

Full Length Research

Over- Schooling Consequences among Academic Staff in Higher Institutions: The Way Forward

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Abstract

This paper was inspired to the researchers as a result of round table discussion with staff about achieving higher degrees for better life and career progression. Over-schooling is a phenomenon of Schooling more than usual; spending time and resources to acquire knowledge. Over-schooling among academic staff can be likened as excess qualification without proper job placement or being overqualified that is necessary for their job responsibilities. In this paper, the researchers examined consequences of over-schooling in the tertiary institutions that cause power struggling, Stress and psychology effect to both young researchers and old ones in the academic community. The situation of over-schooling is a societal phenomenon schools and especially at the tertiary level of education. Through the literature review, the researchers identified concept of over-schooling, tertiary over-schoolers, consequences, reasons and solution over-schooling. This is a pointer that this practice should be carefully examined before anyone (staff) indulges in the process of over-schooling in higher education environment.

Keywords: Consequences, Over- Schooling, Academic Staff, and Higher Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

This paper was inspired to the researchers as a result of round table discussion with staff about achieving higher degrees for better life and career progression. Over-schooling is a phenomenon of Schooling more than usual; spending time and resources to acquire knowledge. When the schools most often overburden the pupils and students with excessive homework. Note copying and extra-mural classes, it could be referred to as over-schooling. Over-schooling can also be referred to as the act of over engaging and over drilling of children through academic process more than they could bear. In other words, it could be seen as over-stressing the child in a bid to impart knowledge on him or her. In fact it is schooling beyond the schooling the school margin. This

phenomenon of over-schooling is captured by various researchers for a variety of reasons. Several authors have given various interpretations and meaning to over-schooling in primary and secondary schools, but there is gap between the tertiary and pre-tertiary institutions, therefore, this topic want to address the issues. The researchers view over-schooling as way of reading more than the requirement of employability in the society.

Over-schooling among academic staff can be likened as excess qualification without proper job placement or being overqualified that is necessary for their job responsibilities. This mainly happens when an academic staff has an advanced degree, but is employed in a position that does not require such high levels of education. Over-schooling has become an issue of concern to many Nigerians. It is viewed as a concept of

concern to so many scholars, authors, writers and educationists. Unfortunately, over the years, it has made Nigerians to suffer from the tarnishing influence of over-schooling without realizing how terrible the impact of over-schooling is quietly destroying the good intentions of the Nigerian government and the Nigerian people, with emphasis on certificate/credentials acquisition (Renner, Anashie & Mezieobi, 2022).

Having highly educated Academic staff can be of great benefit to the university because over-schooling has advantages and disadvantages for both the individual and the institution. One of the advantages is that it rates a university very high when its staff strength is highly qualified, especially when it comes to NUC accreditation. A disadvantage of over-schooling is that over-schooled academics become dissatisfied with their job description, especially when they feel that their qualification is not measured with their job description. This alone can result in a lack of zeal to work and unproductive services.

Additionally, over-schooled academia's may be more expensive to hire and retain, as they often expect higher salaries and may be more likely to pursue opportunities elsewhere. This can strain the resources of the institution and limit the number of faculty positions that can be filled. Institutions may also face challenges in recruiting and retaining faculty members who are appropriately qualified for their positions. Over-schooled academics may be less likely to take jobs at institutions where they feel their skills and education are not being fully utilized (Abreu, 2014).

According to Marginson, S. (2016) acquiring a higher education in a university can become a great instrument to both the individuals and the university. He further explained that higher education is an instrument for achieving economic purpose, moral formation and social enrichment to the world at large.

Concept of Over-schooling

The concept of Over-schooling describes the "over-education" problem? What have been the effects of extent to which an individual possesses a level of ineffective curriculum plans on over-schooling syndrome. Education in excess of that which is required for their particular job. Specifically, do we have a situation of excess supply for a particular job. The phenomenon was first brought to graduates, caused in part by subsidising higher education the attention of researchers by Richard Freeman in his to the extent that we do? 1976 study of the US graduate labour market. (Ekechukwu & Etal, 2018).

However, the need for an optimized schooling system as well interest has mushroomed since the late 1980s as an effective and comprehensive curriculum planning economists attempt to assess the implications of the and development in Nigeria created the need for more continued rapid expansion in educational participation

research to be carried out on the subject matter. It is from rates that has become a key feature of labour market this projection that this study takes its bearing. This policy in most developed and developing economies study, therefore, seeks to address this disparity by having When the demand for less educated workforce especially a holistic study of the relationship between over-schooling the demand for worker with vocational skills rises above and curriculum in Nigeria. That of graduate level workforce then workers may be (Ekechukwu, & Etal, 2018).

According to Okonkwo(2014) Over-schooling is the act of undergoing and undertaking the process of being trained, being drilled, instructed, taught or educated far above or in excess of what is provided in the curriculum. The concept of

Over-schooling is viewed as over education which is explained as the process in which individuals feel that they are being burdened or oppressed by the weight of their education. Udoh, Joseph & Amajuoyi (2014) issue their opinion about over-schooling, researchers revealed that it is controversial to some extent. This is simply for the fact that the average person believes that no one could possibly over-school, based on the notion that no knowledge acquired is a waste, more so considering the fact that learning is a continuum.

However, over-schooling is a reality that is rapidly engulfing the teaching profession. Over Schooling is a term used to describe the situation where individuals possess more education credentials than required for their current employment position(Manga, 2018). This phenomenon is becoming increasingly common in many sectors, including academia, where an increasing number of academic staff hold doctoral or postdoctoral qualifications. According to Abreu (2014), over schooling among academic staff can lead to a range of negative consequences, including reduced job satisfaction, limited career mobility, and a lack of recognition for their qualifications. Some researchers argued that over-schooling is connected to the rise of the new managerialism in higher education, which focuses on the importance of quantifiable outputs and productivity over more qualitative measures of academic performance.

Marginson (2016) further notes that the focus on credentialism and over-schooling can undermine the public good of higher education, as it can lead to a devaluation of education credentials and a shift away from the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Therefore, over-schooling among academic staff is a growing phenomenon that has implications for job satisfaction, career mobility, and the value of higher education credentials. It is important for higher education institutions to recognize and address this issue to ensure that academic staff are appropriately valued and recognized for their qualifications and expertise.

Tertiary Over-Schoolers

Tertiary education comprises all formal post-secondary education, including public and private universities, colleges, technical training institutes, and vocational schools. Tertiary education is an instrumental tool for fostering growth, reducing poverty, and boosting shared prosperity. When a workforce is highly skilled and has lifelong access to a solid post-secondary education, it's a prerequisite for innovation, growth and well-educated people are more employable and productive, earn higher wages, and cope with economic shocks better (World Bank Group, 2021).

The World Bank Group (2021) further explained the economic returns for tertiary education. Graduates are the highest in the entire educational system – an estimated 17% increase in earnings as compared with 10 % for primary and 7% for secondary education. These high returns are even greater in Sub-Saharan Africa, at an estimated 21% increase in earning for tertiary education graduates. Tertiary overschoolers are those who are determined to stay focused on their pursuit of advanced degrees in order to achieve great academic excellence. They are in six categories as can be gathered from the three case studies which formed the introduction to this paper, tertiary over-schoolers are in various categories.

These six categories were identified and discussed by Etuk, Akpan & Etuke (2012) in their paper they submitted "Tertiary Over-schooling in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and Cases". Those in the first category are university degree-holders and graduates from other tertiary institutions with equivalent qualifications. People in this category respond to and are selected to fill job openings, which by the civil service regulations of Nigeria are lower than their ranks (Khan, 2021). For instance, the starting salary for university graduates and people with comparable qualifications is expected to be Level 8, step whatever the employer's assessment sees fit for the prospective employee. Some graduates, out of their eagerness to get a job, may respond to a level 6 job. The person does not declare his/her higher qualification just to get that job. After a year or two, the person would file his/her higher qualifications and expect to get a raise or promotion. Management of the organisation is likely to ignore such requests, because the job the person is assigned to be meant for the rank of employees which was mentioned in the advertisement for the job. The first case in the introduction belongs in this category.

The second category of tertiary over-schoolers which is identified in this paper are employees in tertiary educational institutions, who seize the opportunity of being employed in tertiary educational organizations to work and study at the same time. Management regards them as cheats if they study full time. Some tertiary educational institutions, like the University of Uyo, actually encourage their staff to study and improve their

academic standings by mounting evening study programmes, sandwich programmes and continuing education programmes for the benefit of their workers (Etuk, Akpan & Etuke, 2012).

The problem arises when these people complete their educational programmes. They expect to be upgraded and assigned to higher positions. Whether the study was done surreptitiously or done with official permission from management, the people so involved must wait until an opportunity avails itself. When the opportunity comes, it will not come in a platter of gold. There may be many people vying for the same position. Therefore, people involved compete in examinations. Those who succeed are selected to fill the vacant positions and those who are not successful return to their former ranks. The over-schoolers in this category are often in a dilemma. They feel over-qualified for their jobs, but they cannot leave without an outside job offer.

The third category of tertiary over-schoolers are people who genuinely obtained study-leave in their places of employment. When they return to their jobs on completion of their studies, they are nominally recognized. Although they are recognized as being graduates and what have you, they still receive their former salaries. Their salaries are not upgraded to match their new statuses. This problem is peculiar to school teachers in Nigeria (Etuk, Akpan & Etuke, 2012).

The fourth category of tertiary overschoolers are people who are employed in organizations that have very low compensation plans for their employees. They thrive because the liberalisation of education in Nigeria has generated a lot of unemployed youths. There are little or no industries to employ them. The few industries that existed had either been shut down or privatized since by former President Olusegun Obasanjo (OBJ). That was done through the advice of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund in the name of globalisation, a situation whereby public policies of world nations are bound by international regulations. Globalisation brings increased privatization, diminishing entrepreneurial roles of the state, smaller state budgets, deregulation and liberalization of state systems from former rules and controls. This is what is termed "New Public Management (NPM)" (International Labour Organisation, 1998, p.6)

Globalisation supports measures aimed at cutting costs in public administration and for strengthening the civil society. The state is expected to play new roles which consist of establishing favourable conditions for the private and non-governmental players in the society, with a high degree of self-regulation. This has resulted in a high rate of youth unemployment. Some private organisations which are not well established often underpay their workers. Graduate youths who are anxious to get paid-employment form the bulk of private-sector employees, who are underpaid. They fit into our fourth category of tertiary over-schoolers. Most private schools in this part of Nigeria do not pay their staff well

(Etuk, Akpan & Etuke, 2012).

The fifth category of over-schoolers are people who, for some reasons, remain in colleges and universities pursuing one degree programme after another. Such people may end up being overqualified for employment. Many years ago, a Nigerian who studied in the United States of America (U.S.A) came back with three doctorate degrees in three different disciplines (Khan, 2021). He found it so difficult to get a job that he went to the pages of a newspaper to lament his plight. The employers of labour might have thought him to be a "Jack-of-all-Trades". It is not certain whether people who are so over schooled do it out of the desire to excel or the fear of coming out into the world of work!

The sixth categories of tertiary over-schoolers are prevalent in university campuses among lecturers from senior lecturers upwards. The practice of sending out publications of lecturers for peer review is often times frustrating when the results of the reviews are delayed for several years. The lecturers so affected may become very disgruntled and their morales may be very low (Etuk, Akpan & Etuke, 2012). Tertiary over-schooling can be beneficial to individuals who maintain the price of being more productive. Higher productivity can be attributed to higher brain functioning and maturity level. For instance, if a university graduate is employed to fill the vacancy of a clerical staff, the graduate would have a better understanding of the issues involved; he/she is likely to command better grammar, communicate more effectively, work with a longer life experience and work without supervision (Etuk, Akpan & Etuke, 2012)..

These are the considerations that make salary levels to rise higher and higher as one climbs the educational ladder. Other considerations for fixing salaries higher and higher up the educational ladder are the investments put into acquiring higher qualifications (Khan, 2021). These are time costs, financial costs and opportunity costs (lost opportunities which are spent in pursuing education instead of pursuing other investments). When all these considerations are put together, over-schoolers cannot possibly be happy and contented workers. Their skills add to the level of human resource wealth and economic productivity of the state and they should equitably be rewarded. Moreover, from the point of view of the organization, over schooling is a money saver, it saves up finance which would have been used for training new staff.

Reasons for over-Schooling among Academic Staff in Tertiary Institutions

- a. To secure a higher position in the person queue therefore, individuals continue to invest in education hoping that the additional amount of education will enhance their employability,
- b. High production may be attributed to high brain functioning and maturity level (Khan, 2021).
- c. Individuals go in for over-schooling with the view of

experiencing an increase in their income. That is upgrading of self for more degrees attract more payment.

Consequences of Over-Schooling

From different school of thoughts the following and among other things are considered as the consequences of over-schooling in academic environment of workers:

1. This affect children and adults in areas of stress, fatigue, boredom, less time for play and constant head ache, having less time for exploring his environment, it will leads to the cognitive and psycho-social consequences of the individuals;
2. Over- scholars/academic staffs are some times in a dilemma. Academic staff feel overqualified for their jobs but cannot leave without an outside job offer;
3. Most of the times salaries are not upgraded to match their new position
4. Some over academics because they remain in universities pursuing our degree programme after another, end up being overqualified for employment and are as 'Jack of all Trade'. These leads to lack of focus in their professional calling;
5. The academic staff termed us as over scholars have the practice of sending out publications, when the result of their reviewers are delayed by peer review, it is sometimes frustrating and the academic staff so affected may become very disgruntled and their morales may be very low, in some cases this might lead to stress;
6. The skills acquired by over schooled academic staff in the area of research, supervision, and other complex teaching skills are wasted as they cannot be applied at lower levels of teaching like primary or secondary schools (Akpan, Usoro & Udofia, 2013).
7. Over-schooling lowers productivity due to low morale and high job dissatisfaction by the academic staff.
8. The number of years spent on over-schooling is economically wasted as they could have been used to establish solid and profitable business for wealth.
9. The financial resources spent on over-schooling are wasted due to lower returns of investment based on poor remuneration at the lower levels of teaching in primary and secondary. Despite this process of over-schooling, their reminations do not have been promoted to the corresponding over-schooling process; and
10. Over -schooling results in high job mortality as over-schooled academic staff are constantly looking for greener pastures and are eager to dump the work at the slightest opportunity (Omede & Jimba, 2019, Gaille, 2017)

Way Forward

1. Acquisition of educational certificates should be

deemphasized and should be placed on vocational entrepreneurial education as the incidence of over-schooling will be curtailed in the short run as persons seeking education will also seek to acquire only the "kind and amount of schooling" required for the kind of job they desire to create.

2. Freeing the economy for investments and national development by putting a stop to over-schooling so that graduates should be focused and gainfully employed with over skilled graduates not over-schooled graduates, this means that higher institutions should incorporate skills acquisition into the curriculum to prevent over-schooling.
3. Our federal and state government as well as wealthy citizens to invest in setting up industries instead of building more private universities, polytechnics and colleges of education because there is no point graduating more youths into the streets of Nigeria or generally African.
4. Government at all levels should put in place appropriate machineries as a way of economic grants loans facilities, incentives and vocational subsidies to encourage entrepreneurship and not just to continue to subsidize education
5. Over-schooling should be done with a focused purpose which should be beneficial to the individual concerned and his or her organisation and the society at large
6. There should be a design and implementation of psycho- academic programmes with emphasis on career education and career counseling in academic institutions this implies that schools should employ psychologists and counseling in academic institutions to help learners to be well orientated academically and focused; and
7. Over- schooling should be moderated such that those termed over-schooled should possess adequate oriented and focused skills for their organization of origin (Khan, 2021)

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the researchers examined consequences of over-schooling in the tertiary institutions that cause power struggling among academic staff. The situation of over-schooling is a societal phenomenon schools and especially at the tertiary level of education. Some of the over-scholars have the desire to satisfy their high demands and needs in the society; that is why this been captured without some economic considerations which have been captured in the paper. Through the literature review, the researchers identified concept of over-schooling, consequences, reasons and solution over-

schooling. This is a pointer that this practice should be carefully examined before anyone (staff) indulges in the process of over-schooling in academic environment like universities, colleges of education and polytechnics

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