

**Administrative Professionals and Effective Management in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu
University, Makurdi**

By

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Abstract

Professionalism in the administration of the university system by staff is crucial for combating inefficiency, minimising political influence, and improving the quality of academic services in the university. This paper examined professionalism and its impact on effective administrative management in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were obtained through a closed-ended questionnaire, while secondary data sources were harnessed to complement the questionnaire. The Taro Yamane (1967) formula was employed to determine a sample size of 400 respondents among the non-teaching staff and academic staff in administrative capacity in the university. The study utilized the system theory by Easton (1965), as its theoretical framework of analysis. The study revealed that professionalism ensures that rules and standards are adhered to, which builds the organisational image and trust of its clients and further helps it to remain competitive in the academic world. The research further indicated that the effectiveness of administrative roles in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University has been hampered by underfunding, necessitating the unequal distribution of resources and poor policy implementation. The paper recommends, among other things that professional development and ethics training programmes be made mandatory to all staff in order to reinforce institutional values, ensure compliance with procedures, and build a strong culture of professionalism in the university administration for effectiveness in academic community service delivery.

Keywords: Professionalism, University, Management, Organisation and Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu

Introduction

The role of professionalism in the effective management of society and organisations worldwide cannot be over emphasised. In contemporary times, the management of universities requires much more professionalism than some decades ago. As universities are being granted more autonomy today, their behaviour is expected to become more customer-oriented, more cost-aware and more sensitive towards the needs of society (Pausits-Pellert, 2009). The administration and management of the universities globally have also become increasingly complex: as these citadels of learning have so far become larger and more multifaceted, the tasks have multiplied and therefore the need to provide skilled management and administration has increased (Kerr, 2001, cited in: Pausits-Pellert 2009). More management tasks have to be fulfilled at the institutional level than before. Professional and effective management is becoming an important prerequisite to enabling higher educational institutions to deliver on their mandate of providing knowledge through research and to solve numerous societal problems.

In most universities in Africa in which Nigeria is included, management of these institutions has been confronted with numerous problems which have in one way or the other affected the effective administrative management of these universities, thereby resulting in reduced quality in teaching and learning. Chief among these problems has been professionalism and efficient management, which have become a recurring demand in the history of the Nigerian educational sector. The effect of these problems on educational management and administration is on the effective teaching and academic performance of the students. This situation has become even more worrisome due to the current global financial crisis, which has impacted world economies, especially in the continent of Africa which Nigeria is inclusive. The system has not only witnessed decayed infrastructures, poor funding, poor quality products, low morale of teachers, inadequate research and development, but also the government's unwillingness to address some of these challenges particularly funding.

Historically, university administrators and academics enjoyed self-regulation in their professional duties (Beck & Young, 2005), emphasizing service and trust in their roles (Milliken, 2004). However, with increasing administrative demands, institutions must now balance autonomy with accountability to improve organisational efficiency. Effective administrative management involves decision-making, resource allocation, and personnel coordination, all of which are critical to maintaining a conducive learning environment and fostering academic excellence (Adegoroye, 2005). The

professionalism of administrative staff directly influences an institution's ability to adapt to change, implement policies effectively, and meet stakeholder expectations.

In Nigerian universities, professionalism in administration is crucial for combating inefficiency, minimizing political influence, and improving service delivery. The administrative structure at Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, plays a fundamental role in ensuring the institution fulfills its educational objectives, including higher education provision, research promotion, community service, and skilled graduate production. Over the years, the university has faced various challenges and opportunities that have shaped its administrative framework. As part of its commitment to academic excellence, enhancing professional ethics in administrative management is vital for ensuring institutional efficiency, trust among stakeholders, and sustainable development. This paper, therefore, assessed the extent to which professionalism has impacted the overall effectiveness of administrative management in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Professionalism

A plethora of literature exists as to the meaning and nature of professionalism. However, professionalism in itself suffers from definitional problems, and this is due to lack of general agreement on the definition of a profession (Burke, 1988). However, Lester (2015, p.3) defines a profession “as a reasonably well-defined occupation that meets a defensible set of criteria for being a profession, whether those are derived from a social construct, trait or sociological perspective”. Such identifiable criteria include education founded on broad learning and culture, practical training and building expertise through experience, rational solutions to problems and formal control of entry-routes (Lester, 2015).

Hilferty (2018), posits that professionalism is a process rather than a product. Becoming truly professional is a lifelong challenge, which comprises the way the administrators think about their profession, and how they behave and implement their knowledge and skills related to their profession. Several studies have indicated that the improvement of professionalism encourages administrative staff to set a higher standard in teaching and learning, towards better performance in the quest for professionalization. In addition, when staff put numerous efforts into improving their work quality, they need professional and efficient leaders to motivate them

to maximize their time and achieve the institutional goals. According to Sachs (2016), professional administrators are responsible for delivering quality results in high performance levels of student learning. The use of modern, research-based instructional methodologies, creative techniques and strategies for creating activities for all types of learners and fostering professional relationships with colleagues all serve as additional examples of administrative professionalism.

University Administration

Administration has to do with getting things done with the accomplishment of the defined objectives. The science of administration is thus, the system of knowledge whereby people may understand relationship, produce results and influence outcomes in any situation where they are organized and work together for a common purpose. University administration thus encompasses every other service that facilitates academic pursuits in an organized structure. University administration, whether vertically or horizontally therefore includes these different units and their inter-relationships to produce maximum desired output: the onus of achieving these lies on the Administrator's efficient management of the resources of the university system (Nwafor and Ololube, 2024).

As a corollary, Aniagboso (2019, p.3), agreeably postulates that “an administrator is an individual who directs the affairs of an organization in such a way as to achieve its primary goals and objectives, and who get things done quickly and efficiently”. In other words, the university administrator is concerned with the efficient management of the resources of the University for maximum output. On this premise, the role of the administrative staff of a university defines him or her as one who manages the budgets, personnel and policy, coordinates and ensures the flow of communication, plans and executes developmental programmes, provides infrastructures and facilities for teaching and learning, ensures interaction and relationship with the university's external and internal environment. These identified characteristics must be done rightly, quickly and efficiently.

University Administration according to Abubakar (2014), is currently a professional terminology to describe the duty of those who work in the University apart from teaching and research. It is also a generic terminology for the Management and Administrative staff of the

University, looking at the University as an organic structure and an entity for the utilization of resources to achieve set objectives.

The objectives of the University are teaching and research and lately community/public service and management of human, material as well as financial resources. The University also aspires to obtain and disseminate truth and produce men of sound mind, impeccable character and to harness every available resource for sustainability and re-engineering of the institutional objective.

Studies such as Ogbari et al. (2020), found out that universities with a higher degree of professionalism among administrative staff had better outcomes in terms of operational efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction. The research highlighted that professionalism contributes to improved communication, accountability, and decision-making within administrative units.

In like manner, Zakaria et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine the level of teachers' professionalism and students' academic success. The relationship between the two variables. The study roped into a sample of 374 from 85 secondary schools. They were asked to respond to the questionnaire based on the Malaysian Teacher Standard (2009) and the 2nd Wave of Malaysian Curriculum Quality Standards (SKPMg2), focusing on the fifth Standard, which is Student Success. The findings showed that the level of teachers' professionalism in their duties has significantly impacted students' success in academics. From the testament of these findings, professionalism is important in the workplace, especially in a knowledge-based setup like the university.

Theoretical Framework

This paper utilised the systems theory as its theoretical framework. Easton (1965), Bertalanffy (1950), Parsons (1951), Katz and Kahn (2015), Ghin (1969), and Koontz et al. (1980) are among the scholars attributed to the systems theory. Cole (1993) sees systems theory as having parts that are interrelated and work together to make a whole. The idea posits that organisations have organised frameworks including functionally interrelated elements or subsystems that operate within discernible patterns of interaction.

This theoretical framework offers a significant analytical perspective for investigating the interplay between professionalism and administrative efficacy in university management. Just

like the human body, where different parts need to work together to stay healthy, a university system like the Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University is made up of several departments and administrative divisions/units that work together to effectively achieve the university's vision and mission. According to the systems theory, universities, like other complex organisations, are not just collections of separate units that work on their own; they are integrated systems where all the elements depend on each other. Every administrative function has an effect on and is affected by others. This makes a dynamic network where professional behaviour in one area affects the whole institution. This interdependence makes systems theory a great way to explain how professionalism in administrative operations of the university helps the university to work better as a whole.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this paper. This was because the study aimed at providing a description of the opinion of staff (non-teaching and academic staff in management positions) on the effect of professionalism on effective administrative duties in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. The university was established in 1992 but commenced operation in 1993. The university has a staff strength of one thousand, nine hundred and twenty-two (1,922) staff spread across twelve faculties, a college, directorates, units and registry department. Out of the total staff population of one thousand, nine hundred and twenty-two, the Yamane statistical formula of 1967 was utilised to select a sample size of four hundred (400) respondents.

According to Yamane (1967), sample size can be determined using the following formula:
$$N = \frac{N}{1+n(e)^2}$$

Where:

N = Total Population,

n = Sample Size Sought,

e = expected error

l = constant

$$n = \frac{1922}{1 + 1922(0.005)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1922}{1 + 1,922(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1922}{4.8075}$$

$$n = 399.791 \approx 400 \text{ (approximately)}$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study is 400.

The stratified technique was employed to disaggregate the university staff population into teaching and non-teaching staff. From the teaching staff category, eighty-nine (89) staff (those in administrative positions like Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Provost, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments and Coordinators of various units who are teaching staff were selected based on their roles in administrative management in the University. The stratified technique was utilised in the study because of the large population size of the respondents, which may hinder the researcher from achieving their target within the stipulated time of the study. From the non-teaching staff category, 311 staff were selected. The simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that every staff member in the population had an equal and likely chance of being selected from the sample.

Data for the accomplishment of this paper was obtained from a semi-structured questionnaire instrument with closed-ended questions complemented by secondary data sources such as published journal articles, textbooks, published and unpublished research theses and dissertations, government gazettes, and online materials relevant to the subject matter.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Biodata of Responding Population

The data generated from the research indicates that, out of the total respondents from the sampled population, 268 were males, representing 70.2% while 114 were females, representing 29.8%. While this analysis indicated an opinion that cuts across both the male and female sexes, it has been shown that the male respondents were the majority by a wide margin in the study area.

Educational Level of Respondents

From the data generated, it can be deduced that, 118 respondents have obtained post graduate qualifications, 185 respondents obtained degrees, 25 respondents got NCE/ND, 41 respondents got secondary school certificate, 7 respondents got Primary education, while 6 respondents got other forms of education which is not specified representing 30.9%, 48.4%, 6.5%, 10.7%, 1.8%,

and 1.6% respectively. This analysis shows that there has been an indication that the respondents are educated, as 30.8% obtained postgraduate qualifications while 48.4% obtained first degrees, which is a good indication in the level of education of the staff in the university.

Length of Service of Staff

From the data generated, it could be inferred that 25 respondents from the university have served from a range of 1-10 years, 217 respondents from 11- 20 years, 98 respondents from 21-30 years, and 42 respondents from 30 and above years representing 6.5%, 56.8%, 25.7%, and 11.0% respectively. This analysis shows that those who serve from 11-30 years are the majority, and they constitute larger portion of the staff strength, which is a good indication that they are professional and have gained experience to give vital information on the subject matter under investigation.

Rank of Respondents

The rank of the respondents of the study indicated that 228 of the respondents representing 59.7% were senior teaching and non-teaching staff with the university, while 159 respondents representing 40.3% were junior teaching and non-teaching staff. The responses therefore imply that senior staff cadre respondents dominated the study, which is a good indication that the study's findings would be more valid due to the years of service to the university, which have accorded them such status within the university.

Measuring the Impact of Professionalism on Administrative Roles in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi

Diligence and transparency foster an efficient work environment in the University

The result on the impact of professionalism in efficient university operations illustrates that 268 (70.2%) respondents agreed to the influence of professionalism in ensuring an efficient and effective work environment that is characterized by adherence to procedures, rules and standards, 33 (8.6%) were unsure of the influence of professionalism in university management while 81 (21.2%) of the respondents disagreed. The results implied that professionalism enhances organizational efficiency, discipline, and adherence to institutional standards. This suggests that professionalism is viewed as fundamental to achieving operational excellence in university management.

Staff qualifications and service delivery in the university

The data collected on the above reveals that 265 (69.4%) of the respondents agreed that professionalism in the university environment brings satisfaction and efficient service delivery, 35 (9.2%) respondents were undecided, whereas 82 (21.4%) of the respondents disagreed. The result implies that professionalism brings about efficient service delivery, but the high disagreement rate 21.4% indicates dissatisfaction among a significant minority. This may lead to uneven service quality across departments or issues with responsiveness that need to be addressed.

Expertise amongst administrative and teaching staff creates impactful communication and fosters collaborative and respectful relationships within the university community for effective problem solving towards enhancing academic excellence

The study on the above revealed that professionalism created an impactful communication amongst staff and fosters collaborative and respective relationship in the university for effective problem solving for academic excellence as 305 (79.8%) agreed, 28 (7.4%) were undecided, whereas 49(12.8) of the respondents disagreed.

Investigate Factors hindering professionalism in administrative roles in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.

Chronic Underfunding Limits Operations of the University and Effective Administrative Roles in Particular

Data from the above study reveal that 296 (77.5%) of the respondents agreed that the university is underfunded which limits its effective management, especially administrative procedures and processes while 62 (16.2%) of the respondents differed from the assertion, while 24 of the respondents representing 6.3% were undecided in their opinions. The result shows a wide and consensus view pointing to the chronic underfunding of the university as a major challenge undermining the effective professional practices, institutional effectiveness and quality academic, consultancy, and community development efforts of the university.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study on the impact of professionalism on administrative roles in the University revealed that professionalism is important in organisational management as it ensures an efficient work environment characterised by strict adherence to rules and standards of operations in the organisation, and MOUAM is not an exception. The study further revealed that

only professionals have the capability and competence to carry out their given tasks effectively, and this has helped organisations gain a good public image and credibility with their teaming clients and competitors. The university, over the years, has been rated among the fast-developing universities in Nigeria as a result of professionalism. From the result of the data and analysis it clearly shows that professionalism is vital to efficiency, service delivery, communication, and trust. The consensus in the result reflects a positive attitude toward institutional reforms that are grounded in professionalism. This result relates to the postulation of Jean-Bindley, et al. (2025), where they argued that professional behaviour significantly improves the organisation while Ahmed & Arabi, (2025) findings on professional conduct reveal that professionalism gives opportunities for career development and positively affects employee engagement with the clients and the general public, thereby enhancing organisation efficiency and output.

Findings of the study on some of the inhibiting factors of professionalism of administrative roles in the university revealed that issues such as underfunding, unequal resource allocation (material, human and financial resources) to departments, units, directorates and faculties, as well as complex university procedures which often slow decision making and policy implementation has hindered the effective and efficient operations of administrative roles in the university. The result collaborates with the findings of Nwankwo et al. (2018) that inadequate resources, lack of training and resistance to changes are impediments to professionalism and effective management of higher institutions. The system theory's emphasis on complexity of organization, open ecosystem made up of interrelated, interdependent subsystems, if these inhibiting factors mentioned above are not corrected, the failure or change in one area will directly impacts the entire university's ability to achieve its aims and objectives.

Based on the result, the implication of this on the university is that, it will limit the university's ability to provide essential resources for effective administrative management, thereby affecting everything from infrastructure maintenance to technology, staff development and entire academic system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings show the critical role of professionalism in enhancing administrative effectiveness. Professionalism promotes discipline, adherence to institutional policies, and ethical conduct, which collectively improve organisational efficiency. In MOAUM, professional practices would not only improve internal operations but also enhance the institution's public image, credibility, and stakeholder trust factors, which are vital for long-term competitiveness and sustainability. The study also shows that critical underfunding is a central problem affecting professionalism and administrative management in Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi (MOAUM).

Inadequate financial resources have resulted in inequitable allocation of materials and human resources, undermining policy implementation and demotivating staff. This financial constraint restricts the university's capacity to uphold professionalism and deliver effective administrative services. The study, therefore, concludes that for Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University to achieve its academic and administrative goals, it must embrace professionalism at all levels of management. This includes investing in monitoring systems, promoting transparent and accountable leadership, prioritising staff welfare, and adopting global best practices required in a learning environment. Equally, adequate funding must be pursued to support these reforms. Without addressing these critical issues, the university risks continuing to decline in administrative performance and academic standards.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made to enhance professionalism and effective administrative management in the University:

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit should be established in the university with clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for both teaching and non-teaching staff, while institutionalising regular audits and maintenance schedules to promote transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency.

The university should diversify its funding sources by establishing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and launching alumni fundraising initiatives to supplement government allocations and ensure adequate funding for professional and administrative reforms which may

make available funds to implement academic policies that will meet the vision and mission of the university.

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