



Original article

Performance of Academic Staff in Universities in Southwestern Nigeria

Oluwafisayo Falowo *

Department of Public Administration, Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper studies the job performance of academic staff by examining the teaching effectiveness of academic staff and the level of research productivity of academic staff. Two hundred and fifty academic staff and nine hundred and sixty-seven students were used as samples for the study. Data from the study were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that teaching by academic staff in Southwestern Nigeria was effective using indicators of teaching performance such as mastery of work by staff, attitude to teaching, accessibility of lecturers by students and supervision. Also, findings showed that academic staff are moderately productive in research. The study found out that academic staff in Southwestern Nigeria are performing above average. However, effort should be directed to helping academics improve on research productivity especially writing of books.

Keywords: Performance, Teaching, Research, Academic Staff, Universities.

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* Corresponding author:

Oluwafisayo Falowo is a holder of Ph.D. degree in Public Administration from the Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife. His research interest include Public Policy, Public Finance and Higher Education. He lives in Ile-Ife, Osun state, Nigeria.
Email: falowofisayo@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

The common saying has it that the development of any nation depends on its educational system (Shaheen, Sajid & Batool, 2013). As higher education is obviously regarded as the peak of the educational system, and by virtue of its nomenclature, Boulton and Lucas (2008), affirmed that the university remains and has provided an almost universal model for higher education. The university has created a unique recognition for itself, as it is considered a source of radical thought and social progress in societies where they have been introduced.

As the principal location for national research base, they have led the way into developing the cross disciplinary concepts that are increasingly imperative, if we are to address myriads of complex challenges to national and global societies. Universities, through their role of creating, discovering and disseminating new knowledge through teaching and research, have become vehicle for economic and social development as well as equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills required for professorial jobs.

Ogbogu (2008), described university as the home of key professions because it is the one that trains all others. It has also been emphasized that the benefit that accrue to the society from the university system includes producing quality graduates to catalyse the economy, lower unemployment rates, improved health, lower crime rates, higher tax returns and trickle down effects (Abiodun-Olayemi, 2011).

In Nigeria, and just as it is stated above, the university system occupies the pinnacle of the higher education system. It is regarded as the basic think tank of the society (Ogobodu and Nwaoku, 2007). Abiodun-Olayemi (2011), maintained that universities, whether public or private undoubtedly have come to be regarded as the apex of the Nigerian educational system. According to the National Policy on Education (NPE), the goals of the university shall be to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training, developing the intellectual capacity of the individuals to understand their local and external environment, to acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable the individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009).

Arikewuyo explained the role of tertiary institution in Nigeria (including university education) as stated in constitution to include;

- a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- b) Develop and culcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
- c) Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;

- d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individual to be self reliant and useful members of the society;
- e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- f) Forge and cement national unity; and
- g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction. (Arikewuyo, 2001).

The management of university system in Nigeria is directly under the National University Commission (NUC). The body stipulates the condition that must be met to enable it assess the adequacy or otherwise of the applications and process before approval and licensing. Another view also has it that, improving quality of university education in the country include accreditation of courses, approval of courses and programmes, maintenance of minimum academic standards, monitoring of universities, giving guidelines for setting up of universities, monitoring of private universities, prevention of the establishment of illegal campus and implementation of appropriate sanctions (Ekundayo et al.).

In meeting the goals and objective of the university system, the university system in Nigeria operates on the basis of federal government ownership, state government ownership and private individual ownership. For the university to perform its functions, it requires the operation of human elements of varying professions within it. The performance of members of an organisation is assumed to be a critical factor to every organisation's efficient and effective functioning (Mohammad and Nimalathalsan, 2011). These professionals include academic staff, administrative staff, technical staff etc. All these staffs perform complementary and vital roles in the entire university system.

Moreover, the academic staffs constitute the most productive workforce within the university system. Academic staffs are respected because they constitute the key profession among professions. They are the key actors in carrying out the objectives of the university. Academic staffs are the lecturers who engage in core university activities such as teaching, research and community services. They are the lecturers who translate the educational programmes of university system into practical learning experiences through teaching and research (Mbon, Etor and Osim, 2012).

However, there is a lot of worries expressed by the public over the commitment of the academic staff in universities (Ajayi, Awosusi, Arogundade & Ekundayo, 2011). Existing literature reveals that there is widely observed decline on the performance of the academic staff in the Nigerian university system. The commitment of the academic staff to his core duties has been widely questioned. The quality of graduate has been widely challenged within and outside the country, and the level of research productivity is presumed to be low.

Therefore, the need arises to investigate the performance of academic staff by examining the teaching effectiveness of academic staff in universities in Southwestern Nigeria; and investigating the research productivity level of academic staff in universities in Southwestern Nigeria; hence this study.

Literature Review

The academic staff in any university is as important as the pillar in a building (Imrab, Sajid & Qudisia, 2013). They maintain a pivotal position in the university community. Academic staff contribute to the development of the society through their teaching, research and community service activities. Academic staff job performance revolves around these functions which are teaching, research and community service. Moreover, academic staff job activities extend to activities such as administrative activities, counselling etc. However, this work intends to focus specifically on teaching and research activities of the academic staff.

Aslam (2011) reviewing Miller's work identified six characteristics of effective teaching: (a) lesson planning for class (b) having deep insight of the subject (c) giving confidence to students for presenting their own ideas and suggestions (d) student motivation (e) fair and unbiased feedback on students' performance (f) having genuine interest in teaching subjects. In addition, Aslam (2011) he maintained that a teacher ought to deliver clear and understandable lectures, be able to interpret complex ideas and assumptions and also make practical examples to relate the idea to reality.

In another view, Aslam (2011) maintained that teaching involves adequacy of preparation, stimulation and intellectual curiosity and progressive attitude. He further explained teaching in four components: (a) organization/clarity (b) enthusiasm/stimulation (c) instructors knowledge/group intellectual. Research is fundamental to development and knowledge dissemination. It brings about development of new knowledge. It also provides an important background for academic staff to become successful lecturers. Research contributes to the quality of teaching effectiveness and reinforces necessary skills for teaching efficacy (Lertpullarack, 2008).

Kendagor, Kosgei, Tuitoek and Chelangat (2012), opined that research simply describes a systematic attempt to provide answers to questions. Research is a systematic attempt, search or investigation to find solutions to problems or questions in order to increase the sum of knowledge. They maintained that it has to do with creative works undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge of peoples' cultures, and societies and nursing this knowledge stock to bring up new applications.

Kendagor et al, stated that research in another perspective, involves producing new and better goods and services and developing new and better ways of offering or distributing them. It also results in efficient use of present resources and waste products. In their view, university laboratories have become the centre of technological breakthrough, such as hybrid seeds, satellite communications,

genetic engineering, nuclear energy and the internet among others. The whole high technological industries such as computers and biotech have their roots in major research universities.

Bassey, Akuegbwu, Udida and Udley (2007), stated that research productivity is the major or most important indicator of academic staff productivity. They maintained that research publication in any field of specialization gives up to date information for growth, progress, development and improved society. Research is so vital that academic staff promotion is attached to it. Research publication, it is said fills the gap of past research and creates room for future investigation.

Kendagor, Kosgei, Tuitoek and Chelangat (2012), enunciated that research productivity includes research publications in professional journals and in conference proceedings, writing a book or chapter, gathering and analyzing original evidence, working with post-graduate students on dissertations and class projects, obtaining research grants, carrying out editorial duties, obtaining patents and licenses, writing of monographs, developing experimental designs, producing works of an artistic or creative nature, engaging in public debates and commentaries.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey research design. Data was generated from academic staff and final year students of the University of Ibadan (UI), Bowen University (BU) and Adekunle Ajasin University (AAU). This permitted the use of questionnaire and interview to generate necessary data from the research participants. The study population has all the academic staff of University of Ibadan totaling 1,549, academic staff of Bowen University totaling 307 and academic staff of Adekunle Ajasin University with population of 476.

Also, the final year students of the three schools. UI (3,417), BU (1,189) and AAU (1325) totalling 2,332 for academic staff and of 5,940 for students. The three universities selected using represent all strata of university ownership in Nigeria. Final year students were selected because they have had enough interaction with lecturers, and therefore possess sufficient knowledge to provide intelligent answers in the questionnaire. A total number of 250 academic staff were selected, using simple random sampling technique with a sampling fraction of 10%. final year students selected were 967, using simple random sampling technique with a sampling fraction of 10%.

The study utilised both primary and secondary sources in gathering its data, while questionnaire and interview were the instruments used in eliciting information. Analytical tools such as percentages, frequencies, regression and content analysis were adopted for the analysis.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Teaching Effectiveness of Academic Staff in Universities in Southwestern Nigeria

Performance of academic staff centres on teaching and research. Indicators of teaching effectiveness include: mastery of work by academic staff, attitude to teaching, approach to teaching, accessibility of students to lecturers and supervision. This result from the table 1.1 below showed that majority of the students agree that their Lecturers possess mastery of their work, with about 90%. Also, the result on impartation of knowledge revealed that the lecturers impart knowledge satisfactorily with 85.59%. These following were subsumed under one of the indicators of teaching effectiveness which is (Mastery), the result emanating from the students showed that their lecturers possess mastery of their work.

Furthermore, the responses from the student showed that the lecturers possess the right attitude to teaching 90%. It is interesting to note that responses from the students showed that, their lecturers adopt participatory and group method of teaching 77.02%, while only few answered otherwise 12%. In addition, the result from the table revealed that, most of the students 70% answered in the affirmative that their lecturers are always around. The foregoing discussion revealed that the lecturers are accessible to students. The result from supervision by academic staff showed that the lecturers read and correct their students' work it is significant to note that 85% majority of the student confirm this, while few 15% answered to the contrary. These foregoing responses from the student endorsed the fact that the lecturers adopt good (supervision) method.

Table 1. Respondents Opinion on Teaching Effectiveness of Academic Staff in Universities in Southwestern Nigeria

VARIABLE	SA		A		U		D		SD		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
My Lecturers possess mastery of their work	349	42.25	426	51.57	18	2.18	29	3.51	4	0.48	4.31
Satisfactory impartation of knowledge	227	27.48	480	58.11	65	7.87	41	4.96	13	1.57	3.95
They relate theories to real life	270	32.69	441	53.39	77	9.32	30	3.63	8	0.97	3.99
Commitment to work	354	42.86	390	47.22	54	6.54	15	1.82	13	1.57	4.18
See them on appointment	167	20.22	434	52.54	137	16.59	71	8.60	17	2.06	3.57
Participatory and group method in teaching	142	17.19	495	59.93	89	10.77	86	10.41	14	1.69	3.71
They adopt assignment method for teaching	194	22.49	454	53.49	89	10.77	86	10.41	5	0.61	3.79
The lecturers are always around	219	26.51	365	44.19	124	15.01	103	12.47	15	1.82	3.65
They have time to read student work	20	22.0	9	9.9	17	18.7	34	37.4	11	12.1	2.92
They support with relevant materials	169	20.46	477	57.57	102	12.35	56	6.78	22	2.66	3.7
They ensure corrections are effected as made	207	25.06	466	56.42	111	13.44	39	4.72	3	0.36	3.7

Source: field work 2015

Research Productivity of Academic Staff in Universities in Southwestern

The table 1.2 below focused on investigation of research productivity level of academic staff. The research productivity of academic staff in this work was measured in terms of publication in conference proceedings, publication in journal and participation in research conference. The result shows that majority of the academics 52% attend one national conference per annum. However, the result also showed that many of the academics don't attend international conference per annum. This is buttressed by the fact that majority of the academics 64.13% do not attend one international conference per annum. The result showed that the academics are active in publication of papers in conference proceedings 64.9%. In addition, the result showed that the academic staff are doing considerably well in publication of articles in international journals 80%. The result from the table on authorship of books, co authorship, and contribution of chapter in books revealed that majority of the academic staff are not proficient in this regard. The result on authorship of books showed that very few 10% of the academics admitted to have authored books. Similarly, the result showed that most of the academics 60% do not have co-authored books. The preceding trend was further sustained by the fact that 76% majority of the academics don't have chapters in edited books. Furthermore, the result showed performance of academic

staff on publication in journals. The result showed that the academic staffs are effective in terms of publication in local journals, with majority 90% responding in the affirmative. Invariably, the table showed that majority of the lecturers 81% publish articles in international journals. It is also interesting to note that academic staff participate in both sponsored local and international conferences with many of the academics affirming the questions 65% and 62% respectively. The foregoing result revealed that academic staff in universities in Southwestern Nigeria are moderately productive in research productivity. In the area of conference proceedings, the result showed that the academics are highly productive. Also, in publication in local and international journals, the result showed that the academics are highly productive in this regard. On the other hand, the area of authorship of books, co-authorship of books, contribution of chapters in edited books and books of reading, the result revealed that the academic staff demonstrated low level productivity in this regard. Lastly, on participation in research conference, the academic staff demonstrated high level of productivity.

Table 2. Respondents Opinion on Level of Research Productivity of Academic Staff in Universities in Southwestern

VARIABLE	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
I attend atleast a national conference(con) annually	65	20.90	97	31.19	103	33.12	28	9.00	18	5.79	3.08
I attend atleast an international con annually	29	9.32	37	11.90	45	14.47	96	30.87	104	33.44	2.68
I publish papers in con proceedings	63	20.26	139	44.69	65	20.90	19	6.11	25	8.04	3.35
publish articles in international journal	202	64.95	52	16.72	9	2.89	36	11.58	12	3.86	4.3
I author books	32	10.29			59	18.97	133	42.77	87	27.97	2.54
I co- author books	52	16.72	21	6.75	38	12.22	131	42.12	69	22.19	2.93
I have chapters in edited books	23	7.40	11	3.54	41	13.18	161	51.77	75	24.14	2.67
I have chapters in books of reading	12	3.86	35	11.25	61	19.61	125	40.19	78	25.08	2.54
Articles published in local journal	225	72.35	52	16.72	12	3.86	4	1.29	18	5.79	4.4
I participate in sponsored national con	101	32.48	115	36.98	25	8.04	34	10.93	36	11.58	3.74
I participate in sponsored international con	126	40.51	62	19.94	64	20.58	42	13.50	17	5.47	3.54

Source: field work 2015

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, the study concluded that teaching of academic staff is effective in universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Also, research productivity level of academic staff is moderately high. However, there is the need for academic staff to improve in the areas of writing of books and contribution in books. The government should as a matter of obligation introduce writing of books and contribution in books, a requirement for promotion of academic staff.

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