled respondent using five point likert scale questionnaire consisting of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with assigned numerical values of 5, 4, 3, 2, & 1 respectively to capture the responses. The total sample of 185 was used, comprising ten Registrars, fourteen Deputy Registrars, one hundred and twenty serving professors, forty one professors who retired between one to three years ago. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient, a parametric statistic which tests the degree of correlation or association between variables was used to analyze the collected data. Pearson Correlation Co-efficient (r) was employed in analyzing and interpreting responses connected with the main variables of the hypotheses. Pearson Correlation was used to test whether or not there is any relationship between one set of variable and another. By statistical definition, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient" is given by the formulae".

$$r = \frac{n\sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2) \{n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Where:

r	=	correlation coefficient
x	=	independent variable
y	=	dependent variable
n	=	number of observed data
\sum	=	summation

The interpretation of the result of r is that when $r = 0$, there is no correlation between the variables tested. When $r = 0$ or < 0.5 , there is weak correlation the variables and when $r \geq 0.5$ then there is a strong correlation between the variables. However, if r is negative (-) the variables are inversely related and if positive (+) the variables are directly related.

4. Results and Discussions

This section provides the relevant data with its analysis which gave the basis for validating or rejecting the null hypotheses. Out of the issued questionnaires, only one hundred and seventy were returned representing 92% of the administered questionnaires.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1.1 Category of Respondents

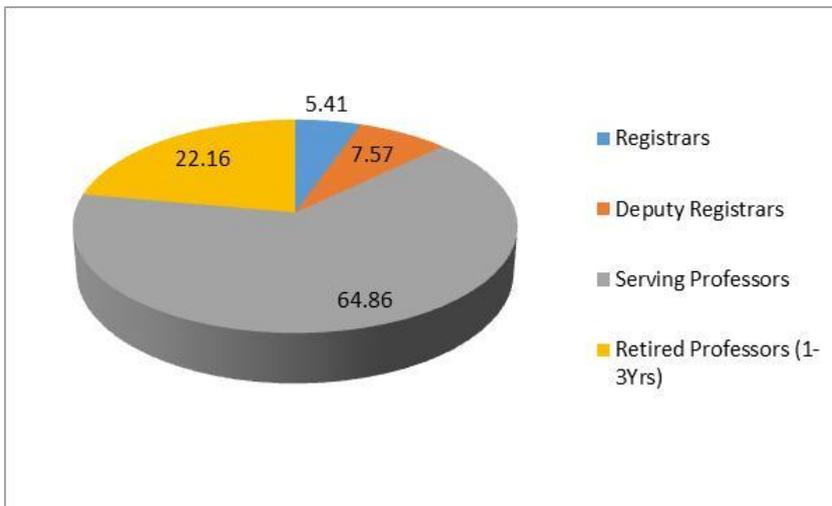


Figure 1: A Pie chart showing the category of respondents

The chart above shows that, 5.41 percent of the respondents are Registrars, 7.57 percent are Deputy Registrars, 22.16 percent are retired professors while 64.86 percent are serving professors. It can be deduced from the chart that, 87 percent (64.86 plus 22.16) of the respondents were professors. This is a proof that the respondents are qualified in all ramifications to give a valid opinion about the subject matter.

4.1.2 Hypotheses Testing

The null hypotheses formulated in section one will be tested in this section as seen below.

Hypothesis 1

1. **H₀**: There is no significant relationship between health care policy and academic excellence.

Decision rule: When r is greater than ± 0.499 this suggests a strong relationship between the variables correlated therefore we reject the null hypothesis (H_0).

The data used for testing this hypothesis were extracted from the responses to question 14 of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Analysis of responses with respect to health care policy and academic excellence.

	X	Y	Xy	x ²	y ²
Strongly agree	5	64	320	25	4096
Agree	4	87	348	16	7569
Undecided	3	14	42	9	196
Disagree	2	5	10	4	25
Σ	15	170	720	55	11,886

$$r = \frac{4(720) - 15(170)}{\sqrt{\{(4 \times 55) - (15)^2\} \{4 \times 11,886 - (170)^2\}}}$$

$$r = 0.953$$

Decision: since r is 0.9318 and it is greater than 0.5 there is a strong relationship. However, to further justify this result we conduct a test of significance as follows using:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{T \text{ calculated}} &= r\sqrt{n-2}/1-(r)^2 \\ \mathbf{T \text{ cal}} &= 0.9318\sqrt{4-2}/1-(0.9318)^2 \\ &= 4.3378 \end{aligned}$$

Decision: Since the t calculated of 4.3378 is greater than the t tabulated of 2.32 at 95% significant level where degree of freedom is 3. Therefore, we simply reject H_0 and conclude that there is a significant relationship between health care policy and academic excellence.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between decent office and house accommodation and academic excellence.

The data used for testing this hypothesis were extracted from the responses to question 15 of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Analysis of responses with respect to decent office and house accommodation and academic excellence.

	X	Y	Xy	x ²	y ²
Strongly agree	5	14	70	25	196
Agree	4	2	8	16	4
Undecided	3	70	210	9	4900
Disagree	2	54	108	4	2916
Strong disagree	1	30	30	1	900
Σ	15	170	426	55	8916

$$r = \frac{5(426) - 15(170)}{\sqrt{\{(5 \times 55) - (15)^2\} \{5 \times 8916 - (170)^2\}}}$$

$$r = 0.576$$

Decision: since r is 0.579 and it is greater than 0.5 there is a strong relationship. However, to further justify this result we conduct a test of significance as follows using:

$$T \text{ calculated} = r\sqrt{n-2}/1-(r)^2$$

$$T \text{ cal} = 0.5068\sqrt{5-2}/1-(0.5068)^2$$

$$= 2.6186$$

Decision: Since the t calculated of 2.6186 is greater than the t tabulated of 1.32 at 95% significant level where degree of freedom is 3. Therefore, we simply reject H₀ and accept H₁ and conclude that there is a significant relationship between decent office and house accommodation and academic excellence.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: There is no significant relationship between vacation policy and academic excellence. The data used for testing this hypothesis were extracted from the responses to question 12 of the questionnaire.

Table 3: Analysis of responses with respect to vacation policy and academic excellence

	X	Y	Xy	x ²	y ²
Strongly agree	5	57	285	25	3249
Agree	4	48	192	16	2304
Undecided	3	60	180	9	3600
Disagree	2	5	10	4	25
Σ	15	170	667	55	9178

$$r = \frac{4(667) - 15(170)}{\sqrt{\{(4 \times 55) - (15)^2\} \{4 \times 9178 - (170)^2\}}}$$

$$r = 0.7027$$

Decision: since r is 0.7027 and it is greater than 0.4 there is a strong relationship. However, to further justify this result we conduct a test of significance as follows using:

$$T \text{ calculated} = r\sqrt{n-2}/1-(r)^2$$

$$T \text{ cal} = 0.5068\sqrt{4-2}/1-(0.5068)^2$$

$$= 4.0785$$

Decision: Since the t calculated of 4.0785 is greater than the t tabulated of 1.32 at 95% significant level where degree of freedom is 3. Therefore, we simply reject H₀ and conclude that there is a significant relationship between vacation policy and academic excellence.

Hypothesis 4

H₀: There is no significant relationship between policy cost implication analysis and academic excellence.

The data used for testing this hypothesis were extracted from the responses to question 15 of the questionnaire.

Table 4: Analysis of responses with respect to policy cost implication analysis and academic excellence

	X	Y	Xy	x²	y²
Strongly agree	5	14	70	25	196
Agree	4	2	8	16	4
Undecided	3	70	210	9	4900
Disagree	2	54	108	4	2916
Strong disagree	1	30	30	1	900
Σ	15	170	426	55	8916

$$r = \frac{5(426) - 15(170)}{\sqrt{\{(5 \times 55) - (15)^2\} \{5 \times 8916 - (170)^2\}}}$$

$$r = 0.576$$

Decision: since r is 0.579 and it is greater than 0.5 there is a strong relationship. However, to further justify this result we conduct a test of significance as follows using:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{T \text{ calculated}} &= \mathbf{r\sqrt{n-2}/1-(r)^2} \\ \mathbf{T \text{ cal}} &= 0.5068\sqrt{5-2}/1-(0.5068)^2 \\ &= 2.6186 \end{aligned}$$

Decision: Since the t calculated of 2.6186 is greater than the t tabulated of 1.32 at 95% significant level where degree of freedom is 3. Therefore, we simply reject H_0 and accept H_1 and conclude that there is a significant relationship between policy cost implication analysis and academic excellence.

5. Findings, Discussions and Conclusions

The major finding of this work was a clear discovery that Nigerian universities have no policy that emphasizes the welfare of professors without taking into account the resultant cost implication. The results show that professors are highly dissatisfied with the absence of welfare policy towards them in the university system and that has adverse effect on academic excellence. This view is in agreement with the work of Abdullahi and Babagana (2015) who found that low level of staff motivation leads to poor performance.

Academic excellence is not achieved accidentally; it is a function of well organized holistic strategies. The main focus of excellence is human beings are their choices because human resource drives excellence. A professor has to do his job to drive excellence; university management ought to have policies that will enhance the productivity of the professor towards excellence.

For better performance and greater returns, Total Quality Management of Human Resources is so important in every organization, most especially in Nigerian universities. It does not only encourage the lecturers but also enables them to put in their best. It is financial wisdom to save cost that will save your cost, rather than multiply your cost. It is unwise for the university to save cost, but in the long run, the cost which they've been saving only ends up multiplying their cost.

Policy on health, housing, and vacation is important to overall productivity of professors and other academic staff in the university. The absence of these has negative cost implications on the university system in particular and academic excellence in general.

The cost of training or hiring another professor when the university loses an existing one either to death or employee turnover, the cost of demoralizing other younger academic who may decide to look for better jobs, the cost of truncated academic calendar due to strike, the cost of keeping people in the system who are no more passionate, are just a few of the negative cost implications.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The issue of welfare of professors does affect academic excellence but it has regrettably been compromised in Nigerian universities without regard to its resultant negative cost implication.

This study recommends that Nigerian universities should weigh the cost implications of their policies before making them because the cost of losing a professor is far more than cost saved from not having a standing policy for their welfare. The university management should give attention to cost accounting details in university policies if academic excellence is in view.

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