CONDUCIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND LECTURERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: AN ECONOMETRIC APPROACH

LEBO, Monica Peter
Department of Business Management
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

UKAIDI, Evelyn Ugonna
Department of Business Management
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

ARIKPO, Nneoyi Nnana.,
Department of Business Management
University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria

ENYA, Matthew Njobili
Department of Business Administration
University of Cross River State, Nigeria

EJA- OSANG, Joseph
Department of Marketing
University of Cross River State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine conducive work environment and lecturers' academic performance in tertiary Institutions in Nigeria. The objectives were to determine the effect of career advancement, staff recognition and job security on academic staff performance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 3215 academic staff of three tertiary educational institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study obtained a sample of 523 using the Taro Yamane Formula. The questionnaire was validated by senior lecturers in business management and management evaluation department in Ebonyi State University Abakaliki and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with a value of 0.000. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using test–retest and Cronbach coefficient alpha. The simple regression statistic was used to examine the effect of dimensions of conducive work environment on lecturers' academic performance. The results indicates a significant effect of conducive work environment (career advancement, staff recognition, job security) on academic staff performance in Nigerian tertiary educational institutions. The study thus recommends that management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should enhance academic staff performance through career advancement, staff recognition and job security.
Keywords: Academic staff performance, career advancement, conducive work environment, job security, staff recognition

INTRODUCTION

Academic staff (lecturers) are the treasured assets of any tertiary institution that should be ingratiated and motivated through adequate financial and non-financial rewards. In the domain of personnel management, the importance of non-financial rewards is deemed essential to spurring employees' job performance. Several empirical and anecdotal positions show that non-financial rewards have a positive effect on improving employee performance in all sectors, and in all economies (Javed et al., 2014).

The importance of non-financial rewards is rooted mainly on the fact they are oriented towards career advancement, office accommodation, conductive work environment, recognition, personal drive for achievement, job security, acknowledgement, appreciation, increased power and authority (Banjoko, 2006), learning opportunity, challenging work (Yamoah, 2013), job flexibility, growth opportunities and career advancement in the institution.

In a study on rewards and employees' motivation in non-profit organizations, Hafiza et al. (2011) found that extrinsic non-financial rewards influence employee's commitment to higher performance than what financial reward offer. This is because financial rewards service immediate satisfaction of employees while non-financial rewards seek to solve long-term issues and sustainability of the organization. Due to the nature and structure of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, non–financial reward strategies include career advancement, staff recognition, and job security (Lebo et al., 2020).

The creative implementation of personalized non-monetary incentives influence employee's positive behavior and attitude and retention, and contribution to higher organizational performance through experience and knowledge (Abu-Abdissamad, 2013). Tausif (2012) found that conducive work environment, job security and career advancement have positive effect on research, publications and number of students supervised and consultancy service rendered. Employees who advance in their career through growth opportunities provided by management exhibit positive attitudes, commitment, satisfaction and intention to continue on the job (Lebo & Ugo, 2020).

It must be observed in recent times that academic staffs are confronted by many challenges in performing their statutory academic functions. These challenges range from irregular and poor pay to poor and unconducive work environment. This has generated high level of stress and low performance in Nigerian universities (Ejumudo, 2014). The Nigeria academic environment has been a matter of concern as it does not reflect a true 21st century modern learning environment (NUC accreditation, 2016). This poor work setting has resulted to poor research and publication, consultancy services and community development services to earn the institution a better score in the university ranking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conducive work environment is the propeller through which other non-financial rewards revolve in the organization. The performance of academic staff depends on the conduciveness of the work environment and the kind of task they handle in a given time frame (Abu-Addissamad, 2013). Creativity among academic staff can only ignited and sustained in a well conducive work atmosphere, where staff are encouraged to display their skills and experience (Ryan & Maddeci, 2012).

Personal drive for achievement or self–actualization is the need to develop one's potentialities, skills, knowledge and experience to become what one assumes to be capable of becoming in life. Academic staff of tertiary institutions appreciate the need to face global challenges in the educational system (Ofoegbu, 2004), and demonstrate varying levels of drive to survive in their institutions. Thus, they struggle for personal accomplishment rather than depend on cash rewards (Ngethe et al., 2012). Academic staff often aspire to something higher than what they have initially, hence are propelled to seek opportunities for personal achievement. This desire for personal achievement may depends on family orientation and the domain in which they desire accomplishment (Tausif, 2012).

The sustainability of academic institution in Nigeria rests on the extent to which they engage in quality research and publications for local, national and international acceptance. The general academic performance of lecturers depends on the level of their engagement on research and publications (Akinfolarin & Ehinola, 2014). The number of quality research conducted and publications are key sources of staff promotion and recognition in institutions, as academic staff promotion from a lower cadre to a higher one depend on the number of researcs and publications credited to them lecturer in a particular period of time.

Creativity and innovation are strong indicators of national development and no tertiary institution can develop and compete globally if their employees are not creative and innovative to turn things around for global acceptance. But this is only possible in a highly conducive and stable work environment (Abu-Addissamad, 2013). This study emphasizes that conducive work environment for academic staff to explore their creative, imaginative and innovative skills include provision of official cars, accommodations, free medical care, sponsored retreat outside workplace, well organized canteen, well equipped office, holidays abroad etc. these factors when put in proper conditions will influence employee creativity.

Kida et al. (2015) assert that providing an enabling work environment for academic staff leads to interpersonal relationship between university management and academic staff. Academic staff do not often demand for wage increment but seek better working condition to enable them improve their academic performance. The constant industrial actions embarked upon by ASUU and ASUP (Academic staff union of universalities and academic staff union of polytechnics) have been hinged on improving conditions of services.

To avoid referring to Nigerians as creative imitators, there is need to maintain a conductive environment where employees can display their talents and ensure full commitment to performance. The importance of creativity and innovation cannot be underrated as the two are essential to growth and development of organization and nations. Academic staffs need to be creative and innovative in performing their academic tasks. Nnabuife (2009) assert that creativity is the ability to develop new skills and ideas and find new methods and perceiving opportunities and problems; while innovation is the capability to implement creative solutions to problem and opportunities to improve lives of people in the society.

Staff creativity entails training and graduating students with scientific, technical and research oriented skills that will be independent, self-employed and enterprising in the society (Onu, 2011). The theoretical foundation of employees' performance is anchored in McGregor's theory Y which stipulates that the average man learns or teach under proper conditions, not only to accept but also to seek responsibility provided the environment is absolutely conducive to enhance the discharge of such responsibility.

Mohamood (2015) in a study on financial and non-financial rewards found that office accommodation influences employees to demonstrate their creative and innovative skills towards higher job performance. Creativity and innovation is a function of stable work environment (Onu, 2011). Poisat (2006) found that creativity leads to autonomy and authority over one's job. Employees value jobs that require increased responsibility and risk which variably lead to recognition and fame if the tasks are accomplished. Academic staff perform excellently in environment that is conducive for them to discharge their academic talent for the benefit of students and sustainability of the institutions. The recent world ranking of universities placed all Nigerian universities at the bottom level due to lack of infrastructural facilities which affect level of staff creativity and innovativeness in teaching, learning and research and publications for global acceptance.

The application of chaotic theory, corridor's principle and serendipity can only be effective when the work environment is conducive for personal initiative to progress. This is because, serendipity means that by searching or looking for a particular idea; other ideas are discovered which can be combined to attain competitive edge. Nigerian tertiary institutions have continued to suffer setback in infrastructure that facilitate creativity and innovation due to corruption among university management and government officials.

Ogwu (2013) examined impact of fair reward system on employees with higher education qualifications in Agip Oil Company in Port Harcourt. The results showed that although monetary rewards have little impact but non-monetary rewards strategies in terms of career progression, recognition and conducive workplace environment strongly impact positively on staff creativity in the oil company. The study concluded that employees who engage in self-career advancement courses will acquire more knowledge and skills and as such assume higher responsibilities which will display their creativity to influence management recognition and at the same time attract higher financial reward. That is to say that acquisition of higher education influences higher non-monetary rewards which invariably lead to higher work performance.

Consequently, the study hypothesizes that:

Ho_1: Career advancement has no significant effect on academic staff performance.

Ho_2: Staff recognition has no significant effect on academic staff performance.

Ho_3: Job security has no significant effect on academic staff performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey-descriptive methodology because the events happened naturally. What was required was to ascertain career advancement and lecturers' academic performance in selected tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. The population of the study consist 1442 academic staff from the University of Calabar, 1243 from Cross River University of Technology and 530 from Federal College of Education, Obudu. A stratified random sample of 523 academic staff from the 3 institutions was taken.

A questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. The instrument was designed to elicit responses on lecturers' career advancement in the following factors: lecturers' ranks, lesson content, lesson delivery, students' motivation and evaluation of learning. Each of the factors had a weight of three (5) points. Respondents were simply required to rate the teaching effectiveness of their lecturers. For this research, the variables for this study were operationalized in this way:

$Y = f(x)$; Where y = dependent variable (academic staff performance ASP), x = independent variables such as career advancement, staff recognition, job security

Hence, ASP = f (CA, SR, JS)

Where:

$X_1, X_2 \ldots X_n$ are the independent sub variables

In testing the hypotheses formulated for the study, a 0.05 level of significance was used. Linear regression statistics served the data analyses. Decision criteria: Accept the alternative hypothesis if (P< .05) and reject the null hypothesis, if otherwise.

RESULT

Table 1: Model summary showing the effect of career advancement on academic staff performance

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.780[a]	.807	.806	1.84966

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career advancement

Source: Field survey (2023)

Table 2: ANOVA[a] showing the effect of career advancement on academic staff performance

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1463.605	1	1463.605	554.396	.000b
Residual	351.106	522	2.640		
Total	1814.711	523			

a.   Dependent Variable: Academic staff performance

b.   Predictors: (Constant), Career advancement

Source: Field survey (2023)

Table 3: Coefficients^a showing effect of career advancement on academic staff performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.036	.257		23.509	.000
1. Career advancement	1.685	.106	.780	15.888	.000
Dependent Variable: Academic staff performance					

Source: Field survey (2023).

The result on Table 1 shows the linear regression analysis of career advancement on academic staff performance. With R-value of 0.780 and a probability value (0.000) less than the 0.05 significance level, the results revealed that career advancement has a positive effect on academic staff performance. From the results above, the effect of both variables is 78.0 per cent. The R^2 value (0.807) implies that a change in career advancement affects academic staff performance by up to 80.7 per cent when other factors are held constant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that career advancement has a significant effect on academic staff performance.

Table 4: Model summary showing effect of staff recognition on academic staff performance

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
1	.891^a	.893	.892	2.06023
a.	Predictors: (Constant), Staff recognition			

Source: Field survey (2023).

Table 5: ANOVA^a showing the effect of staff recognition on academic staff performance

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1620.814	1	1620.814	1111.669	.000^b
1. Residual	193.897	522	1.458		
Total	1814.711	523			
a. Dependent Variable: Academic staff performance					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Staff recognition					

Source: Field survey (2023)

Table 6: Coefficients^a showing the effect of staff recognition on academic staff performance

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.851	.265		25.871	.000
	1.375	.112	.891	12.229	.000
1. Staff recognition					
a. Dependent Variable: Academic staff performance					

Source: Field survey (2023).

The results show the linear regression analysis of the effect of staff recognition on academic staff performance. With R-value of 0.891 and a probability value (0.000) less than the 0.05 significance level, the results revealed that staff recognition has a significant effect on academic staff performance. From the results above, the effect on both variables is 89.1 per cent. The R^2 value (0.893) implies that a change in staff recognition behavior by up to 89.3 per cent then other factors are held constant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and include that staff recognition has a significant effect on academic staff performance.

Table 7: Model summary showing effect of job security on academic staff performance

Model	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Std. error of the estimate
I	.759a	.852	.851	1.66468

a. Predictors: (Constant), Job security

Source: Field survey (2023).

Table 8: ANOVAª showing the effect of job security on academic staff performance

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
	Regression	1546.410	1	1546.410	766.688	.000b
1	Residual	268.301	522	2.017		
	Total	1814.711	523			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic staff performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), job security

Source: Field survey (2023)

Table 9: Coefficientsª showing effect of job security on academic staff performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.859	.222		26.362	.000
1. Job security	1.993	.103	.759	19.413	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Academic staff performance

Source: Field survey (2023)

The results show the linear regression analysis of the effect of job security on academic staff performance. With R-value of 0.759 and a probability value (0.000) less than the 0.05 significance level, the results revealed that job security has a significant effect on academic staff performance. From the results above, the effect on both variables is 75.9 per cent. The R^2 value (0.852) implies that a change in job security influences academic staff performance behavior by up to 85.2 per cent when other factors are held constant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that job security has a significant effect on academic staff performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To examine the extent to which conducive work environment relates to academic staff performance in selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State. In relation to the first hypothesis tested, the reliability of the study was established, the analysis of the association was conducted to examine the effect of career advancement on academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State through the application of regression analysis.

The analysis indicated an output was positive and significant. This finding indicates that the alternate hypothesis was accepted while null hypothesis was rejected. That is to say that there is a positive significant effect of career advancement on academic staff performance in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. This implies that career advancement influences the level of staff performance among academic staff in the tertiary institutions.

This finding is one of the strongest values amongst the hypothesis tested as the findings displayed both positive and significant with a confidence value per 0.5. The result implies that, if career advancement and academic staff performance were measurable values. A unit increase or addition of infrastructure in work environment will lead to more than 60% increase in academic performance of Lecturers. Consider the nature of Nigeria work environment and its geometrical effect on staff performance, one would discover that lecturers are

embodiment of knowledge, skills, creativity and innovation, but adversely affected by high level of unconducive work atmosphere which variably affect their academic performance.

In the recent ranking of universities in the world, no Nigeria university ranked in the first 30 due to poor conducive work environment which affect level of creativity among lecturers in institutions. This result agrees with the reportr of Tausif (2012) that conducive work environment has a positive and significant effect of employee performance in terms of creativity. A creative employee is an empowered employee and can demonstrate his creative knowledge and skill where there is a good working atmosphere out of rancor and stress. Kida et al. (2015) opine that enabling work environment facilitates interpersonal relationship between academic staff and management and hence reduce the tendency of conflict and industrial actions witnessed in the Nigeria universities. This disharmony has affected the level of creativity among lecturers as they often agitate for improved conditions of service to enable them perform maximally.

In the same vein, Akinfolarin and Ehinola (2014) in their finding on academic staff motivation, discovered that conducive work environment as non-financial strategies influence the level of staff creativity and innovativeness as they can perform with less stress. These opinions as analyzed by the researcher are equally the perceptions of Kida et al. (2015), who discovered that conducive work environment as non-cash reward influences the rate of creativeness among lecturers in the institutions. These results and that of other researchers have stated the idea that conducive work environment literature can further be extended in other sectors as it has been studied in selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Non-financial rewards in different dimensions have been the major source of employees' satisfaction in any work setting especially the tertiary institutions where the lecturers face challenges emanating from work stress of various levels. The opinion of majority of the academic staff (respondents) of the three selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State showed that career advancement, staff recognition, and job security are measurement parameters of non-financial rewards directly have a positive significant effect with academic performance amongst lecturers in the selected tertiary institutions in Cross River State. There is an evidence of the urgent demand to discourse and revise these poor policy of non-financial rewards for the lecturers' growth and sustainability of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In lieu of the findings made, the study recommends that, to enhance the performance of academic staff in Nigeria tertiary educational institution, management of these institutions should create conducive work environment by providing non-financial incentives like career advancement, staff recognition, job security, etc.

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