

Management Emphasis on Professional Development and Lecturers' Job Performance in Akwa Ibom State Based Universities, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to determine how management emphasis on professional development predicts lecturers' job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State. A research question and one null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The study population consisted of 1535 lecturers in public universities in Akwa Ibom State. The cluster and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 307 lecturers as sample for the study. The instruments: Departmental Head Management Emphasis of Professional Developmental Questionnaire (DHMEPDQ) and Lecturers' Job Performance Questionnaire (LPJQ) were used for the study. The reliability coefficients of .89 and .87 respectively were obtained for the two instruments, and same were administered for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using simple regression analysis and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results was that management emphasis on professional development of lecturers significantly predict lecturers' job performance in the public universities in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore it is recommended, that university administrators should encourage and motivate lecturers to undertake professional development.*

Keywords: Management Emphasis, Professional Development, Lecturers, Job Performance, Universities

1. Introduction

The efficiency of any university depends, to a large extent, on how human resources are effectively utilized. In tertiary institutions lecturers are the major determinants of educative processes particularly in ensuring quality. Hence, the success or failure of the education system depends on them. It is the lecturers that translate the educational programmes of any nation into practical learning experiences through teaching and research (Ayuba, 2004). Lecturer's job performance is critical to the realization of the tertiary institutions' goal. In recognition of this fact, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has set up various strategies (in-service training, workshops, seminars and conferences) to ensure that lecturers are properly trained and professionally developed for quality service delivery in the universities. Despite these giant strides, there seem to be a downward trend in lecturers' job performance.

Job performance could be described as the ability to skillfully combine the right behaviour for the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Performance refers to employees' job behaviour compared with the formats and standards that have been set by the organization. In the context of this study, job performance is the lecturers' job behaviour compared with the formats and standards that have been set by the National University Commission (UNC) or the university management. Some of these standards and formats include effective teaching, research and evaluation of students, among others. However, it has been observed that some lecturers seem to neglect the formats and standards as expressed in this work. Some do not attend their classes regularly nor encourage students' participation in class. Some have taken to examination malpractice by encouraging students to bribe 'sort' them for scores.

Some researchers have tried to solve this problem by using various approaches. For example, job performance of

lecturers was studied using environmental variables (Robert 2009); organizational climate (Olorunsola & Arogundade, 2012); motivation (Abejinrinde, 2009; Abdulsalam & Mawoli, 2012); and knowledge management (Uchendu, Osim & Akueqwu, 2012). Some researchers attributed the problem of job performance to lecturers' variable like gender, age, and experience among others (Opatolu, 2005). Moreover, the wealth of researches on this area notwithstanding, none was found conducted in Akwa Ibom State as at the period of the study. In order to fill the existing gap, the present study was interested in using university management emphasis on professional growth of lecturers, to study lecturers' job performance in Public Universities in Akwa Ibom State based public universities. Management emphasis on professional growth is part of management practices. Management practices is associated with organizational goals. They are those practices that attract, develop, motivate and retain staff in order to achieve educational goals in the universities. They are important in higher institutions because they provide supportive framework for learning and teaching. Management practice is a tool for delivering the desired, relevant, innovative driven intervention in public universities to access the level of compliance with National Universities Commission (NUC) guidelines. One of such tools is emphasis on professional development for lecturers.

Professional development for lecturers is an essential element towards improving the quality of education. In a broader sense it refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role. More specifically, professional development of lecturers' refers to the achievement of enhanced learning experience in research and teaching, so that a lecturer could deliver effectual knowledge to students in particular and to the society as a whole. Professional development helps to give the employees the opportunities to grow along a career path. It can be used to correct minor deficiencies, set new sights, define new learning programs and give staff the hope to advance within the organization.

Volume 6 Issue 5, May 2017

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Professional development of lecturers is critical for the gradual improvement of educational standards. A qualified lecturer will always deliver quality knowledge which in turn would improve the quality of education in an educational institute and enhance the achievement of overall institutional goal. Innovations exude through the remarkable performance of lecturers but the point of concern is that not much significance is given to their professional development at the university level.

Teaching is a profession which elucidate the brains of students and the path which leads them to different other professions. The lecturers' knowledge and the transference of that knowledge carry critical significance. Professional development is actually based on giving access to the lecturers to use up-to-date and finest teaching tools. This gives an upright support to the lecturers who want to grow professionally, bringing out the exceptional talent which they have and refine their skills. All lecturers' want to update their knowledge and follow best teaching practices.

Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. It encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degree to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities solicited in practice. Professional development has been described as intensive and collaborative. It aims at incorporating evaluative stage, varieties of approaches professional development, consultation, coaching, communities of practice, lesson study, mentoring, reflective supervision and technical assistance. In a broad sense, professional development may include formal types of vocational education, typically post secondary or poly-technical training leading to qualification or credential required to obtain or retain employment. Professional development may also come in the form of pre-service or in-service professional development programmes.

These programmes may be formal or informal, group or individualized. Individuals may pursue professional development independently, or programmes may be offered by human resource department. Professional development on the job may develop or enhance process skills sometimes referred to as leadership skills as well as task skills. Some examples for process skills are 'effectiveness skills' team functioning skills and 'system thinking skills'.

Approaches to professional development by management involves mostly:

- 1) Reflective supervision – to support, develop, and ultimately evaluate the performance of employees through a process of inquiry that encourages their own practices and
- 2) Technical assistance – to assist individuals and their organization.

Ejima (2012) asserted that the quality of a teacher is dependent on his or her preparation for professional role as a distinct practitioner. This is his or her professional development as against the training which is a preparation of an individual to undertake relatively routine task. Lecturers are university teachers and they are very fundamental in the

realization of institutional goals. Without the right lecturers in the right position, the attainment of these goals becomes impossible. To achieve this equilibrium, Azubuike (2007) asserted that staff needs to be trained. This implies that management should place much emphasis on professional development. However, the training and development of human resources is an expensive investment, which tertiary institutions cannot effectively cope without external assistance. This training involves many activities such as the organization or sponsorship to conferences, workshops and seminars, study leave, sabbatical leave and staff development. In the views of Newman (1991), knowledge management is the collection of processes that govern the creation, dissemination and utilization of knowledge.

Bertels (1996) posited that knowledge management is the management of the organization towards the continuous renewal of organizational knowledge base. This means the creation of supportive organizational members putting IT-instruments with emphasis in teamwork and diffusion of knowledge. Thus, it is how knowledge is managed that determines how effective lecturers will be on their job performance. In other words, exposure to certain professional development platform by the management will create knowledge and make for effective utilization of such knowledge by the lecturers. This is because universities, constitute an aspect of knowledge economy. They exist for the sake of knowledge propagation and management, so lecturer's effectiveness in job performance will hinge on the extent of knowledge management. It is the knowledge acquired by lecturers that enable them performs creditably on their job.

Robort (2009) asserted that collaborating and networking between people and organization back and forth supports that enrichment and refreshment of information. The university organizations management has the ability to analyse the available knowledge into categories according to their needs and relate them to different areas among them. This enables the lecturers to break their teaching activities in such a way that students can progress from the known to the unknown, from the small aspects to the complex ones. Individuals in educational system may have knowledge that can great knowledge to other members of the educational organization and the system itself. They may have gotten this knowledge from on the job experience, but if this knowledge is not shared among individuals in the organization, it could be lost or taken to another place. To forestall this, there is need for knowledge sharing and mapping, that is, certain professional development platform can be mounted, by the university management making use of experienced hands within the university system to share and map their knowledge with others.

In a study conducted by Uchendu, Osim and Akueqwu (2012) on knowledge management and university lecturers' job performance in Cross River State. The study investigated the relationship between knowledge management and university lecturers' job performance in Cross River State. Two hypotheses were formulated and 453 university lecturers were selected through the stratified simple random sampling technique from the two public universities in Cross River State. A researcher developed instrument, Knowledge

Management and Lecturers' Job Performance Questionnaire (KMLJPQ) was used for data collection. The reliability of this instrument was established with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient range of 0.67 to 0.91. Data collected were analysed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between knowledge management and lecturers job performance. From the study, it was recommended that head of departments should encourage knowledge sharing by organizing strategies for lecturers to share knowledge among themselves.

2. Statement of the Problem

Lecturers' job performance in the public universities might not be at its best. This is attributed to a lot of factors, including lecturers' variables such as gender, age, experience, among others. Others have claimed that the seeming slack in lecturers' job performance is due to organizational structure. Some researchers have even attributed it to management practices, but the question is: Is the management practice in these institutions sufficient or appropriate to enhance performance?

Management practice is a tool in delivering the desired, relevant, innovative and quality driven interventions in public universities to assess the level of compliance with Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) guidelines on curriculum implementation (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). It involves the best known way to achieve a desired result in a certain situation, creative solution to problems, training and collaborative practices. Management practice has become the most sought after form of knowledge, not just for effective practices or decent practices or better practice but best (Executive Edge, 2005). Therefore in the endless hype knowledge age of the new millennium, researches reported that management practices have an influence on lecturers' job performance in Nigeria.

In spite of the wealth of research on the nature of management practice in higher education, there still seem to be no evidence which shows how management emphasis on professional development of lecturers predicts lecturers' performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State. From the foregoing, the fundamental problem of this study bothers on how management emphasis on professional development of lecturers predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State. In other words, how does management emphasis on professional development of lecturers predict lecturers' job performance in public Universities in Akwa Ibom State?

In order to guide the study, one research question and a corresponding null hypothesis were formulated thus:-

Research Questions: How does management emphasis on professional development of lecturers predict their job performance?

Null Hypothesis: Management emphasis on professional development of lecturers does not significantly predict their job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State.

3. Method

This study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. An ex-post facto design was used for the study because the nature of this study suggest that the proposed management emphasis on professional development of lecturers had already existed. Therefore, no attempt was made to manipulate or control the variable. The population of this study consisted of 3821 (200-level) students and 1535, lecturers from the two publicly owned universities in Akwa Ibom State. Three hundred and seven (307) lecturers and seven hundred and sixty four (764) students were used for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used for the study. Twenty percent (20%) of both lecturers and students were therefore selected by simple random sampling technique through the balloting method in each of the public university.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

	Lecturers		200 level students		
	Population	20% sample	University	Population	20% sample
UNIUYO	1185	237	UNIUYO	3303	660
AKSU	350	70	AKSU	518	104
Total	1535	307	Total	3821	764

Two instruments: Departmental Head Management Emphasis of Professional Development Questionnaire (DHMEPDQ) and Lecturers Performance Questionnaire (LPQ) were used for data collection. The DHMEPDQ contained 5 items placed on a four point rating scale. It measured the identified variables under management practice and was administered to 307 respondents. The LPQ, also contains 20 items which measured the dependent variable; lecturers' performance and was administered to 764 respondents. Respondents were expected to indicate by ticking (✓) the option that best expressed their feelings. Their responses were rated as:

Strongly agree - (SA) = 4, Agree - (A) = 3, Disagree - (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree - (SD) = 1

The instruments were subjected to face validation as carried out by three experts in scientific research based in the faculty of education, University of Uyo. These experts were requested to assess the instruments with respect to their relevance, hypotheses, language used in developing the items, adequacy and appropriateness of questionnaire items.

Reliability of the instruments was established using 20 lecturers and 40 students selected from the universities who did not take part in the main study. The instruments were respectively administered once and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha formular which enabled assessment of the internal consistency of the instruments. The result of the analysis yielded the reliability coefficient indices of .87 and .81 for DHMEPDQ and LPQ.

Data obtained were analyzed using simple linear regression. To make it possible to use this statistical tool the average score of three students was regressed with one lecturer's score. The unit of analysis was the lecturers whose questionnaire were properly filled and returned. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 alpha level.

4. Results

In this section, the research question earlier raised in the study was answered and the null hypotheses formulated was tested at 0.5 level of significance. The data analyses are presented in Tables 2 and 3

Answer to the Research Question

How does management emphasis on professional development by lecturers predict their job performance?

Table 2: Summary of Simple Linear Regression of how Management Emphasis on Professional Development Predicts Lecturers' Performance in Public Universities in Akwa Ibom State

Variable	R	R ²	Percentage of contribution
Management emphasis on professional development	.226	.051	5.1%
Lecturers' job performance			

Table 2 reveals the strength of relationship between management emphasis on professional development and the dependent variable, (lecturers' performance). R, the correlation coefficient (.226), is the linear correlation between the observed and predicted value of the dependent variable. Its small value indicates a weak relationship. R², the coefficient of determination (.051), is the squared value of the correlation of coefficient. It shows that 5.1% variation in lecturers' performance is explained by the model (management emphasis on professional development).

Null Hypothesis: Management emphasis on professional development of lecturers does not significantly predict their job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Table 3: Regression for the prediction of lecturers' job performance by management emphasis on professional development

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision at P>.05
Regression	7187.713	1	7187.713			
Residual	132976.80	303	438.867	16.38	3.89	*
Total	140164.51	304				

* = Significant at P>.05; Independent variable=Management emphasis on professional development: Dependent variable=lecturers' job performance

Entries in Table 3 reveal that the F-value of 16.38 is greater than the critical F- value of 3.89 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 and 398 degrees of freedom. This significant F – value caused the rejection of the null hypothesis that management emphasis on professional development does significantly predict lecturers' job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State. This means that lecturers' job performance in public universities in Akwa Ibom State is determined, significantly, by management emphasis on professional development of lecturers.

5. Discussion of Findings

The results of the study on departmental head management emphasis on professional development showed that lecturers' job performance was significantly predicted by management emphasis on professional development. Presumably, lecturers exposed to professional development continually broaden their depth of knowledge to work better towards the achievement of the overall goal of the university. It implies that additional acquisition of skills and knowledge for personal development and career advancement is necessary and contributes significantly to efficiency and productivity. The result also means that management emphasis on professional development of lecturers' increases at the same direction with lecturers' job performance in universities in Akwa Ibom State. Their job

performance in terms of lesson preparation, lesson presentation, actual teaching, commitment to job, involvement in co-curricular activities, supervision, leadership motivation, and school discipline is enhanced by management emphasis on professional development. This finding agrees with the assertion of Ejima (2012) that the quality of a teacher is dependent on his or her preparation for professional role as a distinct practitioner. The finding of the study also agrees with the opinion of Azubuike (2007) that staff need to be trained and that it implies that management should place much emphasis on professional development. The findings of the study also agrees with Bertels (1996) which posited that knowledge management is the management of the organization towards the continuous renewal of organizational knowledge base. This means the creation of supportive organizational members putting IT-instruments with emphasis in teamwork and diffusion of knowledge.

This study shall provide relevant information on the influence of certain management practice on lecturers' performance in the Nigerian university system. The different universities management, the regulating bodies or agencies like the Nigerian Universities Commission and the federal ministry of education, will use the findings of the study, as a framework to encourage, support or sponsor lecturers for professional development to boost the job quality and

satisfaction for university teachers. The departmental heads will also find the findings of the study very useful in agitating for better work management practice towards efficient service delivery by lecturers. Finally this study will serve as a literature to researchers on related area.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, the conclusion is that management emphasis on professional development of lecturers is determinants or predictors of lecturers' job performance. Therefore for effective job performance of the universities lecturers, the management practices of management emphasis on professional development of lecturers need to be in place by the school administrators.

7. Recommendations

It is recommended from this study that the universities, through its different administrative structures, should mount a virile professional development platform making use of experienced hands within the universities system to share and map their knowledge with others.

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