

Professional Development and Lecturers' Job Effectiveness in Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to fine out the influence of lecturers' professional development on their job effectiveness in federal government owned universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted to study a sample of 180 (45 lecturers and 135 students) selected from the six federal Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria using stratified random sampling technique.

Two research instruments called 'Lecturers' professional Development Questionnaire (LPDQ)' and 'Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (JEQ)' constructed by the researchers and validated by experts were used for data collection. All hypotheses were analysed using Independent t- test statistics. The result indicated that lecturers' professional development in terms of retraining, research publication and ICT utilization significantly influenced their job effectiveness in terms of instructional delivery, communication skills and students evaluation. It was recommended that for the work of lecturers to be effective in the university system, the aspect of their professional development must be given good attention by the management of the university.

Key words: Professional development, lecturers, job effectiveness

1. Introduction

To produce quality graduates with employability skills, abilities and competences to harness the available resources and solve practical problems in Nigeria, the university system must be efficient. The efficiency of the University system is greatly anchored on the competence of the academic staff which is dependent on their professional development. Professional development refers to the activities aimed at acquisition of new knowledge and skills for effective job delivery. In the University system, lecturers' professional development is encouraged through re-training programmes, mentorship, seminars, research publications, conferences, symposiums, inaugural lectures, Communication and Technology Gadget utilization and so on.

Training is a planned and systematic type of activity which is aimed at knowledge creation and the management of such knowledge to produce better output. Retraining results in enhanced level of skill, knowledge and competency that are necessary to perform work effectively and efficiently (Sultana, Irum, Ahmed & Mehmood, 2002). Training and development play a vital role in the efficiency of organisational system and effectiveness of the personnel (Falola, Osibanjo & Ojo, 2014). The retraining needs of lecturers in Nigerian Universities have become very imperative in this era of global competitiveness in education.

Professional development may also take the form of mentoring. Mentorship programme is a process that enhances professional development. Where a young lecturer is attached to a more experienced one he or she may be motivated to learn and grow faster on the job. The professor or senior lecturer who is to mentor the young lecturer may love to produce a quality professional to replace him/her so as to ensure sustainability of the University system.

Another development strategy is delegation of duty. Delegation is a process of assigning responsibility of a superior to an inferior staff for ease of duty and for training purpose. Delegation provides an employee the opportunity to exercise self-direction and control, which signals to the employee that he or she is considered by the supervisor/organization to be able, task competent, organizationally important, and need satisfying (Bateman & Snell, 2004). Where a senior lecturer gives some moderate work to a young lecturer to do under close supervision, the young lecturer may be encouraged to develop faster professionally.

The use of Information Communication Technology gadgets may enhance professional growth speedily. Lecturers who use the computer system to work may gain quicker access to study materials through the internet. The use of internet to access journals, periodicals, magazines, inaugural lectures, conference papers and so on may help a lecturer to grow fast on the job. On-line courses are easily accessible through the use of computer related devices.

Lecturers' job effectiveness refers to the dedicated conducts of lecturers in carrying out the official duties diligently (Onwuachu, 2007). A highly effective lecturer may be a researcher, a receiver, creator and a

distributor of knowledge (Modebelu & Kalu-uche, 2013). Such a lecturer is a supervisor, a counselor, a facilitator, a guide, a technocrat, a motivator, a leader, a model as well as a manager. He /she ought to be pragmatic in sourcing lecture materials, updating ideas and issues, employing mutual learning techniques, encouraging participation in team work and contributing to knowledge creation.

Lecturers in Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone may have not been effective in their job performance. It has been observed that some lecturers do not attend lectures regularly. Some lecturers lack proficiency in their use of ICT gadgets. These and more make it eminent to raise the question are lecturers performing their job effectively?

It is in pursuit of the answer to the puzzling question that the researchers want to examine the relationship existing between professional development and lecturers' job effectiveness in Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone.

2. Literature review

Training is an activity used for the development of human resources in an organisation or institution. It is a learning process generally geared towards the primary purpose of helping members of an organisation to acquire, develop and apply the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitude required by that organisation to achieve its mission (Anho, 2012).

In an empirical study, Sultana, Irum, Ahmed and Mehmood (2002) sought to find out the impact of training on employee performance in the telecommunication industries in Pakistan. The study employed a descriptive survey design to study 400 technical staff stratifiedly selected from five (5) telecommunications companies in Pakistan. A researcher made questionnaire was used for data collection while Pearson product Moment Correlation and Simple Regression Analysis were used to test the hypotheses and the result revealed that training had positive impact on employee job performance.

Bingilar and Etale (2014) examined the impact of human resources development on performance of academic staff of Universities in Nigeria. The hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis test statistics and the result indicated that Human Resources Effectiveness had statistically significant positive relationship with performance of academic staff in Nigerian Universities.

Akpan (2008) stated that ICT could improve the quality of researches and publications in our universities through the use of information and quality materials from the internet and can also facilitate record-keeping by teachers. This holds that lecturers who make effective use of ICT gadget could improve on their job effectiveness.

Jani, Shahid, Thomas and Francis 2015 in an empirical study sought to identify the significant predictors of lecturers' teaching effectiveness for public and private universities in Malaysia. The aim of this study was to identify which components of emotional intelligence have significant impact on teaching effectiveness. The study was carried out in two private and two public universities in the study area using a self structured questionnaires for data collection. Three hundred and sixteen (316) lecturers were randomly selected from four universities to form the sample for the study. Stepwise Regression Analysis was adopted for analyzing the data collected and the result indicated that self-management and personal leadership had a linear relationship with teaching effectiveness. The study concluded that self-management skills and personal leadership skills have significant impact on teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, Olelewe and Amaka (2011) examined effective utilization of ICT for sustainable manpower development among computer educators in Colleges of Education in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population of 119 Computer Educators (89 Lecturers and 17 instructors) in the three Federal Colleges of Education, three State Colleges of Education and five Private Colleges of Education that offer Computer Education as a course of study in the zone. The result indicated that effective utilization of ICT greatly enhanced teaching and learning basically in instructional delivery and individualized learning process.

Higgins and Moseley (2011) studied the impact of ICT utilization on teachers' job performance using a descriptive survey design. The instruments for data collection were open ended questionnaire and structured interview. The result of the survey showed that teachers who used ICT to work in their perception saw it as useful for personal work and for teaching. The study also found out that ICT usage by teachers made teaching more interesting, easier, and more diverse.

Adeyemi (2011) sought to investigate the availability and utilization of information communication and technology in the effective management of universities in South-West, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey

research design. The data collected using a researcher made questionnaire was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the result of the findings revealed that information communication and technology have significant impact on the effective management of universities in south west Nigeria.

From the research, it holds that effective utilization of computer based gadget in study by lecturers can to a greater extent enhance their learning process and improve their job effectiveness.

Moreover, Radloff in Akpan (2014) enumerated four importance of ICT in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning to include:

- (i) Providing encouragement for staff and students to reflect on how they teach and learn;
- (ii) Applying theory and research on learning and principles of good instructions to designing online learning environments;
- (iii) Making teaching and learning more visible and public;
- (iv) Encouraging collaboration and team work among staff and students;
- (v) Offering greater access to learning for more people.

It therefore means that ICT has become imperative means to enhance job effectiveness of lecturers. Akpan (2014) sought to establish the influence of ICT competence on lecturers' Job Efficacy in two Nigerian universities. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to study a population of 1795 lecturers from the two universities in the Cross River State. From this population 500 (187 were females and 313 were males.) lecturers were randomly selected as sample for the study.

The result of the hypotheses revealed that male and female lecturers did not differ significantly in their level of ICT competence. Moreover, that lecturers' level of ICT competence significantly influenced their job efficacy in classroom instruction, research/publication, communication and record-keeping.

3. Statement of problem

The rate at which university graduates from Nigerian universities lack employability skills has become alarming. One then wonders how effective the lecturers are in their service delivery. It has been observed that some lecturers do not attend lectures regularly; some extend classes to the very eve of examinations as against the University rules of ending lectures two weeks to the examinations. Some of the lecturers lack proficiency in the use of ICT gadgets. Many students suffer setbacks during research project due to supervisors who cannot guide them well to go about the research work. Some students are usually found lamenting and looking for who to help them write research project or do the analysis and interpretation of research result for them when they are supposed to be assisted by the research supervisors. It is also common to hear that lecturers and students of the universities copy other people's work to pass examinations or gain promotion which is an act of plagiarism. Despite the efforts of the government and organisations in organising conferences, retreats, symposia and so on to improve on the efficiency of lecturers and the introduction of "Turn it in" software as a control mechanism to check plagiarism, these problems still exist. It is on this note that the researchers want to find out if lecturers' professional development could enhance their job effectiveness in Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted for the study using a sample of 180 respondents selected from the six Federal Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. The sample was made up of 45 lecturers and 135 students selected using stratified random sampling technique.

The study used two instruments to collect data from two sets of respondents. The first instrument was called "Lecturers' professional Development Questionnaire (LPDQ)" constructed by the researchers. It was a modified 4-point response scale type of questionnaire which was made up of two sections. Section A measured respondent's demographic data while section B consisted of statements of professional development in terms of retraining, research publications and ICT utilization. The 4-point response scale was scored as follows: Strongly Agree (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2 points), Strongly Disagree (SD=1 point) for positively constructed items and the reverse for negatively constructed items. The respondents to the questionnaires were academic staff from the six universities. The second instrument was a researcher made questionnaire titled "Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (JEQ)". It was made up of two sections. Section A measured students' personal data while section B contained statements of lecturers' job effectiveness. It had a 4-points response scale of Very Effective (VE-4 points), Fairly Effective (FE-3 points), Effective (E-2 points) and Not Effective (NE-1 point). Students from the universities responded to the instruments. This was because they were assumed to be matured enough to assess the lecturers' job effectiveness. The indices of job effectiveness were instructional delivery, communication skills and students evaluation.

The instruments were validated by Experts from measurement and Evaluation while Crunbach Alpha Reliability test method was applied to ascertain the internal consistency of the instruments. Data collected through 4 research assistants were subjected to Independent t-test statistics to test the hypotheses.

Result

The result of the analyses is presented in tables 1, 2 and 3

Hypotheses one

There is no significant influence of retraining programme on lecturers' job effectiveness.

The result of the hypothesis is as presented in table 1

Table 1

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of Retraining of Lecturers' and their job effectiveness (N= 180)

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value
Retraining of Lecturers (X)	45	17.4693	4.82076	3.452*
Job effectiveness	135	18.0521	3.53405	

* Significant at .05 level, critical $t=1.96$, $df = 178$.

The result in Table 1 shows that the calculated t-value of 3.45 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 needed for significance at 0.05 alpha level of significance with 178 degree of freedom. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected which implies that retraining of lecturers significantly influenced their job effectiveness. This may mean that increase in the frequency and magnitude of retraining of lecturers would bring about improved job effectiveness among University lecturers.

Hypothesis Two

Research publications has no significant relationship with lecturers' job effectiveness.

The result of the hypothesis is as presented in table 2

Table 2

Independent t-test analysis of the influence research publications on Lecturers' job effectiveness (N= 180)

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value
Research publications (X)	45	16.6484	4.95232	4.21*
Job effectiveness	135	18.0521	3.53405	

* Significant at .05 level, critical $t=1.96$, $df = 178$.

The result of table 2 indicated that at 0.05 level of significance, the calculated t-value of 4.2 was found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 178 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there existed a significant influence of research publication by lectures on their job effectiveness in the Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. This holds that the more research work published by a lecturer the higher the chances of his/her job effectiveness.

Hypothesis Three

Lecturers' ICT utilization has no significant influence on their job effectiveness.

The result of the hypothesis is as presented in table 3.

Table 3
 Independent t-test analysis of the influence of ICT utilization on Lecturers' job effectiveness (N= 180)

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value
ICT utilization (X)	45	16.2964	4.6756	3.10*
Job effectiveness	135	18.0521	3.53405	

* Significant at .05 level, critical $t=1.96$, $df=178$.

Table 3 presents a result of the analysis of ICT utilization by lecturers' and their job effectiveness. The result indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected because the critical t-value of 1.96 was found to be less than the calculated t-value of 3.1 with 178 degree of freedom at .05 level of significance. It therefore holds that increase in the level of ICT utilization would bring about improvement in lecturers' job effectiveness in the Universities in South-South Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

Retraining programme and lecturers' job effectiveness.

Retraining of lecturers was found to have significant influence on lecturers' job effectiveness in the universities. It holds that when university management is committed in retraining their staff, they are bound to improve on their job effectiveness. Eighty percent of the lecturers who participated in the study confirmed that retraining programmes adopted by the universities have greatly enhanced their job effectiveness. It therefore means that the initial training received before employment is not enough to keep the staff on the job mostly in this era of changing technology.

The findings of this study is in consonant with the findings of Akpan (2014) who reported that lecturers of Nigerian universities needed more training and development to cope with the challenges of higher education. It is also in agreement with the findings of Jani, Shahid, Thomas and Francis (2015) who submitted that self-management skills and personal leadership skills have significant impact on teaching effectiveness.

Research publications and lecturers' job effectiveness.

The discovery of the significant influence of research publications on lecturers' job effectiveness is appreciable. To write a publishable research article is an indication of great development and continuous learning. Research publications is a component of job effectiveness as University education is aimed at research and community service. The findings of the hypothesis holds that increase in research publication as encouraged by universities as a bench mark for promotion is a good strategy to enhancing lecturers' job effectiveness. The findings of the study is in line with the findings of Akpan (2014) who reported that lecturers' level of ICT competence significantly influenced their job efficacy in classroom instruction, research/publication, communication and record-keeping. The findings is also in consonant with the works of Bingilar and Etale (2014) whose report showed that effective work performance of college staff was to a greater extent dependent on human resource development. The findings is also in consonant with the result of Adeyemi (2011) and Harris and Sass (2004).

Lecturers' ICT utilization and their job effectiveness.

The result of the hypothesis revealed that lecturers' job effectiveness was significantly influenced by their level of ICT utilization. The use of computers and accessories in learning greatly enhanced the learning process. Computer related materials make for easy access to study materials like e-books, journals, periodicals, conference papers and so on. Electronic reading materials make for easy search and helps the user to easily locate and identify the needed information and to easily share the knowledge so created.

The findings of this hypothesis is in agreement with the findings of Odelewe and Amaka (2011) who reported that effective utilization of ICT greatly enhanced teaching and learning basically in instructional delivery and individualized learning process. It is also in line with the views of Aregbeyen (2010).

Conclusion

Lecturers' job effectiveness can be improved and enhanced through professional development in terms of their retraining, intense research and encouragement to publish research articles as well as utilization of ICT gadgets.

Recommendations

Based on the findings it has been recommended that

1. For the work of lecturers to be effective in the university system, the aspect of their professional development must be given good attention by the management of the university.
2. The management of the University should make Information Communication Technology gadgets available and functional for the lecturers' effective use.
3. Every University Management should make research publications a major criteria for promotion so as to encourage the lecturers to develop themselves in their area of specialization.

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