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Supervision of Administrative Staff in The Faculties: The Role of The Registry

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Abstract

Staff poor attitude to work has been a major concern to management and stakeholders of the University of Education, Winneba, particularly the College of Technology Education, Kumasi. The most culprit of such poor attitude to work is perceived to be among the administrative staff at the various faculties and academic departments. Effective supervision has been identified as solution to poor attitude to work among the administrative staff. The main objective of this paper was to investigate the effects of administrative staff attitude towards work within the faculties. The study recommends that faculty officers, being the representatives of the Registrar should be assigned the full responsibility of supervising administrative staff at the faculties in the University.

Keywords: supervision, attitude, administrative staff, faculties, registry

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of administration in higher education institutions is to provide maintenance, integration and coordination, support and supervision serving the core missions of teaching and learning, research and public service. Although administration should not be considered merely subservient to academic activities, it plays a primarily supporting role that secures and enables accomplishment of the institution's core functions (Kivistö&Pekkola, 2017). Fielden and Lockwood (1973) opined that the role of administration is to provide support at all levels and areas of the University and to perform stewardship and management functions. The administrative staff are therefore required to provide this support by engaging in a wide range of activities to ensure that the university attains its vision. The administrative staff are the non-teaching staff who run the various departments including registry, finance, etc who service various committees, who see to it that decisions made by the university authorities are carried out. Administrative staff in universities are also concerned with how to manage resources allocated to their departments. According to Adu-Oppong (2014), administrators manage budget, personnel and policy, shape institutional priorities and practice, coordinate and communicate. The universities would therefore not function without a committed hardworking administrative staff who take a broad view of the institution's interest (Adu-Oppong, 2014).

Attitudes of some of the administrative staff towards work however, have been questioned by stakeholders of many institutions including staff in the University. Students, prospective students, staff and visitors alike have often complained about the conduct of some staff demonstrating unsatisfactory delivery of services. Some staff have been accused of not reporting to work on time, not found behind their desks as well as leaving offices before the closing time. Poor attitude to work has a negative

impact on productivity level of organisations and creates bad image for the organisations. According to Othman and Suleiman(2013), organisations cannot prosper well, succeed, grow or even survive without adequately addressing the issue of poor attitude to work.

Staff are usually expected to portray good attitude and best character to their customers both within and outside the organisation. Attitude towards work has a great repercussion on organizational development and constitutes a major source of concern to employers, regulators, customers and some co-workers. Consequently, in a professional work setting, poor attitude can affect everyone and cause conflicts among workers.

Poor attitude to work has been a major concern to management and some staff of the University of Education, Winneba, particularly the College of Technology Education, Kumasi. The most culprit of such poor attitude to work is perceived to be among the administrative staff at the various faculties and academic departments. Reports reaching the Department of Human Resource (HR) and other records available to the Department indicate that whilst most staff report to work very late others do not even sign the attendance book. What is more worrying is that some of the reports on staff attendance sent to the HR departments usually give different impression from what happens on the ground. Such poor attitude to work could be attributed to poor supervision.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. find out administrative staff attitude towards work in the faculties
2. explore effective supervision in the faculties
3. the need for faculty officers to take full charge of supervision of administrative staff in the faculties

Effective supervision of Administrative staff by faculty officers would improve the administrative system in Academic Departments and Faculties in the College. When faculty officers provide effective leadership and supervision required for senior and junior staff to perform efficiently, Deans and Heads of Department would have more time to concentrate on academic issues. Administration in the university would improve and the university as whole will benefit.

FINDINGS:

Supervision of Administrative Staff in the Faculties

Observation made indicated that senior and junior staff at the various faculties and academic departments view themselves as responsible to Deans and Heads of Department instead of faculty officers, supervision of junior and senior staff were found to be ineffective at the faculties and academic departments.

Challenges of faculty officer in ensuring effective supervision in Faculties

Faculty officers being representative of the Registrar at the faculties are unable to provide effective leadership and supervision of junior and senior staff as certain administrative duties such as approval of annual leave application, recommendation for promotion and annual performance appraisal were at the discretion of Deans and Heads of Academic Department.

Supervision Defined

Supervision is a workplace activity in which a manager oversees the activities and responsibilities of employees he/she manages. It is an important job function for managers at all levels of an organisation. Supervision has been defined in several ways by different authors to suit their specific purposes.

According to Omisore (2014), traditionally, supervision refers to the managerial or leadership function of overseeing the productivity and progress of employees; typically

the employees who report directly to the supervisor. Bernard (2005), as cited in Omisore (2014), defines supervision as the ability of superiors to influence the behaviour of subordinates to take a particular course of action. It is the art of influencing people towards achieving organizational goals. Omisore (2014), further clarifies that quality of supervision therefore refers to the effectiveness of the superiors in influencing the behaviour of subordinates in taking a particular course of action.

Bernard and Goodyear (2004) defined supervision as a relationship between senior and junior members of a profession that (a) is evaluative (b) extend over time, (c) serves to enhance the skills of the junior person, (d) monitors the quality of services offered by the junior person and, (e) act as gate keeping to the profession. In effect supervision is managing others through leadership and personal influence. Supervision is then seen as a control mechanism which has the task of correcting the activities of individuals and groups to ensure that their performance is in accordance with plans. Supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the junior professional(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients she, he, or they see, and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the particular profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

According to Winardi (1983), Supervision means evaluating the performance and if necessary, implementing corrective measures so that the results of work will be in line with the plans. Fayol, one of the pioneers of management science as quoted by Harahap(2001), argues that supervision includes checking whether all the efforts going on are in accordance with the set plans, orders issued, and organisation's ideals. It is also intended to identify the weaknesses and mistakes to be avoided in the future

occurrence. Thus, supervision is guiding the activities of people who perform the work. It includes planning, organizing, directing, and controlling the work and the activities of subordinates or employees. Supervision (controlling) can be considered as an activity to locate, correct crucial irregularities in the outcome of the planned activities. Supervision is done by the leaders of the duties and obligations in an organization, company or government agency. The direction and purpose of supervision is a manifestation of increased efficiency, effectiveness, rationality and order in the achievement of objectives and the implementation of tasks of an organization, company or government agency (Rulandari, 2017).

People who have been given supervisory roles are to direct and guide employees whenever they deviate from doing the right thing. Directing junior officers may include setting good examples, using rewards and punishments to bring them back to the norm. Ukeje (1992) defined supervision as the element of administrative process, which is concerned with effort to guide the day-to-day activities of the work group by stimulating, directing and coordinating the workers and their efforts, and cultivating good working personal relationship so that they all work towards means of achieving targets.

From the above definitions, it will be prudent for management to strengthen supervision that aims at guiding and coordinating the work of staff at the departments and faculties in such a way that performance targets are achieved.

Osaе-Apenteng (2012) observed that supervision is not just about the position one occupies in an organisation or the delivery of instructions to satisfy the achievement of administrative objectives, but rather supervision is a developmental process to support and enhance individuals' acquisition of the motivation, autonomy, self-awareness, and skills necessary to effectively accomplish the job at hand.

According to an Abstract developed in collaboration with Evolv and the Centre for Human Resources at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, supervisors have a large effect on how well employees follow their daily schedule, including when they show up to work as well as how precisely they clock in and out. (<http://www.corporatelearning.com/downloads/17930Resources/EvolvOnDemand-supervisor-Effects-WorkforcesProductivity.pdf>) The abstract concluded that “bosses matter”. For them, given that supervisor affects the output of many employees, this suggests that picking the right supervisors is much more important than picking the right employees. If a supervisor is not present enough, or is too overbearing, then the reaction from employees will only be fear, resentment, and displeasure in their work (Duffy, 2002). The productivity will not be as good as expected, and the employee turnover will increase.

Effects of Poor Supervision

Supervision is an extremely vital part of a workplace that intends to maximize its success potential. It naturally follows, then, that poor supervision in a workplace is one of the primary obstacles to achieving potential success by an organization. Effects of poor supervision in an organisation may include the following:

- There is no enough responsibility for taking action for the prevention of problems, mistakes, accidents, and injuries.
- Poor supervision can be a contributing factor to low productivity. The National Business Research Institute notes that productivity suffers when supervisors do not keep promises, give inappropriate credit or blame others for their mistakes. Supervisors who are too controlling can unwittingly slow down work flow by requiring even the simplest task to have their (supervisor's) approval. A hands-off management style also can be a problem. When supervisors are uninvolved

or unavailable, employees have no one to turn to for direction or guidance. Supervisors who adopt a positive attitude help foster the same attitude in their employees (Omisore, 2014).

- According to Hinkin and Tracy (2000), poor supervision opens the door for unethical behaviours within an organization. With poor supervision, employees commonly feel that their work is not valued by the company, and loyalty is difficult to form. Without loyalty, employees are more likely to deviate from acceptable organisational practices. Such activities can include reporting late to work, theft, decreased employee effort, using equipment without authorization, and falsifying documents, among other things.
- Poor supervision drives good employees away. Reports from OPM, MSPB, and others have noted the impact of poor supervision on moral and turnover as undesired turnover, adds to recruitment and training costs. The idea that poor supervision drives good employees away is by no means confined to the public sector. For example, a Gallup report dated April 19, 1999, found that “employees do not leave companies, they leave managers and supervisors. The impact that a supervisor has in today’s workplace can be either very valuable or very costly to the organization and the people who work there.”
- Problems that require third-party intervention increase, supervisory behaviour impacts the number of grievances and complaints filed by non-supervisory employees. The cost for resolving these issues can be very significant.

Current Status of Supervision in Faculties and Academic Departments at COLTEK

It is widely accepted that administrative staff working in the faculties and academic departments are responsible to the Deans of Faculty and Heads of Academic Department. Not only do the Deans and Heads of Department assign them other tasks to perform, they also approve their leave application, recommend them for confirmation of appointments, promotion and whenever they apply for some facilities in the University among others. They are therefore responsible for the supervision of such staff of the faculties and departments.

The Deans and Heads of Department are mainly teaching staff who spend most of their time teaching and researching. Due to their work schedule, some of them could go straight to the classroom early in the morning and return to the office after lectures. As part of their roles, the Deans and Heads of Department also attend regular meetings in and outside campus, particularly at Winneba. Some of such meetings could take them away for days.

Paradoxically, the nature of work of these Deans and Heads of Department makes it very difficult to effectively monitor and supervise the behaviour of staff within their faculties and departments. It appears that staff take advantage of the busy schedule of their immediate supervisors to misbehave including reporting to work late and other truancy behaviours. It is believed that some staff do not even report for duty when their heads of department travel outside campus. In view of the above, supervision of the junior and senior staff within the faculties appears not to be very effective. The effect of lack of effective supervision of staff of the faculties and department is enormous. They include the following: Lack of commitment to work, demonstration of unethical behaviors, frequent absenteeism, reporting late to work and also leaving office before

scheduled time, malingering, low productivity, de-motivation and withdrawal of output.

The Registrar of University of Education, Winneba

In the University set up, the Registrar is the head of the non-teaching staff in the administration and he/she is normally referred to as the Chief Administrator of the institution (UEW Statute, October, 2007). The Registrar, as the Chief Administrator of the University coordinates the various administrative functions of the university's central administration. He/She is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the University under the Vice-Chancellor and in accordance with policy directives of the University Council. The Registrar is also the secretary to the University Council and the Academic Board. He/She provides strategic advice and briefings to the Vice-Chancellor and is expected to provide leadership and management across a wide-range of activities (UEW Statute, October, 2007).

This is in line with the statutory provisions of the University of Education, Winneba. According to the University of Education Act 2004, Act 672 "The University shall have a Registrar who shall be appointed by the Council and shall act as secretary to the Council and such other Boards and Committees as the Council may direct". Statute 9(b) of the University of Education, Winneba Statute, 2007 states among others that "the Registrar shall be responsible for providing secretarial services for all Boards and Committees of Council and the Academic Board and its Sub-Committees"

From the foregoing, the Registrar performs the following functions:

- a. The Registrar provides advice to the Vice Chancellor
- b. He/She provides secretarial services for all boards and committees of Council and Academic Board and its sub committees.

c. He/She provides administrative support for the day to day administration of the University

d. He/She provides leadership and management across a wide-range of activities

The Act and the Statute therefore place enormous tasks on the Registrar as he/she is required to provide leadership in a wide range of activities in the University of Education, Winneba and its various campuses. In order to perform such functions effectively and efficiently, the University appoints different categories of staff to assist the Registrar. To this end, Junior and Senior staff from clerks to Chief Administrative Assistants are appointed. In addition, Senior Members of the Registrar's offices, ranging from Assistant Registrars to Deputy Registrars are also appointed to directly assist and represent the Registrar in the discharge of his/her functions/duties.

Some of these staff are sent as Faculty Officers and Administrative Assistants to represent the Registrar at the various faculties and departments and to perform the functions of the Registrar.

This implies that officers ranging from Administrative Assistants to Deputy Registrars appointed to the various offices of the University perform their functions on behalf of the Registrar. To ensure that such officers perform effectively and efficiently, the Registrar is required to provide effective leadership and supervision for such staff of the University irrespective of the offices they find themselves.

Faculty Officers

The Faculty officers are the representatives of the Registrar at the faculties. They are therefore expected to step in to provide the leadership and supervision required for all the senior and junior staff posted to the faculties and the various departments to work for the Registrar. This will fill the gap of lack of effective supervision created as a result of busy schedules of faculty members at the various faculties and departments of the

University. Faculty Officers are the chief supervisors of both the junior and senior staff of the faculty. Okronipa et.al (2017) described Faculty Officers, as “multi-faceted individuals whose concerns are for the faculty and the university as a whole In more specific terms, the Faculty Officer is seen as responsible for:

- Servicing the Faculty Board and all its sub-committees.
- Servicing the Faculty’s Appointments and Promotions Committee.
- Students’ Services – that is admission, registration, matriculation, graduation, etc.
- Maintenance of students’ records for examinations.
- Assisting in the preparation of teaching and examination timetables for the faculty in a decentralized system.
- Preparation of annual budget and administration of expenditure from funds available to the faculty.
- Supervision of staff of the faculty (non-teaching staff).
- Creation, retention and disposal of records of the faculty and departments.
- Control and maintenance of both movable and non-movable assets of the faculty.
- Advising the Dean and Heads of department on the administration of the faculty and department.
- Planning and organization of all meetings, public lectures/seminars/conferences of the faculty.
- Monitoring and implementation of the statutes, rules, policies and regulation of the University at the faculty and departments.

Okronipa et al. (2017), concluded that faculty officers as the chief administrators of the faculties have a role and responsibility to co-ordinate and direct affairs at the faculty in getting things done within the University’s settings.

CONCLUSIONS

Supervisors play a pivotal role in the development of workers under their supervision. Leadership, training, employee morale and task direction are among the central responsibilities of effective supervisors. In acknowledging that it is the duty of supervisors to ensure that employee job performance is at maximum potential, it would be advantageous for managers to ensure that effective supervision is provided at faculties, departments, sections and units within the University. This will ensure that the vision and mission of the University are achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, it is recommended that regular and intensive supervision should be provided at the faculties and departments to promote quality service delivery by junior and senior staff. The faculties play very critical roles in the achievement of a university's vision and mission. The supervision at the faculties and departments needs to be strengthened.

- Faculty Officers should supervise the signing of attendance books by senior and junior staff.
- Faculty Officers should be made to appraise performance of junior and senior staff in the faculties and academic departments every academic year.
- Faculty Officers should be tasked to recommend junior and senior staff for promotion.
- Faculty Officers should be responsible for approving casual and annual leave of senior and junior staff of the faculties and departments in consultation with Deans and Heads of Department.
- Faculty Officers should organize annual orientations and trainings for such staff within their faculties.

- The supervision of junior and senior staff at the faculties should be made clear to avoid role overlap of Deans, Heads of Academic Departments and Faculty Officers.

Anticipated benefits of improved supervision at COLTEK

Supervision is a developmental process designed to support and enhance an individual's acquisition of the motivation, autonomy, self-awareness, and skills necessary to effectively accomplish the job at hand (Omisore, 2014). When there is effective supervision of staff at the faculties and departments, the University stands to gain immensely. Some of the benefits are enumerated below:

- i. Staff work better and stop wasting time on irrelevant activities. This leads to a boost in productivity
- ii. Effective supervision provides accurate records which enables managers to be able to evaluate the performance of employees well.
- iii. Effective employee supervision also leads to proper office management. Employees will work within the working hours.

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