A Study of the Professionalism of Student Affairs at a Nigerian Private University

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Authors' contributions

This article was conceded in teamwork between all authors. All writers read and ratified the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study applied data from descriptive background to conduct a research on student affairs professionalism at a Nigerian private University. The study among other things investigated the: programmes of study of student affairs personnel; percentage of staff who are interested in student affairs profession, the percentage of personnel who have acquired degrees and training in Student Affairs profession. The study engaged the use of questionnaire to collect data from 108 respondents. The results of the investigation showed that majority of staff members had never obtained any degree in student affairs profession. Also, the findings revealed that absolute majority

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of respondents had never received any training in a student affairs profession. It also indicated that majority of respondents lack any knowledge of appreciable student affairs service, as a career. Following this, recommendations were made on how personnel in student affairs can obtain degrees and training in student affairs career. Suggestions were also made on to the commencement student affairs professionalism not only in the institution under study but also in African higher institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Merriam-Webster dictionary cited in [1] perceives professionalism as a career that demands special skills and knowledge, which can only be acquired through long years of studying, teaching and training in higher educational institutions. In the light of this, therefore, to become a professional is demanding and it takes a committed and perseverance spirit to attain the height in educational institutions and work organisations after many years of practice. These criterions distinguished professionals from non-professionals among mankind.

In all fields of study in science and technology, professionals are well acknowledged due to their significant contributions to societal development. Based on this, they are well respected, honoured and highly remunerated than other careers in social, behavioural sciences and humanities in Nigeria.

Student affairs administration to the best of our knowledge could be regarded as a career carved out from the fields of study in social, behavioural and humanities in advanced nations higher education system and it has been greatly developed to warrant professionals in this field of human endeavour forming powerful organisations, such as (NASPA) which is responsible for sponsoring the establishment and expansion of student affairs administration in other parts of the world, i.e. South Africa. Given this, issues relating to student affairs administration have been widely discussed in the literature emanating from the tertiary institutions in developed countries [2-9], while little is known on this subject in sub-Sahara African (SSA) higher education system.

The poor level of educational development in the region [10] seems to have hindered the advancement of student affairs departments and also jeopardized the commencement of a career in student affairs in their tertiary institutions. With

particular reference to Nigeria, previous studies have attributed this draw back to bad leadership and poor funding of the education [11]. Scholars such as [12-13] have also associated this challenge with the endemic corruption among the Nigerian elites in government agencies, parastatals, commissions etc. Also, it has also been argued that the elite class in the university administration across the country has contributed meaningfully to its endemic nature [14-15].

The foregoing and other challenges hindering the delivery of quality education in the public sector higher education institutions [16] prompted the establishment of private universities as a panacea [17-18]. The sector since inception provides state-of-the-art facilities to adequately accommodate both undergraduate and postgraduate students on campus. It has also brought to the fore reengineering of student affairs department [19] to foster a variety of programmes such as Students' Career Development (SCD), Students Work-Study Programme (SWP), Student Tutorial Scheme (STS) and Faculty Support Programme (FSP) [20], Psychosocial Counselling Scheme (PCS), Academic Counseling Initiative (ACI), Social Work Service (SWS), Students with Disabilities Scheme (SDS), Parent Support Idea (PSI), Sexual Assault and Harassment Awareness Scheme (SAHS) [21]. Within the student affairs department, currently, personnel such as Hall Administrative Officers, Hall Administrative Assistants, Student Welfare Officers, and Monitoring Students and Security Officers, Hall of Residence Facilities Maintenance Administrative Officers [19] and so on have evolved.

In spite of the above efforts and the determination of the management of private universities to provide solutions to factors hindering quality education in the country, concrete actions towards professionalizing student affairs administration, which is expected to enhance the performances of student affairs personnel towards quality service delivery for students is yet to be considered. Moreover,

despite the desire of many Nigerian private universities to be listed among the leading universities in the world, professionalism of student affairs, designed to promote excellence in the area of Student Affairs Administration, has hardly been given a top priority. Besides, studies on student affairs professionalism (administration) in Nigerian higher educational system are very scanty. Even among the existing literature [22-24], none focus on student affairs professionalism (administration). It is on the foregoing premise that this study was conceived.

The study is therefore set to investigate the: (i) programmes of study of student affairs personnel, (ii) percentage of staff who possess a degree in student affairs profession, (iii) percentage of personnel who have attended training in student affairs profession, (iv) percentage of personnel who belong to professional bodies in student affairs department, (v) percentage of personnel who had pre knowledge of student affairs profession prior to their appointment, (vi) percentage of personnel who perceive student affairs as a career, and (vii) percentage of staff who are interested in student affairs professionalism.

The importance of this endeavour is hinged on the usefulness of student affairs career to stakeholders in academia (students, staff, faculty, parents and educational institutions) which has hitherto been neglected since the inception of tertiary education in the country several years ago.

The study is divided into the following sections, namely: Introduction; literature review; methods of data collection, discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

1.1 Student Affairs Professionalism: An Overview

Personnel who work in the student affairs department are called "student affairs practitioners, student affairs staff, or university administrators" P. 1 of [25] in developed nations. They provide services and support for students in tertiary institutions. Student affairs professionals are saddled with the task of developing initiatives, provide advice to student organizations and student representatives and to also carry out research on how to meet the needs of all students.

Student Affairs Personnel or College Student Personnel (CSP) Graduate Programmes according to [26] include classes in psychology, business, law, communication, inter and intra-personal counseling, higher education, and group dynamics. These programmes could be of help in establishing a foundation for creating social interaction among students, lecturers, staff and parents. This author believes that CSP programmes are found in departments of Leadership, Counseling, Psychology and Education. Also, they can be associated with student development theories, such as the Astin's Theory of Involvement [27].

Given the above, professionalizing student affairs means designing a special curriculum on students matters which should be made compulsory for whosoever is interested in the profession. Such a curriculum could include graduate work with a complementary assistantship which is usually considered an entry level position for anybody who is interested in student services in many developed nations higher education system [28]. However, it could be run as a part-time paraprofessional position with compensation from the school authority, which could be in the form of a tuition wavering and a stipend [28] to interested students.

1.2 State of Knowledge on Student Affairs Profession in Developed Nations

Going by the level of development of student affairs career in higher education system in many developed nations, it could be deduced that the profession has become an integral part of their educational system. Apart from the fact that other professions emerged from the developed societies, the elite class in these countries are always interested in innovation and service to humanity [29]. This could probably be responsible for their interest in encouraging the establishment and development of student affairs profession in higher institutions in other parts of the world, South Africa is a clear case in point.

The profession has grown to become a profitable career to be fully engaged in, in one's life time. However, it could be observed that certain factors must have been responsible for this positive development. These are briefly explained below:

1.3 Factors that Make Student Affairs Professionalism Enticing in Developed Nations Higher Education System

Like other professionals in advanced societies, student affairs professionals are well treated, remunerated and properly recognized in higher education system. Thus, the profession seems to be enticing like other professions in science and technology. This could be attributed to the following factors:

1.3.1 The establishment of publications in student affairs career

Publications in forms of journals, books and periodicals that are not known in the literature in many Third World societies are in existence in tertiary institutions in developed countries. In respect of journals, there are flourishing outlets that publish research papers conducted by scholars on student affairs issues on a regular basis. The purpose of this is to provide solutions to various problems affecting students and staff in academia. Also, concepts and practices related to college student affairs works are given priority in most of these publications. Hence, many scholars have become professors in this area while many are consultants to different institutions and organisations through their publications on student services.

Some of the existing journals in student affairs are:

i. The Journal of student affairs at Colorado State University, USA, popularly known as the Journal of Student affairs in Higher Education [30],
ii. The College Student Affairs Journal, owned by Information Age Publishing [31],
iii. The Journal of College Student Development, operated by the College Education Institution [32],
iv. The Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice operated by the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education [33],
v. Higher Education and Student Affairs [34] etc.

Most of these journals operate both online and print version with the aim of granting students, faculty, staff and researchers ample access to materials that could ensure academic excellence and breakthroughs, across the world.

In areas of book publications, several books on student affairs career are evident in the literature to enable students and professionals in the field of student affair acquire knowledge and understanding, in order to develop their career [35-37]. Some of the inspiring books written by experts in student affairs administration in developed nations are listed below:

a. Beginning Your Journey: A Guide for New Professionals in Student Affairs addresses the most critical and current issues for those entering the field, edited by Marilyn J. Amey and Lori M. Reesor, 2015 [38].
b. Creating Inclusive Campus Environments for Cross-Cultural Learning and Student Engagement, edited by Shaun R. Harper, 2015 [39].
c. Learning Reconsidered 2: Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience, edited by Richard P. Keeling, 2006 [40].
d. Assessing Student Learning and Development: A Handbook for Practitioners, edited by Marilee J. Bresciani, Carrie L. Zelna, and James A. Anderson, 2004 [41].
e. Building a Culture of Evidence in Student Affairs: A Guide for Leaders and Practitioners, edited by Marguerite McGann Culp and Gwendolyn Jordan Dungy [42].
f. Learning Is Not A Sprint: Assessing and Documenting Student Leader Learning in Cocurricular Involvement, edited by Kathy M. Collins and Darby M. Roberts, 2012 [43].
g. More Than Listening: A Casebook for Using Counseling Skills in Student Affairs Work, edited by Ruth Harper, Nona L. Wilson, and Associates, 2010 [44].
h. Decisions Matter: Using a Decision-Making Framework with Contemporary Student Affairs Case Studies, edited by Annemarie Vaccaro, Brian McCoy, Delight Champagne, and Michael Siegel, 2013 [45].
i. College Student Mental Health, edited by Sherry A. Benton & Stephen L. Benton, 2006 [46].
j. Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators, by NASPA, 2015 [47].

These and many other life transforming books not listed in this section are lacking in higher education system in Nigeria. On a more serious note, it serves as a concern to emerging student

affairs scholars, students and staff of higher institutions in the country.

1.3.2 The availability of prominent professionals in student affairs career

It is evident in the literature that many personnel and students in developed nations have succeeded in carving a niche for themselves in student affair profession. These include, but not limited to Dr. Kevin Kruger, Raven Whitely, Mr. Kevin Bailey, Mr. Enrique Ramos, Mr. Thomas Miller [48], Dr. Kathleen Callahan and Mr. Dorsey Spencer. Such persons seem to be delighted or highly pleased to be associated with the career.

These personalities are more or less role models in the field of student affairs to the young ones. Their success could prompt many students and persons from other careers to develop an interest in student affairs professionalism [49].

1.3.3 The establishment of professional bodies in student affairs administration

In order to ensure a virile student affairs profession, professional bodies are established to tackle numerous challenges confronting members, students and staff in developed nations tertiary institutions. The oldest of these professional bodies (NASPA) was founded in 1919 at the University of Wisconsin [50].

These bodies are non-profit organisations established to serve the interest of students and staff. For instance, the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International for instance focuses on ensuring excellent accommodation for students [51] while the National Student Employment Association assists students who engaged in work-study programme while in school [52]. In respect of the needs of the members of staff in student affairs department, the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education [40] ensure that they are well remunerated, trained and adequately developed.

Since the creation of NASPA, several other professional organisations in student affairs administration have emerged and they have spread across different continents of the world. Some of these professional bodies are listed below:

1. The American Association of School Personnel Administrators (APASPA) [53].
2. The Virginia Association of School Personnel Administrators -VASPA [54].
3. The West Virginia School Personnel Association-WVSPA [55].
4. The Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) [56].
5. The Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) [57].
6. The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) [58].
7. The Association for College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) [51].
8. The National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) [59]
9. The National Association for Managers of Student Services in Colleges (UK) [60].
10. The National Association of Student Employment Administrators (NSEA) [40].
11. The European University College Association (EucA) [61].

These professional bodies are relatively lacking in Nigerian higher education system and it is gradually becoming a concern to scholars in the country. Several student affairs practitioners across the globe belong to most of these associations. It is not certain if any member of staff in the student affairs department in the institution under study belongs to any of them. Therefore, this study intends to discover the membership of student affair personnel in the institution under study on the above professional bodies.

1.3.4 The establishment of curriculums and degrees in student affairs professionalism

As indicated in [62] there are various programmes of study in student affairs administration in higher education system in developed nations. These include: "a Master of Science in Student Affairs in Higher Education, a Master of Education in Teaching and Learning-Student Services, or a Master of Arts in College Student Development or a Ph.D. Program in Student Affairs Development" (P. 1). Moreover, Course descriptions of higher education and student affairs in the college of education, University of Iowa, are cases in point [63]. Given this, it is possible to specialize in student affairs administration from the first degree to the PhD level.

Most of the prominent professionals in student affairs administration in developed nations higher educational system must have obtained one or more degrees in programmes of study illustrated

above. They are still available for students, faculty members and staff who are interested in student affairs administration, not only in developed nations, but also from different parts of the world.

However, it has not been established in the literature if any of the personnel in the department of student affairs in the institution under study has ever acquired any degree in student affairs profession. The present study intends to investigate this problem.

1.4 State of Knowledge on Student Affairs Profession in Africa

Student affairs profession is a recent career in higher education system in Africa. For many years in the past, it was not known in tertiary institutions across the continent. Its origin and gradual development could be traced to the efforts of the management of South African higher institutions who collaborated with the management of some of the higher educational system in developed nations in order to establish the career in Africa. World bodies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [64] equally contributed to its emergence and its development to the present level in the continent.

For its continual expansion, the management of tertiary institutions can subscribe to several courses in student affairs highlighted above. Also, various factors that make student affairs profession enticing for people in developed nations can equally be studied and used to encourage student affairs personnel to develop an interest in student affairs profession in their various institutions. Holders of degrees in Arts, Humanities, Social, Behavioural and Management Sciences can be recruited and motivated to start a career in student affairs from 'assistantship level' [62]. It could enable them to learn the theories, assessments and evaluations related to the practice of student affairs and how to help students thrive in a college setting [62].

The management of tertiary institutions in Africa can equally collaborate with their counterparts in New York University (NYU) that engages master's programme in Higher Education and Student Affairs to prepare students for careers in higher education NYU [65]. The curriculum in NYU "encompasses broad themes in the history and development of higher education both in the U.S. and abroad, and includes the study of colleges as institutions; student learning and development; the profession of student affairs; research and assessment methods; access to higher education and diversity, and the theory and practice of leadership" (p. 1 of the above).

Furthermore, the strategy of the management of the NYU hinges on selecting "students who have performed very well academically in their undergraduate years" (p. 1 of the above). Also, NYU uses to engage "applicants who have demonstrated a commitment to higher education, student affairs, community engagement, or public policy" (p. 1) in higher education in student affairs matters. This could assist the management of tertiary institutions in Africa, mostly SSA to commence a career in student affairs professionalism.

Subscribing to the above could also be a strategic way of making the department of student affairs a virile unit for quality service for stakeholders in academia in Nigeria.

Due to the expansion of professional bodies in developed nations and owing to the commitment of experts in student matters and the support of world organisations, some of the professional bodies in student affairs in developed nations are in existence in South African tertiary institutions [64], some of them are under-listed below:

i   The Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACHDHE) [66].
ii. The South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) [67].
iii. The National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV) [68]
iv. The National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP) [69].
v.   The South African Association of Campus Health Services (SAACHS) [70].
vi. The South African Chapter of the International Association of College and University Housing Officials (ACUHO-I SAC) [71] etc.

In Nigerian higher institutions, professional associations in student affairs seem not to be in existence. Therefore, the likelihood of personnel in the department of student affairs perceiving the student administration as a profession is not sure. Hence, there is no gainsaying the need for a study of this nature in the higher education system in the country.

2. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This study employed descriptive survey design. This is because it is more suitable for a study of this nature. Also, it assists in depicting the respondents accurately.

Members of staff in student affairs department constituted the study's population. The population of these personnel at the time of this study was 120. Out of this figure, a sample of 108 personnel was randomly selected, considering the small number of the entire population.

Questionnaire was used to collect information from 108 respondents. It contained two sections (A and B). Section A contained nine items. Each of them had three options and respondents were asked to choose the best option relating to their situation. Section B contains eleven questions relating to various professional bodies in student affairs. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they belong to these professional bodies or not.

This study employs construct validity of instrument, which involves the use of expert. Hence, research instrument was given to five experts in social sciences for scrutiny.

Simple percentage was used to analyse the data collected for this study. This involves frequency table and percentage.

Table 1. Response rate

SN	Response rate	Frequency (N 120)	% (100)
1	No. of questionnaires distributed	120	
2	No of questionnaires Retrieved	108	90
3	Unreturned questionnaire	12	10

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)

From Table 1, 120 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Out of this figure, the researchers were able to retrieve 108 back through the help of one research assistant while the remaining 10% failed to return their questionnaires to them. This represents 90% response rate for this survey.

3. RESULTS

From Table 2, the programmes of study of personnel working in student affairs department in the course of this study are presented. Out of 18 programmes of study sampled, 5 were science oriented programmes while the remaining 13 were social science oriented programmes.

In science oriented programmes, Computer Science, Mathematics, Biochemistry degree holders constituted 1.8% each, while Geologists and Biologists in the sample represented 0.9% each. In the social science related programmes, personnel who studied business administration represented the majority with 20.4%. This is followed by personnel who read Public Administration, Accounting and Economics with 9.3%, 8.3% and 7.4% respectively. Personnel who studied Banking and Finance and Political Science constituted 5.6% each. Statisticians among these personnel represented 3.7% while Sociologists and other social scientists represented 3.7% each. Lastly, personnel who studied International Relations & History and Marketing represented 1.8% each, while those who read English Language and Industrial Relations represented 0.9% each.

Given the above analyses, the majority of personnel (72.2%) in student affairs department studied social science related programmes while the minority (7.4%) studied science related programmes. However, personnel who studied social science related programmes can be introduced to internship programmes in student affairs profession and be encouraged to develop a career in student affairs professionalism.

Dwelling on Table 3, absolute percentage of respondents (90.7%) did not possess any degree in student affairs profession while the percentage of respondents who did not indicate whether they had acquired degrees in student affairs profession or not represented the minority (9.3%).

The result in Table 3 could be attributed to non-existence of degrees in student affairs in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Dwelling on Table 4, greater percentage (52.8%) of student affairs staff had not undergone any training in student affairs profession while the percentage of personnel who had acquired

training in student affairs profession represent 32.4%. Respondents who did not decide on this item constitute 14.8%, which is the least in the sample.

Actually, it is acknowledged in literature that student affair profession is a new career in Africa, but previous studies also show that personnel in student affairs department in some of the South African universities have been acquiring degrees on this profession. Hence, nothing stops these personnel in Nigerian universities from following suit. Though, 32.4% of respondents in the present study claimed to have attended training, probably through the in-house

training within the university environment and not at national, regional and international levels.

Personnel who had not received any training in student affairs matter might be among the new staff that recently joined the department. This is because first-hand information shows that in-house training is being organised once in a while among student affairs staff on how to be efficient in handling student matters. Although, the training might not be effective like trainings being organized in developed countries and in South African institutions, but it may not be correct to submit that no training has been organized for personnel in student affairs.

Table 2. Programme of Study of Student Affairs Personnel

SN1	SN2	Programmes of study	Frequency	%	Colleges
1	1	Computer Science	02	1.8	
2	2	Mathematics	02	1.8	**Sciences**
3	3	Biochemistry	02	1.8	8(7.4%)
4	4	Geology	01	0.9	
5	5	Biology	01	0.9	
6	1	Public Administration	10	9.3	
7	2	International relations and history	02	1.8	
8	3	Accounting	09	8.3	
9	4	Business Administration	22	20.4	
10	5	Marketing	02	1.8	**Social**
11	6	Banking and Finance	06	5.6	**Sciences**
12	7	Political Science	04	3.7	
13	8	Sociology	04	3.7	
14	9	English Language	01	0.9	78(72.2%)
15	10	Economics	08	7.4	
16	11	Statistics	04	3.7	
17	12	Industrial Relations	01	0.9	
18	13	Social Studies	02	1.8	
19	1	Staff who did not mention their programmes of study	22	20.4%	
	Total		**108**	**100**	

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)
Note: As indicated in Table 2, Science programmes were highlighted in green colour while the social sciences progrmmes were highlighted in purple. Respondents who did not indicate their programs of study were highlighted in naval blue

Table 3. Percentage of respondents on acquisition of degree in student affairs Profession

Item	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
Have you gotten a degree on student affairs profession?	00	98(90.7%)	10(9.3%)	108(100%)

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)

Dwelling on Table 5a, greater percentage (98.2%) of respondents did not belong to any professional bodies in student affairs profession while just 1.8% belonged to only *one* professional body (see Table 5b details).

The result in Table 5a is not surprising anyway, since the profession is a new phenomenon in higher institutions in Nigeria, it is not possible for members of staff in student affairs to be familiar with it. This is because workers can only join associations that they are fully aware of. Even if they are aware and they do not have interest due to several factors highlighted in [72] it would become difficult to get them enlisted in the profession.

Deducing from Table 5b, just 2 personnel out of 108 sampled indicated their membership of just one professional body while other members of staff (98.2%) were not members of any professional group.

Table 4. Percentage of respondents who have acquired training in student affairs profession

Items	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
Have you ever undergone any training on student affairs profession?	35(32.4%)	57(52.8%)	16(14.8%)	108(100%)

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)

Table 5a. Percentage of personnel who belong to professional bodies in student affairs

Item	Yes	No	Total
Are you a member of any professional bodies in student affairs profession?	02(1.8%)	106(98.2%)	108(100%)

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)

Table 5b. Respondents membership of professional bodies in student affairs career

SN	Which of the following professional bodies in student affairs do you belong to?	Yes	No	Total
1	The American Association of School Personnel Administrators (APASPA)	0	108(100%)	108
2	Virginia Association of School Personnel Administrators - VASPA	0	108(100%)	108
3	The West Virginia School Personnel Association (WVSPA)	0	108(100%)	108
4	Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)	0	108(100%)	108
5	National Association for Managers of Student Services in Colleges (UK)	0	108(100%)	108
6	The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS)	02(1.8%)	106 (98.2%)	108
7	The Association for College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I),	0	108(100%)	108
8	National Association of Student Employment Administrators (NSEA).	0	108(100%)	108
9	The Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACHDHE),	0	108(100%)	108
10	The South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP),	0	108(100%)	108
11	The National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV)	0	108(100%)	108

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)

The result in Tables 5a & b is not surprising, since the greater percentage (90.7%) of personnel have not obtained any degree in student affairs profession and coupled with the greater percentage of respondents (52.8%) who have not acquired any training in student affairs profession, it is obvious that greater percentage of them will not belong to professional bodies in student affairs career.

Table 6 shows that greater percentage of respondents 58.3% was ignorant of student affairs profession prior their appointment to work in the institution under study while just 33.4% others were aware of such before their employment. Personnel who failed to decide whether they have had a prior knowledge of the profession or not represent 8.4%

Previous results shown above support the result in Table 6. If the greater percentage of respondents has not acquired any degree and training in student affairs profession, certainly, the number of personnel who did not have pre-knowledge of student affairs profession prior employment will not be different. This is an indication that the profession is new in SSA.

Form Table 7, the percentage of respondents who believed that student affairs job is not a career represent the absolute majority (68.5%) of the total sample. This is followed by 23.1% others who perceived it as a career while 8.4% of respondents did not decide whether it is a career or not.

This submission shows that majority of respondents in the student affairs department were not aware that student affairs is a profession. The result earlier shown in previous tables is in support of the findings in Table 7.

Most staff are not aware of this new profession and it could be the major reason why the greater percentage of personnel in student affairs department do not belong to professional bodies in this field. It could also be the reason while most of them have not acquired any degree in the field.

According to Table 8, the percentage of personnel who were not interested in student affairs profession represents the absolute majority (65.7%). Respondents who were interested represent 22.2% while personnel who did not decide on whether to stay or not represent 12.1%.

Dwelling on the above submission, the percentage of personnel who are not interested in student affairs profession is higher than those who are interested. Previous results from the Table 3 downward have provided a clue why the current result is not different. This could be attributed to the fact that many personnel in higher education system in SSA are not familiar with this profession and if they are not aware of its existence, it is very difficult to be familiar with advantages inherent in the career.

Table 6. Percentage of personnel who had prior knowledge of student affairs profession before joining the department

	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
Did you know anything about student affairs profession prior joining the department?	36(33.3%)	63(58.3%)	9(8.4%)	108(100%)

Source: Researchers Field Survey (2016)

Table 7. Percentage of respondents who perceived student affairs as a career

	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
Do you see your job as a career?	25(23.1%)	74(68.5%)	09(8.4%)	108(100%)

Source*: Researchers Field Survey (2016)*

Table 8. Percentage of respondents who are interested in student affairs profession

	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
Are you interested in student affairs profession?	24(22.2%)	71(65.7%)	13(12.1%)	108(100%)

Source*: Researchers Field Survey (2016)*

4. THE SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

This study found that no staff has acquired any degree in Student Affairs Profession. Further to that, the study found that approximately 1/3 of Student Affairs staff had received some forms of training in their places of work. Finally, the study found that 98.2% of personnel in student affairs did not belong to any professional body in Student Affairs Profession while just 1.8% belonged to only one professional body- *The International Association of Student Affairs Services (IASAS).*

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that professionalism of student affairs has not been considered a priority despite the desire of most Nigerian private universities to provide quality education to students and be listed among the leading universities in the world. The current state of student affairs department in higher education system in Nigeria could have negative implications on job performance. It may also affect the effectiveness of students after graduation. Students are the main reason higher education system is in place, hence the quality service rendered to them by staff could determine their worth after graduation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings and conclusion, this study suggests a need for greater recognition, support and development of student affairs profession in Nigeria. To this end, it is essential that universities in the country, both private and public collaborate with the South African higher institutions on the establishment of student affairs profession in their respective institutions. The collaboration will engender the establishment of programmes of study on student affairs profession. This in turn will enhance quality delivery of assignments of personnel in student affairs.

The study recommends compulsory training and conferences for Student Affairs staff on a regular basis. The study also suggests that personnel in Student Affairs be made to belong to professional bodies in student services.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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