

Welfare Service and Staff Productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Okon Ume Okorie

Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State, Nigeria

Abstract: Welfare service serves as a lubricate for optimum performance of employees in an organization. However, the universities in Nigeria, especially Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, faced uncertainties about whether the current welfare provisions were adequate and effectively contributing to the productivity of both teaching and non-teaching staff. This raised questions about the effectiveness of existing welfare policies and their role in enhancing staff performance and overall institutional efficiency within the university environment. The study investigated the intricate relationship between staff welfare services and productivity at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. Anchored on the Equity Theory of Motivation, this study adopts descriptive survey designs to explore the dynamics of staff welfare and productivity. Utilising Taro Yamene's formula (1994), a sample size of 350 respondents was determined, with a random sampling technique employed to select participants. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis, with simple percentages analysing the socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of the respondents while mean and standard deviation were used to analysed the research questions. The study revealed a moderate consensus among staff on their welfare needs and preferences, with notable variations in perceptions, especially regarding healthcare access. Challenges such as funding constraints, administrative inefficiencies, lack of staff involvement, and inadequate infrastructure were identified as key impediments to providing effective welfare services. These factors were found to significantly influence staff morale, well-being, and productivity within the university setting. The study recommends the implementation of improved communication channels and the active involvement of staff in decision-making processes. By valuing staff input and aligning welfare services more closely with their diverse needs, the university can foster a more inclusive environment, leading to increased staff satisfaction and engagement, which is crucial for enhancing productivity.

Keywords: Welfare Service, Staff Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Welfare Service has evolved to become a central aspect of modern welfare states, marking a shift from traditional redistributive benefits to a focus on providing citizens with skills and cognitive capacities to address and overcome hardships independently. This transformation has led to the

emergence of what can be described as Welfare Service States (Bonvin, Otto, Wohlfarth, & Ziegler, 2018). These states are characterized by personalized social services that play a significant role in welfare production, significantly impacting the relationship between street-level bureaucrats and citizens (Wohlfarth, 2020). The rise of Welfare Service States brings with it a set of challenges and opportunities. For instance, the provision of cultural and welfare services is a crucial factor in shaping state policy for social work and development, as it aims to satisfy the diverse needs and well-being of people (Rim, Jang, & Ri, 2020). Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on social services has implications for welfare citizenship and democracy, highlighting the importance of these services in current social investment strategies (Otto, 2020).

Moreover, the concept of Welfare Service States also extends to specific sectors like employee welfare, where activities are designed to promote the economic, social, and cultural well-being of employees, providing various services, benefits, and facilities (Megha, 2022). Additionally, the interaction between public and private providers in the welfare service sector has been shown to affect citizens' trust in public institutions and the legitimacy of the state (Berg & Johansson, 2020).

Worker productivity, a vital element in organizational success, hinges on various factors ranging from individual skills and motivation to broader environmental conditions. Kodri, et al. (2018) highlighted the significant impact of training and certification on worker productivity, emphasizing that skills, work motivation, and management are key determinants. This suggests that investments in employee development are crucial for enhancing productivity. Additionally, Sofian (2019) discussed the relationship between work environment improvements and increased worker productivity, illustrating that factors like safety, humidity, and work layout play a substantial role in optimizing performance. In a different vein, Arsanti, et al. (2023) found a notable link between nutritional intake and worker productivity. This underscores the importance of addressing basic health and wellness needs as a foundation for effective work output. Similarly, Al Jassmi, et al. (2019) explored the influence of emotional well-being on productivity, using physiological signals to correlate happiness with higher productivity levels. This indicates that emotional health is a pivotal aspect of worker productivity, alongside physical wellness.

In the academic sphere, the interplay between welfare services and worker productivity is crucial for maintaining a high-functioning educational environment. Universities increasingly recognize that the well-being of their staff, both academic and administrative, is integral to their overall success. Welfare services in this context include factors like health benefits, conducive work environments, and opportunities for professional development, all of which significantly impact worker productivity.

Patro (2019) emphasizes the role of welfare programs in enhancing employees' economic growth and productivity. By improving the quality of work life, welfare schemes not only foster better organizational relations but also boost the productivity of the employees. This holistic approach to employee welfare is seen as essential for creating a loyal, satisfied, and efficient workforce. Similarly, Arasu (2022) highlights the direct relationship between welfare measures and employee productivity in hospitals, suggesting that these findings are applicable to university settings. Adequate welfare measures positively influence the mental and physical efficiency, morale, and overall productivity of the employees, leading to enhanced performance.

In universities, where intellectual capital is paramount, the welfare of employees directly influences their ability to perform, innovate, and contribute to the academic community. Effective welfare programs are more than just benefits; they are investments in human capital that pay dividends in the form of higher productivity, better job satisfaction, and improved institutional

outcomes. Universities that prioritize employee welfare can expect to see not only happier staff but also a more dynamic, innovative, and productive academic environment.

The relevance of studying "Welfare Service and Staff Productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education" is underscored by the growing awareness of the impact of welfare services on employee productivity in educational settings. Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, like many other higher education institutions, relies heavily on the productivity of its workforce to achieve its educational and organizational goals. In this context, welfare services, including adequate work environment, health benefits, and opportunities for professional development, are crucial in ensuring staff well-being and, consequently, their productivity.

A study conducted by Igenewari and Michael (2018) at Ignatius Ajuru University focused on enhancing the operational effectiveness of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) centers, a key component of welfare services in the university setting. The study highlighted how well-equipped and efficiently managed ICT centers can significantly impact the productivity of academic staff, by facilitating better teaching methodologies and research capabilities. Additionally, Nwachukwu et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between the work environment and employee commitment in Ignatius Ajuru University, among other institutions. Their findings revealed that factors like work noise, supervisor relationships, and work incentives can significantly influence staff performance and dedication, further illustrating the importance of a conducive work environment as part of welfare services in enhancing employee productivity.

These studies justify the need to examine welfare services and worker productivity in universities like Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Such research can provide valuable insights into how enhancing welfare services can lead to improved productivity among university staff, ultimately contributing to the overall success and effectiveness of the institution. Therefore, this study examines the influence of welfare service on staff productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt.

Statement of the Problem

The issues of concern regarding welfare service and staff productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education" are multifaceted and deeply rooted in the institutional framework and operational dynamics of the university. One of the primary concerns is the impact of the work environment on employee commitment and productivity. The study by Nwachukwu et al. (2019) identified that the working conditions, including factors such as noise distraction and supervisor relationships, significantly affect the motivation and overall performance of employees in educational institutions. This implies that a suboptimal work environment in Ignatius Ajuru University could lead to decreased employee satisfaction and productivity. Additionally, the effective use of technology, as examined by Igenewari and Michael (2018), plays a crucial role in enhancing the productivity of academic staff. The study found that inadequacies in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure could hinder the staff's ability to perform optimally, affecting their teaching and research capabilities.

Another critical issue is the psychological and social impact of the university's environment on its staff and students. The research conducted by Kasumu Rebecca Oluwayimika (2022) on the use of social media among students highlighted the influence of digital platforms on mental health and well-being. This extends to staff members, who may also be affected by the digital landscape of the university. Furthermore, staff development strategies, as highlighted in the study by Eyina and Orlu (2021), are crucial in determining the effectiveness of job performance in universities. The lack of adequate training and development programs can lead to a gap in skills and knowledge

among staff members, thereby affecting their productivity and the overall quality of education provided.

Moreover, issues like employee satisfaction towards welfare measures, as discussed in Vinitha's (2020) study, have direct implications on staff morale and efficiency. The satisfaction level of employees with the welfare facilities provided by the university is a key indicator of their overall engagement and productivity. This also ties into the broader context of the organizational culture and management practices within the university. Considering these aspects, one must ponder: How well is Ignatius Ajuru University of Education addressing these multifaceted challenges? Are the current welfare services and staff development strategies sufficient to meet the evolving demands of academic productivity? The answers to these questions could significantly influence the strategic planning and policy-making processes within the university.

It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken to examine the influence of “Welfare Service and Staff Productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.”. The university's approach to addressing these issues will not only determine its future trajectory but also set a precedent for other educational institutions grappling with similar challenges.

Research Questions

The following research questions were stated to guide the study:

- 1) What is the specific welfare needs and preferences of staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?
- 2) How does the welfare services affect staff productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?
- 3) What are the challenges militating against providing qualitative welfare services to staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to examine the influence of welfare service on staff productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- 1) examine the specific welfare needs and preferences of staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
- 2) investigate the impact of welfare services on staff productivity at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
- 3) identifies the challenges militating against providing qualitative welfare services to staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

LITERATURE REVIEW

Welfare Service

Welfare service, a multifaceted concept, has been explored and defined in various ways in recent literature. The understanding of welfare service evolves with changing societal needs, technological advancements, and institutional priorities. One perspective, as explored by Megha TM (2022), views employee welfare as a comprehensive term encompassing various services, benefits, and facilities provided by employers. This perspective emphasizes the holistic approach to welfare, considering the physical, mental, economic, social, and cultural well-being of employees. The definition underlines the importance of both statutory and non-statutory activities undertaken by employers and governments for the overall development of employees.

Another definition, offered by Yangdi Han and Jin Huang (2019), focuses on welfare services in the context of rural China. They define social welfare broadly as efforts by the country and society to promote personal or societal well-being. This definition highlights the diverse approaches implemented to provide social services, acknowledging the complexity and dynamic nature of welfare services, especially in a rural context. Wang, Cui, and Fang (2022) provide an innovative approach to welfare services, discussing a distance-based service priority mechanism aimed at increasing social welfare. This definition expands the traditional scope of welfare services, incorporating elements of service efficiency and strategic prioritization to enhance social welfare outcomes.

Chris Jones (2019) takes a more general approach, discussing social work as a form of welfare service. This perspective considers welfare service as an activity undertaken by various welfare workers, including those employed by state social service departments. It captures the essence of social work independent of a specific context, recognizing the diverse and shifting nature of welfare activities.

From these definitions, it can be inferred that welfare service is a broad, dynamic concept encompassing various activities and measures designed to improve the well-being of individuals, whether in an employment context or within a broader societal framework. Welfare services can include health benefits, training, professional development, and cultural activities, all aimed at enhancing the overall quality of life and productivity of individuals. They are implemented by a range of providers, including employers, governments, and non-profit organizations, and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of different communities, such as rural populations or employees in various sectors.

Staff Productivity

Staff productivity is a crucial concept in organizational management and has been defined variously in recent literature, reflecting its multidimensional nature. According to Zuhdi, et al. (2022), work productivity is the ability of employees to produce services in accordance with expected timeframes, suggesting that a productive employee can deliver services efficiently within a given period. This definition underscores the significance of time management in productivity. Stenson, et al. (2020) define provider productivity, particularly in emergency departments, as a dynamic measure affected by various factors such as shift length and the presence of residents. They measure productivity through patients per hour or relative value units per hour, highlighting that productivity is not static and varies throughout a work shift.

Sofian (2019) offers a broader definition, describing work productivity as the ability of employees to produce goods or services as expected in a short or appropriate time. Productivity, in this context, is seen as a ratio, a comparison, and a systematic measurement of a level of efficiency, emphasizing that it is not merely about quantity but also the efficiency and effectiveness of resource use. Kimberly Febrina Kodrat (2022) provides a more specific industrial perspective, defining productivity as a measurement of the ability to produce an output from an input. This definition emphasizes the importance of resource utilization in achieving operational effectiveness, efficiency, and quality.

From these definitions, staff productivity can be personally summarized as the capacity of employees to effectively and efficiently achieve desired outcomes within a given timeframe, using the available resources. This involves not just the quantity of output but also the quality, encompassing factors like time management, resource utilization, and adaptability to varying work conditions.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The paper is anchored on the Equity Theory of Motivation. This is, a significant theory in organizational psychology and behavioural management, which was developed by John Stacey Adams in 1963. This theory posits that employees are motivated not only by absolute rewards but also by their perception of fairness in the workplace. According to Adams, individuals assess their input/output ratio and compare it with that of their peers. When they perceive this ratio to be equitable, they are more likely to be satisfied and motivated; however, perceived inequity can lead to demotivation and dissatisfaction.

In the context of welfare services and staff productivity, particularly at institutions like the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, this theory offers valuable insights. The perception of equity plays a crucial role in determining staff morale and productivity. As welfare services often deal with both tangible (like pay and benefits) and intangible (like recognition and work-life balance) aspects of employment, understanding and applying the principles of Equity Theory can help foster a more productive and motivated workforce.

Moreover, the relevance of this theory extends beyond traditional business settings. In academic institutions, where the nature of work and the outputs can vary significantly, ensuring a sense of fairness among staff is essential. Equity Theory suggests that managing perceptions of fairness is as important as the actual distribution of rewards, making it a critical tool for administrators and policymakers in educational settings.

Historical Context and Development of Equity Theory: The Equity Theory of Motivation was developed in the early 1960s by John Stacey Adams, a workplace and behavioural psychologist. This period was marked by significant developments in organizational behaviour and psychology, where new theories were emerging to understand employee motivation beyond the conventional financial incentives. Adams' contribution was particularly notable for introducing the concept of social comparison in the workplace.

During this era, the focus was shifting towards understanding the psychological needs of employees. Adams' theory emerged amidst this shift, proposing that employees seek to maintain equity between the inputs they bring to a job (such as effort, skill level, tolerance, and enthusiasm) and the outcomes they receive (like salary, benefits, and recognition). The theory was groundbreaking as it highlighted the importance of fair treatment and the psychological responses to perceived inequalities.

The development of Equity Theory was influenced by earlier work by researchers like Maslow and Herzberg, who emphasized psychological factors in motivation. Adams' theory added a new dimension by focusing on the relational aspects of work, particularly how employees perceive their treatment relative to others. This aspect of the theory made it highly relevant to diverse organizational settings, including educational institutions like Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Equity Theory's emphasis on fairness and comparison provided a new lens to view employee satisfaction and productivity. It underscored the idea that perceptions of inequality could lead to demotivation, regardless of the absolute value of rewards. This insight is particularly relevant in the context of welfare services and staff productivity, where disparities in treatment can significantly impact staff morale and effectiveness.

Core Concepts of Equity Theory

Equity Theory is centred around several core concepts that explain how individuals perceive fairness in the workplace and how these perceptions influence their motivation and productivity. The key components of the theory are:

Inputs: These are what the employees perceive as their contributions to the job, which include effort, loyalty, hard work, commitment, skill, ability, adaptability, flexibility, tolerance, determination, enthusiasm, trust in superiors, support from co-workers and subordinates, personal sacrifice, etc.

Outcomes: These are what the employees receive in return for their input, such as salary, benefits, recognition, reputation, responsibility, sense of achievement, praise, thanks, stimuli, and job security.

Comparison: Employees compare their input/outcome ratio with the input/outcome ratio of referent others (peers, colleagues in other organizations). This comparison is the crux of the theory.

According to Adams, an employee's perception of fairness is central to their motivation. If an individual believes that they are being treated fairly in comparison to their peers, they are more likely to be satisfied and thus more motivated. Conversely, if they perceive an inequity, they may experience feelings of distress, leading to lower motivation and productivity. This perceived inequity can either be under-reward (feeling underpaid) or over-reward (feeling overpaid). The theory highlights that motivation is not just about the actual rewards but how these rewards compare to those of others. In the context of welfare services, where rewards can be both tangible and intangible, understanding these dynamics is crucial. For instance, in an academic setting like Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, perceptions of equity among staff can significantly impact their productivity and overall job satisfaction. Equity Theory is particularly relevant in today's diverse workplaces, where employees have varying expectations and perceptions. Managers and administrators need to be cognizant of these perceptions to maintain a motivated workforce.

Equity Theory's application in welfare services, particularly about staff productivity, is profoundly relevant. In the context of welfare services, the theory underscores the importance of perceived fairness in determining employee motivation and satisfaction. This is crucial in environments like Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, where the success of welfare services significantly impacts staff morale and productivity.

In welfare services, inputs from employees typically include their time, effort, expertise, and dedication. The outcomes, on the other hand, are not limited to monetary compensation but also include non-material aspects such as job satisfaction, professional development opportunities, recognition, and a supportive work environment. Equity Theory suggests that employees will evaluate these inputs and outcomes not in isolation but in comparison with their peers. If they perceive a balance between what they contribute and what they receive, especially concerning others, they are more likely to be motivated and productive. For instance, in a university setting, if faculty members perceive that their efforts in teaching, research, and community service are being fairly rewarded compared to their colleagues, they are more likely to be engaged and productive. Conversely, if they feel that their contributions are not being adequately recognized or rewarded, it can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced productivity. This is particularly pertinent in the academic field, where outputs such as research publications and teaching effectiveness are crucial.

Thus, for administrators at institutions like Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, it is essential to maintain an equitable environment. This involves not just ensuring fair compensation but also recognizing and valuing the diverse contributions of staff members. It means creating policies and practices that acknowledge different kinds of inputs and provide appropriate and comparable outcomes. Implementing such equitable practices can significantly enhance staff productivity and the overall effectiveness of welfare services.

Applying Equity Theory to the specific context of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, provides a clear example of how perceived equity or inequity can impact staff productivity. In an academic environment, the inputs from staff include not only their teaching responsibilities but also research, administrative duties, and community engagement. The outcomes are similarly multifaceted, ranging from salaries and promotions to professional recognition and personal satisfaction.

At Ignatius Ajuru University, if faculty members perceive that their efforts are being equitably rewarded compared to their peers, it fosters a sense of fairness and satisfaction, which in turn can lead to higher levels of productivity and commitment to the institution's mission. This perception of equity is crucial in an academic setting where the rewards are not always immediate or tangible. Recognition of achievements, opportunities for professional growth, and a supportive work environment play a significant role in how staff perceive equity.

However, if staff perceive inequities, such as disparities in workload, recognition, or resources, it can lead to demotivation, decreased job satisfaction, and lower productivity. For example, if a faculty member perceives that their research efforts are not as adequately recognized or rewarded as those of their colleagues, this could lead to a decrease in research output, impacting both the individual's career progression and the university's academic reputation. Therefore, university administrators must be mindful of how policies and practices are perceived by their staff. Transparent communication, equitable distribution of resources, recognition of diverse contributions, and fair grievance mechanisms are critical in maintaining perceived equity. This case study highlights the practical application of Equity Theory in an academic institution and underscores the importance of understanding and managing staff perceptions of equity to enhance productivity and job satisfaction.

In essence, Equity Theory offers a timeless yet adaptable framework for understanding workplace motivation, making it an indispensable tool for administrators, policymakers, and leaders in various organizational settings, including educational institutions like Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research conducted on the impact of welfare services on staff productivity at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt employed a descriptive survey design. This study encompassed the entire workforce of the University as its population. It differentiated between teaching and non-teaching staff, with the total sample size amounting to 1,200 employees. Within this sample, teaching staff constituted 480 individuals, representing 40% of the total, while non-teaching staff comprised 720 individuals, accounting for 60%. The selection of this sample was strategically done using Taro Yamene's statistical formula, which facilitated an accurate representation of the overall employee population of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. This comprehensive approach ensured that the study effectively captured the diverse perspectives and experiences of both teaching and non-teaching staff regarding the influence of welfare services on their productivity.

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

s = Sample size

N = Population

$$\begin{aligned}
 I &= \text{constant} \\
 e^2 &= \text{margin error or margin which is } 0.05 \\
 s &= \frac{1200}{1+1200 \times (0.05)^2} \\
 S &= \frac{1200}{1+1200 \times (0.005)^2} \\
 S &= \frac{1200}{1+3} \\
 S &= \frac{1200}{4} \\
 S &= 300
 \end{aligned}$$

In response to the increased proportion of non-teaching staff relative to teaching staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, the researcher augmented the sample size by adding 79 questionnaires, resulting in a total sample of 379 from the 1200 staff. This adjustment allocated 150 questionnaires to teaching staff and 229 to non-teaching staff, ensuring adequate representation. The research then employed a random sampling technique to distribute 300 questionnaires among the respondents. The significance of using questionnaires lies in their ability to facilitate direct data collection on welfare services and staff productivity. The primary data obtained was analysed using the 4-point Likert scale method. This analysis involved both statistical tables and criterion mean, based on the Likert rating scale, to calculate the mean and standard deviation. This methodical approach was crucial for obtaining a nuanced understanding of the relationship between welfare services and staff productivity at the university.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Questionnaire Returned Rate

Details	Administered Questionnaire	Retrieved Questionnaires	Not Retrieved Questionnaires
Frequency	379	365	14
Percentage	100%	96.4%	3.6%

The table displayed the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires. In the study, 379 questionnaires—100% of the total—were distributed to the population, and 365—96.4% of those—were retrieved and determined to be pertinent. The final 14 records (representing 3.6%) could not be located and were not important. Thus, the 379 questionnaires that were found were used in the study.

Research Question One: What is the specific welfare needs and preferences of staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Table 4.1.3: Descriptive Statistics on specific welfare needs and preferences of staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

S/N	Items (365)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
1.	Access to Healthcare: I believe that having access to comprehensive healthcare	32	6	317	10	2.16	0.73	Disagreed

	services is a critical welfare need for the staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.							
2.	Housing Support: Provision of housing support or subsidies is important for the welfare of staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.	102	168	48	47	2.89	0.96	Agreed
3.	Professional Development: Opportunities for professional development and training are essential for staff welfare at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.	98	176	47	44	2.90	0.93	Agreed
4.	Childcare Facilities: Availability of childcare facilities is a significant welfare need for staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.	100	172	48	45	2.90	0.94	Agreed
5.	Recreational Facilities: Access to recreational facilities and programs is crucial for the welfare of the staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.	104	166	48	47	2.90	0.96	Agreed
	Grand Mean					2.75	0.90	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table (Table 4.1.3) illustrates the specific welfare needs and preferences of staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, accompanied by means and standard deviations for each item. The data reveals varying sentiments among the staff. Access to healthcare received a mean score of 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.73, indicating disagreement among the respondents regarding its critical nature. Conversely, housing support (mean=2.89, Std.=0.96), professional development opportunities (mean=2.90, Std.=0.93), childcare facilities (mean=2.90, Std.=0.94), and access to recreational facilities (mean=2.90, Std.=0.96) all received mean scores suggesting agreement on their importance for staff welfare. The overall grand mean of 2.75 (Std.=0.90) signifies an average agreement among the respondents regarding these welfare needs and preferences. It is apparent that while there is consensus on certain aspects, such as housing support and professional development, addressing the concerns and disparities regarding healthcare access is essential to comprehensively meet the diverse welfare requirements of the staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Research Question Two: How does the welfare services affect staff productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Table 4.1.3: Descriptive Statistics on the welfare services affect staff productivity in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
6.	Impact of Health Benefits: The health benefits provided by the university significantly increase my overall productivity at work.	100	170	48	47	2.88	0.95	Agreed
7.	Effect of Support Services: Support services like counseling and financial advice positively affect my work efficiency and job satisfaction.	8	326	2	29	2.86	0.57	Agreed
8.	Influence of Work Environment: The physical work environment and facilities at the university contribute to improving my productivity.	--	234	69	62	2.47	0.77	Agreed
9.	Role of Work-Life Balance: Welfare services that promote work-life balance enhance my motivation and productivity at work.	8	253	34	70	2.55	0.82	Agreed
10.	Training and Development Impact: Participation in training and development programs offered by the university has a direct positive impact on my work performance.	8	310	2	45	2.77	0.68	Agreed
	Grand Mean					2.71	0.76	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

In the context of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, a comprehensive assessment was conducted to investigate how welfare services impact staff productivity. The research question focused on this aspect, and the findings were summarised in Table 4.1.3, presenting descriptive statistics for various welfare-related items. Notably, the mean and standard deviation were used to gauge staff perceptions. The results indicate that the provision of health benefits by the university garnered a mean score of 2.88, signifying that staff members generally agreed that these benefits significantly boosted their overall productivity. Support services, such as counselling and financial advice, were also positively received, with a mean score of 2.86. Additionally, the physical work environment and facilities were seen as contributors to productivity, scoring 2.47 on average. Welfare services promoting work-life balance achieved a mean score of 2.55, reflecting their positive influence. Furthermore, training and development programs offered by the university had a direct positive impact, with a mean score of 2.77. The grand mean of all these

aspects was calculated at 2.71, affirming that staff members generally agreed on the positive effects of welfare services on their productivity, as evidenced by the standard deviation of 0.76. These findings shed light on the significant role played by welfare services in enhancing staff productivity at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges militating against providing qualitative welfare services to staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Table 4.1.3: Descriptive Statistics on the challenges militating against providing qualitative welfare services on staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
11.	Funding Issues: There is inadequate funding for welfare services, which affects their quality and effectiveness.	2	322	--	41	2.78	0.64	Agreed
12.	Administrative Bottlenecks: Administrative procedures and bureaucracy significantly delay the implementation of welfare services.	122	100	60	83	2.72	1.15	Agreed
13.	Lack of Staff Involvement: There is a lack of involvement of staff in the planning and execution of welfare services.	82	134	79	70	2.62	1.03	Agreed
14.	Inadequate Infrastructure: The infrastructure to support comprehensive welfare services is insufficient or outdated.	86	163	77	39	2.81	0.92	Agreed
15.	Ineffective Communication: There is a gap in effective communication regarding the availability and access to welfare services.	102	168	47	48	2.89	0.96	Agreed
	Grand Mean					2.71	0.95	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The research question aimed to identify and understand the challenges that hinder the provision of qualitative welfare services to staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, as reflected in Table 4.1.3, which presents descriptive statistics for these challenges. The mean and standard deviation were utilised to gauge the severity of these issues. Firstly, funding issues emerged as a prominent challenge, with a mean score of 2.78, signifying that respondents agreed on the inadequacy of funding, which consequently affects the quality and effectiveness of welfare services. Administrative bottlenecks were another significant concern, scoring 2.72 on average, indicating that administrative procedures and bureaucracy significantly delay the implementation of welfare services. The lack of staff involvement in the planning and execution of these services was also evident, with a mean score of 2.62. Moreover, inadequate infrastructure to support

welfare services received a mean score of 2.81, suggesting insufficiency or outdated facilities. Lastly, ineffective communication regarding the availability and access to welfare services was identified as a challenge, scoring 2.89 on average. The grand mean for all these challenges was calculated at 2.71, underscoring the overall agreement on the existence of these impediments, as indicated by the standard deviation of 0.95. These findings collectively illuminate the multifaceted challenges militating against the provision of qualitative welfare services to staff at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, underscoring the need for strategic interventions to address these issues and enhance staff well-being.

Discussion of Findings

The data in Table 4.1.3 indicates that the overall grand mean for staff welfare needs and preferences at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is 2.75, with a standard deviation of 0.90. This suggests a moderate level of agreement among respondents regarding these needs. While there is a consensus on certain aspects like housing support and professional development, there is some disagreement regarding the critical nature of healthcare access.

The findings from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, which indicate a grand mean of 2.75 and a standard deviation of 0.90 for staff welfare needs and preferences, suggest a moderate level of agreement among respondents. This observation is reflective of a nuanced understanding of staff welfare in university settings, highlighting areas of consensus such as housing support and professional development, alongside divergences in perceptions, particularly in the realm of healthcare access. The present finding corroborate with some existing finding on the influence of welfare service on staff productivity.

In the study conducted by Gao Yua (2015), titled "On University Labor Union with the Purpose of Seeking "Big-welfare" for Staff in the New Period," the importance of material and spiritual benefits for university staff is underscored. Yua's research emphasizes the significance of welfare work in stimulating work enthusiasm and creating a harmonious university campus. This research provides a supportive backdrop to the findings from Ignatius Ajuru University by underlining the need for comprehensive welfare support to foster staff contentment and productivity. Furthermore, the study by Diedong, et al. (2019) on "Attitude and Perception of Academic and Administrative Staff towards Progression in Higher Institutions of Learning in Ghana", reveals that staff at the University for Development Studies were generally well-motivated but expressed concerns regarding the promotion systems. The authors recommended a greater focus on staff welfare, including capacity building and infrastructure improvements, to enhance staff progression. This mirrors the scenario at Ignatius Ajuru University, where a moderate consensus on welfare needs implies the importance of addressing various staff preferences and concerns, especially in essential areas like healthcare.

The comprehensive assessment of the impact of welfare services at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education revealed a notable finding: the grand mean of staff perceptions regarding the impact of welfare services on productivity is 2.71, with a standard deviation of 0.76. This suggests a general consensus among staff that welfare services, including health benefits, support services, work environment, work-life balance initiatives, and training programs, positively influence their overall productivity. In essence, the study highlights the significant role played by welfare services in enhancing staff productivity at the university.

The present finding is supported by some existing empirical studies. A study by Muruu (2016) entitled the "Effects of Welfare Programmes on Employee Satisfaction in the Public Sector: A Case of the Public Service Commission, which examined how welfare programmes, including health and safety, affect employee satisfaction, which is a key component of productivity. The

findings show that compensation programmes and safety and health initiatives have a positive impact on employee satisfaction, aligning with the findings at Ignatius Ajuru University that welfare services play a significant role in enhancing staff productivity. This study underscores the importance of well-structured welfare programmes in improving staff efficiency and overall productivity (Muruu, 2016).

Finally, a study by Njeru, et al. (2017) on "An Exploratory Study of the Relationship Between Non-Monetary Welfare Programs and Employee Performance Among Non-Teaching Staff in Institutions of Higher Learning in Kenya" by Njeru et al. investigated the correlation between non-monetary welfare programs and employee performance. The study concludes that welfare programs, such as health and safety initiatives, significantly relate to improved performance. This aligns with the findings at Ignatius Ajuru University, highlighting the critical role of welfare services, including work-life balance initiatives and training programs, in boosting staff productivity (Njeru, et al. 2017).

The research revealed a comprehensive understanding of challenges hindering the provision of qualitative welfare services at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The grand mean, standing at 2.71, with a standard deviation of 0.95, signifies a consensus among respondents about these impediments. Funding issues (mean=2.78), administrative bottlenecks (mean=2.72), lack of staff involvement (mean=2.62), inadequate infrastructure (mean=2.81), and ineffective communication (mean=2.89) were all identified as challenges. This data underscores the multifaceted nature of obstacles faced, emphasising the need for strategic interventions to enhance staff well-being by addressing these issues comprehensively. The present finding corroborated with the existing studies. A study by Sadera, et al. (2022) titled "Perceptions of Quality of Students' Welfare Services in a University in Kenya," the authors examined the quality of welfare services in a Kenyan university. They found that despite efforts, the university faced significant challenges due to growing student populations straining existing facilities and personnel, alongside funding challenges. This mirrors the findings at Ignatius Ajuru University, where funding issues and inadequate infrastructure were highlighted as key impediments to effective welfare service provision (Sadera, et al. 2022). Finally, a study by Bricocoli, et al. (2023): In "Planning and designing universal access to social services. A pioneering local program on welfare spaces in Italy," the researchers discussed the challenges in innovating and extending access to social assistance services. They highlighted the importance of spatial dimensions in welfare places and the need for alternative planning strategies to address these challenges. This study correlates with the findings at Ignatius Ajuru University, particularly in terms of addressing administrative bottlenecks and enhancing communication for effective welfare service delivery (Bricocoli, et al. 2023).

CONCLUSION

In concluding the analysis of staff welfare services and their impact on productivity at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, it becomes evident that the staff's needs and preferences in welfare services occupy a significant place in their professional contentment and efficiency. The moderate agreement among the staff regarding their welfare needs highlights a shared recognition of the importance of certain services, notably in areas like housing support and professional development. These are seen as fundamental to their well-being and professional growth. However, the variation in the perception of healthcare access points to an area requiring further attention. This divergence is not unusual in an institutional setting, where staff from diverse backgrounds and roles may have differing priorities. Recognising and addressing such disparities is crucial for the development of a more comprehensive and beneficial welfare system that caters to the varied needs of all staff members.

Moreover, the general perception among the staff suggests a positive correlation between well-structured welfare services and enhanced productivity. Services such as health benefits, conducive work environments, work-life balance initiatives, and training programmes are valued by the staff, indicating their effectiveness in not only meeting basic employee needs but also in fostering a more motivated and efficient workforce. However, the study also brings to light several challenges, including funding constraints, administrative inefficiencies, lack of staff involvement in decision-making, inadequate infrastructure, and communication barriers. These challenges highlight the need for a strategic, multifaceted approach to welfare service provision.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion from the above the following recommendations were offered:

- 1) **Enhanced Communication and Involvement Strategies:** To address the disparity in staff welfare perceptions, particularly regarding healthcare, the university should implement improved communication channels and involve staff more actively in decision-making processes. By fostering a more inclusive environment where staff input is valued and integrated into policy development, the university can ensure that welfare services are more closely aligned with the diverse needs of its workforce, leading to increased satisfaction and engagement among staff members.
- 2) **Comprehensive Healthcare Program Implementation:** Considering the varying views on healthcare access, it is recommended that the university develop and implement a comprehensive healthcare program. This program should cater to the diverse health needs of the staff, providing not only basic medical coverage but also specialised services. Regular health assessments, wellness programs, and mental health support should be included to ensure a holistic approach to staff health, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and productivity.
- 3) **Infrastructure and Administrative Process Overhaul:** To tackle challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and administrative bottlenecks, a strategic overhaul of the university's administrative processes and infrastructure development is recommended. Streamlining administrative procedures to reduce red tape and investing in the modernisation of facilities will enhance the efficiency of welfare service delivery. These improvements should aim to create a more conducive work environment, which in turn can lead to increased staff productivity and morale.

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