Work Environment and Provision of Instructional Facilities as Correlates of Academic Staff Job Performance in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

This study investigated work environment and provision of instructional facilities as correlates of academic staff job performance in Nigerian universities. Descriptive research of survey design was used to carry out this study. The population of the study consisted of all academic staff in all the public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The researchers utilised two sets of research instruments titled Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (ASJPQ) and Infrastructure, Allocated Funds and Job Performance Questionnaire (IAFJPQ) for students and lecturers respectively. Data analyses indicated that there is a significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance and also a significant relationship between the provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance. Based on the findings, it was concluded that adequate attention should be paid to work environment and provision of instructional materials by the universities management for effective teaching and learning process in the universities. Recommendations were made on the need by the government to improve on the funding of the universities in order to ensure good quality in the instructional delivery.

Key words: Instructional materials, Work environment, Universities, Academic staff, Job performance.

Introduction

University education is a veritable tool towards the realization of national development. According to World Bank (2008), University education from a global perspective is fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations. The Nigerian university system has grown in size and has undergone massive transformation since its inception over sixty years ago. It is highly unfortunate that its ability to act as a catalyst for national growth and economic development seems to be hindered by the long-standing problem of inadequate funding which could have helped to transform the universities work environment and perhaps improve on the provision of instructional facilities in order to enhance academic staff job performance.

Nigerian government's priority in terms of funding appears to have declined and this has limited the ability of the academic staff of universities to effectively and efficiently perform their duties, particularly the traditional roles of teaching and research (Bamiro & Adedeji, 2010). The problem of inadequate funding of Nigerian universities could be linked to the consequence of the expansion of the educational system. This is as a result of the response to the increasing demand

for higher education and the intensifying needs of modern economy driven by knowledge, without an increase in the corresponding rate of available financial resources. This major problem of funding has culminated to poor working conditions in Nigerian universities. It is important to note that work environment could influence effective performance of academic staff in the universities. It is the prevailing situation in universities where the core functions of teaching and research are carried out. This includes conducive office accommodation, access to well-equipped libraries, laboratories, and other facilities. For academic staff to perform their job creditably, the constituents of good work environment must be provided in adequate quantity and quality.

The academic goals achievement parameter like research publication, community service, academic staff job performance as well as students' academic performance is completely dependent on the adequate provision of instructional facilities (Bello, 2011). The implication is that when instructional facilities are in short supply, teaching and learning which is the primary duty of academic staff will be impaired (Oyewole, 2009). The provision of facilities like interactive smartboards, internet facilities, e-library, micro lab, etc, are very crucial in the attainment of a quality academic programme. According to Afe (1995), teaching tasks are done through conscious and deliberate effort. Hence, effectiveness of the academic staff in this regard will depend very much on conducive work environment and adequate provision of instructional facilities in order to enhance their job.

Literature Review

Work Environment and Job Performance

In this study, work environment is seen as the prevailing situation in the universities where the primary functions of teaching and research are carried out. This includes conducive office accommodation, access to good library and laboratory and other facilities. A favourable work environment could enhance the performance of academic staff. Arogundade (2008) stressed that the work environment of an organisation is a combination of all the organisational factors and the personality characteristics of the members of the organisation. It also reflects the physical layout, the mode of communication, motivation and the system of authority within the system. With these, one could infer that work environment is the prevailing atmosphere concerning work situations in any organization. In fact, it dictates the extent to which organizational goals and objectives are achieved. Ajayi, Awosusi, Arogundade and Ekundayo (2011) observed in their study that the work

environment of academic staff in southwest Nigeria universities was favourable. This is contrary to the work of Taiwo and Okebukola on the same subject matter. Taiwo (1980) for instance posited that research facilities were inadequate, while Okebukola (2008) and Sadiku (2017) discussed physical facilities of Nigerian Universities as being over-stretched and decaying. This in our opinion may not be unconnected to lack of maintenance, due to poor funding.

Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) asserted that remuneration, cordial relationship between authority and staff recognition, information flow, promotion, staff development, adequate provision of facilities and fund enhance job performance. It could be inferred from the result of their work that better work environment would enhance better job performance of academic staff and vice versa. The result of their studies contradicts that of Durotolu (2000) which revealed that there is no significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance.

Durotolu (2000) and Sadiku (2017) viewed work environment as a milieu atmosphere, culture, tone, feel or the internal quality of an organization especially as experienced by its members and even noticed by visitors to the organization. Arogundade (2008) reported that work environment components such as physical facilities are likely to influence the job performance of academic staff in universities. In the school system, it could be seen that a conducive work/learning environment has positive influence on the performance of the lecturers thereby promoting learning for better performance. Arogundade (2008) further ascertained that a good university environment motivates lecturers to teach as well as promoting better learning in students.

The tertiary education system appears to be facing challenges which will not allow the system to achieve the objectives in the areas of human, social and economic development. Prominent among these numerous challenges is poor work environment. It is not enough for these physical resources to be available in the universities but they must be of good quality before meaningful work could be carried out by the human resource available. Okebukola (2008), further confirmed that the place of physical resources in any educational process cannot be overemphasized but unfortunately according to him, many of the Nigerian universities are having classrooms and offices befitting public secondary school. Ahmed (2010) is also of the view that the availability of good work environment builds up the confidence in the instructors. It appears that the constituents of good work environment like furniture, laboratory equipment, relevant library books and internet facilities which are very important to instructors' job performance seem not to be sufficiently on ground in many Nigerian universities. Oyewole (2009) opined that these

resources are very important and indispensable in the educational process and therefore must be provided in adequate quantity and quality so as to enhance job performance and academic environment for better results in the education system. Olayiwola (2010) laid credence to this observation by saying that the health and prosperity of a nation depend on the quality of the resources made available to instructions in the education system.

Afe (1995) and Sadiku (2017) pointed out that teaching task is done through conscious and deliberate effort. But for academic staff to carry out this conscious and deliberate effort, he/she needs a conducive environment devoid of strike, inadequate personnel, corruption, inconsistent funding by the government among others. In the universities, it has been expressed that academic staff lacks a conducive work environment devoid of required resources needed for their job performance. With the appropriate university programmes in place, if the necessary resources are not there, the academic staff cannot perform no matter how much they are induced. To redress the falling quality of our present university education, prominence should be given to the element of the university work environment. This would create an endearing intellectual atmosphere which promotes teaching and learning. Adaralegbe (1983) and Akuegwu (2005) ascertained that, without a good psycho-social, physical and intellectual environment, the teachers and students cannot perform well in their academic activities.

Infrastructural/ Instructional Facilities and Job Performance

The non-corresponding expansion in facilities, equipment and material resources have resulted in the gradual collapse of the educational system. Furthermore, scholars emphasised the significance of various categories of facilities towards the quality of education at the different levels of education system (Adeyemi & Igbineweka, 2000). Hallak (1997) and Oyewole (2009) identified school building, classroom accommodation, furniture, libraries, laboratories, recreational equipment. apparatus and other instructional materials as contributing to academic achievement. Deducing from the above, the effective teaching-learning process may not be guaranteed with inadequate instructional materials (Ajayi and Ayodele, 2002).

This is to say that when instructional facilities are in short supply, teaching and learning is impaired. This implies that the quality of academic programmes is adversely affected. According to Ajayi (2007) and Okebukola (2002), effective teaching-learning processes cannot be guaranteed with inadequate instructional materials. Oyedeji (2012) also, stated that there is a close significant relationship between the infrastructural development and goals achievement variables of the

tertiary institutions like; research publications, students' academic performance, lecturers job performance, school discipline, and community services. To support this exploration, Bello (2011) also concluded that infrastructural facilities are crucial for students' academic performance and lecturers' job effectiveness.

Oyedeji (2012) stated that the adequacy of the instructional facilities provided-in the schools is an indicator of measuring the quality and standard of education. According to him, poor and inadequate instructional facilities have a significant negative impact on the students' academic performance. The findings of Oyewole (2009) also showed that there is no significant relationship between provision of instructional materials and teachers' job performance. However, he stressed that the relationship was positive but not significant. Akuegwu and Nwi-ue (2013) also observed that the most potent index for assessing and evaluating the standard and quality of the academic institutions is through a close examination of the available infrastructural facilities provided for effective teaching-learning processes in the universities. It should also be noted that the government, education planners, teachers, students, the private sectors, international agencies, and well-meaning Nigerians to recognised the importance of infrastructural facilities to the educational goal achievement.

Both the government and non-governmental organisations and meaningful individuals, however, committed a colossal amount of funds for developing the necessary infrastructural facilities in the interest of academic goals achievement in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Sadiku, 2017). This amount of money seemed not to be well utilised by the appropriate authorities in the universities. Therefore, the available infrastructural facilities are grossly inadequate for both the staff and students use. Despite all the efforts of the government and non-governmental organizations, international agencies and philanthropists to develop the necessary infrastructural facilities for Nigeria educational system. Ogundele (2001) observed that most of the education managers often complain of inadequate teaching materials and equipment, transport facilities, buildings, landscaping, and recreational centers. They complained of destruction and vandalisation of the existing infrastructural facilities by the students. This could be as a result of lack of maintenance culture and adequate care for the existing facilities which has made the work environment not to have considerably improved over the years.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

Ho1:　　There is no significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance.

Ho2:　　There is no significant relationship between the provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance.

Methodology

The descriptive research of survey design was used to carry out this study. The study is primarily an investigation into the relationship between work environment, provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance in Nigerian universities. This research is descriptive in nature because the study describes the existing situation without manipulating any of the variables. The population for this study consisted of all students and academic staff of public universities in Southwest Nigeria. At the time of this study, there are six federal universities and nine state universities in Southwest Nigeria. Stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 540 academic staff and 1,350 students sampled for the study.

Firstly, the universities were stratified along with the variable of type of ownership, 4 conventional Universities (2 State, 2 Federal) and 2 Specialised universities (1 State, 1 Federal). Secondly, purposive sampling was used to select three faculties (Education, Social Sciences and Humanities) for the conventional universities while in specialized universities (faculty of Engineering, Sciences and Agriculture). Simple random sampling technique was used to select 30 lecturers and 75 students from each faculty. The researchers utilised two sets of instruments namely Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (ASJPQ) was used for the students, and Infrastructure, Allocated Funds and Job Performance Questionnaire (IAFJPQ) was used for the academic staff. The researchers constructed the questionnaires after careful review of some literature related to the study of Arogundade (2008) and Ajayi et al. (2011) who had worked on work environment and job performance.

The validity and reliability of the two instruments (ASJPQ and IAFJPQ) were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to find Cronbach alpha values of 0.85 and 0.87 respectively. Hence, the researchers considered the instruments to be valid and reliable for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by experts while the reliability of the instruments was carried out using test-retest method reliability. Data obtained through the ASJPQ and IAFJPQ were analyzed, and all hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level

of significance using SPSS. All the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance.

Table 1: Work Environment and Academic Staff Job Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r Cal	rTable
Work – Environment	540	26.38	5.07	0.665*	0.195
Academic Staff Job Performance	540	33.11	5.99		

*P<0.05

Table 1 shows that r cal (0.665) is greater than r table (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance. The relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance is high, positive and statistically significant at 95% confidence level. This implies that an enhanced work environment of academic staff will lead to corresponding increase in their job performance and vice versa.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance.

Table 2: Provision of Instructional Facilities and Academic Staff Job Performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r Cal	rTable
Work – Environment	540	28.91	5.93	0.746*	0.195
Academic Staff Job Performance	540	33.11	5.99		

*P<0.05

Table 2 shows that r cal (0.746) is greater than r table (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between the provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance. The correlation between provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance is significantly high in a

positive direction. This implies that increased provision of instructional facilities will lead to corresponding improvement in academic staff job performance and vice versa.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance. Generally, a conducive work environment is the utmost desire of every workforce in any human organization (Ajayi et al., 2011). In essence, the morale of academic staff gets more enhanced with the provision of conducive offices with adequate facilities such as lecture rooms, lecture theatres, and serene academic environment that could facilitate job performance. This result agrees with the findings of Arogundade (2008) and Sadiku (2017) who found that work environment components such as physical facilities influence the job performance of academic staff in the universities. The finding of this study also confirmed the observation of Ajayi, Awosusi, Arogundade, and Ekundayo (2011) that the work environment of academic staff in Southwest Nigeria universities had a significant relationship with their job performance. However, this research conflicts with the findings of a study carried by Durotolu (2000) which revealed that there was no significant relationship between work environment and academic staff job performance. With the result of this present study, it becomes highly imperative to ensure a better working environment that could always motivate the lecturers to teach effectively and as well promoting better learning on the part of students.

The result of the second hypothesis indicated that there was a significant relationship between provision of instructional facilities and academic staff job performance. This finding supports Ajayi (2007) and Okebukola (2007) who observed that effective teaching-learning process cannot be guaranteed with inadequate instructional facilities as this could have negative significant impact on the students' academic performance. The result of this study negates the finding of Oyewole (2009) who found that there was no significant relationship between provision of instructional materials and lecturers' job performance. However, he stressed that the relationship between the two variables was positive but not statistically significant. Hence, the total numbers of the instructional facilities provided in the universities could serve as potent indicator for measuring the quality and standard of education given at this level of the educational system (Sadiku, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, one major conclusion that could be drawn is that the work environment and provision of instructional facilities significantly influence the job performance of academic staff in Nigerian universities. If the university system should effectively maintain standard and quality in their output, adequate attention should be paid by the universities management to the work environment and the provision of instructional materials for effective teaching and learning process in the universities.

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations were made; the universities authority should place a high premium on ensuring conducive work environment for all the academic staff to effectively perform their responsibilities in teaching, research and community services. This include provision of conducive office accommodation, access to well-equipped library, laboratory and other facilities. The government should also improve on the funding of the universities to ensure good quality in the instructional delivery. There is the need to ensure adequate provision of instructional facilities for both the staff and students' use, while the existing instructional facilities need to be appropriately maintained to save them from destruction. The government should as a matter of importance provide adequate fund through budgetary allocation for the maintenance of available facilities as well as the provision of new ones in the universities.

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