

TRANSFORMATIVE EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES AS CORRELATE OF JOB PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between transformative empowerment strategies and the job performance of university lecturers in South East Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The sample comprised 333 lecturers drawn from four federal universities in South East Nigeria using a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using two researcher-developed questionnaires titled *Empowerment Strategies Questionnaire (ESQ)* and *Lecturers' Job Performance Questionnaire (LJPQ)*. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research question, while simple linear regression analysis was employed to test the eight null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed, among other things, that transformative empowerment strategies had a significant and strong positive relationship with the job performance of university lecturers in South East Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended, among other things, that university rankings should take into account the extent and quality of staff empowerment programmes, particularly those designed for academic staff, as an important indicator of institutional performance.

Key Words: Empowerment, Strategies, University Lecturers and job performance.

1.0 Introduction

The university education is a developmental investment which its end product is the promotion of industrial sustainability, socio-political development, economic reliance, cultural diversification, adaptability to technological innovations and means of ensuring quality manpower development in a given society. Obunadike, Ughamadu and Uzoechina, (2016) averred that university education is the process of acculturation through which individuals are assisted to attain the development of their potentials in order to ensure moral, social, economic, political and technological development of any society. University education therefore is the highest educational level of the three tiers of education system globally. Omenyi (2023) noted that universities be it public, private or faith-based undoubtedly have come to be regarded as the educational level that produces the world class workforce for effective productivity. This makes the role of university education an unavoidable one when compared with societal impact. University education therefore enhances functional co-existence, collaborative research among workforce, invention of new ideas and concepts, promotion of individual usefulness and productivity as well as societal development. In light of the functions of university education, the professional development of lecturers remains essential to the attainment of its goals.

The role of lecturers in attaining national education goals remain unquestionable. The success of the implementation of higher education is largely determined by the readiness of the lecturers in preparing their students through teaching and learning activities. Omenyi, (2023) opined that the strategic position of lecturers to improve the quality of educational outcomes is strongly influenced by their professional abilities in teaching and their level of welfare. For this to be realized, the strategy of empowering lecturers is needed. Empowerment of lecturers is intended to create a work atmosphere or climate that leads to the development of potential, empowerment and protection. Empowerment strategies are essential for lecturers in Nigerian universities to enhance their teaching and research effectiveness.

Obunadike *et al* (2016) defined empowerment strategy as a creative way of enhancing the capacity of workforce towards contributing meaningfully to the organisation's productivity. Calisici & Kiral (2022) noted that empowerment strategy deals with the techniques that motivate and encourage self-sufficiency, and a free working environment for the purpose of achieving organizational goals. Celik & Konan, (2020) argued that empowerment strategies are tactics that are required to create a positive organisational identity, which is important for prompting employee's performance in such organisation. Kiral (2020) opined that the use of various empowerment strategies such as motivation, entrepreneurial training, leadership training, reward and support amongst other tends to increase the potential of their employees in various ways and prompt them for work effectively. Olatunbosun (2019) are of the view that the empowerment strategy implemented will be able to raise their dignity and worth, improve the quality of learning, improve the quality of national education and provide quality services. The

researcher considers some empowerment strategies in this study such as entrepreneurship training, leadership training and instructional training. Entrepreneurship training of lecturers as an empowerment strategy would help focus the attention of lecturers to be more committed to their assigned job responsibility.

University lecturers are expected to develop professionally and be transformed through different empowerment strategies. These strategies are key mechanisms for improving classroom instruction and students' academic performance. 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 is greatly anchored on the competence of the lecturers which is dependent on their empowerment strategies. In the university system, lecturers' job performance can be enhanced through transformative empowerment strategies.

However, some lecturers' job performance has been a concern due to perceived deteriorating students' academic performance, low morale and confidence, lack of leadership qualities, low interest in teaching, research and student mentorship. The above scenario seems to have posed a threat on the quality of education offered by the universities and service delivery. The study thus posed a question that requires empirical response: "to what extent does transformative empowerment strategies relate to job performance of lecturers in South East Nigeria?" Hence, this study filled this gap by investigating the relationship between empowerment strategies and the extent of their relationship to university lecturers' job performance in South East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to:

1. Examine the extent to which empowerment strategies jointly relates to job performance of lecturers.

Research Questions

This research question guided the study:

1. To what extent do empowerment strategies jointly relate to job performance of lecturers?

Hypothesis

The study hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significance to guide the study.

H₀₁: There is no significant joint relationship between empowerment strategies and job performance of lecturers.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in South East, Nigeria. The South East zone has five states namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. South East zone consists of low sedimentary plain that are essentially an extension of South West coastal plain. The South East states are bordered in the west, north, east and south by Delta, Benue, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom and Rivers States respectively which cuts across latitudes of between 04° minutes 45'' degree and 07° 15'' north and longitude 06° and 50'' and 08° and 20' east. Abia State was created on 27th August, 1991 with Umuahia as the capital city. Geographically, the state is bounded by Enugu state on the north, Akwa-Ibom state on the east, Rivers state on the south east part of Nigeria. The old Anambra state which was created in 1976 constituting part of East Centratl with its capital at Enugu. The zone has many tertiary institutions (Federal and State Universities, Universities of Technologies, University of Agriculture, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education). Four universities out of the five federal universities in the South east of Nigeria will be used for the study. The universities are Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUUAU), Univeristy of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AEFUNAI) and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK). The area of the study is suitable for this research because the researcher is interested in finding strategies that would be of benefit to the lecturers which would as well help to improve their job performance in the area. Also, there are good number of lecturers in the faculties/colleges of Education in the Federal Universities who provided information for the study.

The population for the study is 1983 lecturers in Faculties/Colleges of Education in Federal Universities in the South East, Nigeria. The universities under study were Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUUAU) with 114 lecturers; University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) 151 lecturers, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AEFUNAI) 110 lecturers and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (UNIZIK) 247 lecturers, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri (AIFUE) with 1,361 lecturers. (See appendix B, page 130). (Source: Personnel Administration Offices of the Universities, 2025)

The sample size for the study was 333 lecturers. This comprised 19 lecturers from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUUAU); 25 lecturers from the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN); 18 lecturers from Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo (AEFUNAI), 42 lecturers from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Akwa (UNIZIK) and 229 lecturers of Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri (AIFUEO). This sample size was determined using Taro Yamen mathematical estimation model. All the five states of the South

east Nigeria were sampled and used for the study. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 333 lecturers. A sampling fraction of 0.05 was used to multiply the population of each stratum to obtain the sample size of each University. This sampling fraction was obtained by dividing the population by the sample size thus:
 $S.F = 333/1983$.

The researchers sought the help of four research assistants who were adequately briefed to administer the 333 copies of the questionnaires to the 333 respondents. These research assistants were briefed on how to relate and administer the instrument to the respondents. Thus, this approach helped the researcher to gain a high level of cooperation, accuracy and return from the respondents. The researcher collated all the questionnaires so as to determine both the percentage of return, determine the percentage of inadequately filled questionnaire as well as to determine the percentage of instrument mortality. A total of 313 out of the 333 questionnaires administered were correctly completed, returned, and used for the analysis, representing a response rate of 94%.

The data collected from the field were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) to answer the research questions. Linear Regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule for result acceptance was interpreted as: 0.00-No relationship; 0.01-0.20- very low relationship; 0.21-0.40 - low relationship; 0.41- 0.60 - moderate relationship; 0.61-0.80 - high relationship; 0.81-0.99 - very high relationship; 1.00 - perfect relationship. More so, null hypotheses were accepted as the alternative rejected if the P-value is less than the alpha value of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Question

To what extent do empowerment strategies relate to job performance of lecturers?

Data for answering research question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation matrix of relationship between Empowerment Strategies and job performance of lecturers

Source		ENT	LST	INT	Joint	JPL
ENT	Pearson Correlation	1				.709
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.003
	N	313				313
LST	Pearson Correlation		1			.745
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
INT	Pearson Correlation			1		.838
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.002
	N	313				313
Joint	Pearson Correlation				1	.746
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313

ENT= Entrepreneurial Training, LST= Leadership Training, INT= Instructional Training, JPL= Job Performance of Lecturers, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 show a correlation (r) value of .709 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.60-0.79, indicating high extent relationship. This result shows that entrepreneurial training to a high extent, relate to job performance of lecturers. The Table also revealed a correlation coefficient (r) of .745 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.60-0.79, indicating high extent relationship. This result shows that leadership training to a high extent, relate to job performance of lecturers. Data in the Table further show a correlation coefficient (r) of .838 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.80 and above, indicating very high extent relationship. This result indicates that instructional training to a very high extent, relate to job performance of lecturers. Finally, it was found from the Table, a correlation coefficient (r) of .746 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.60-0.79, indicating high extent relationship. This result indicates that empowerment strategies to a high extent, relate to job performance of university lecturers in South East, Nigeria.

To determine the relative contributions of empowerment strategies (Entrepreneurial Training, Leadership Training, Instructional Training) on teachers' job commitment, a Scheffe test was carried out and the predictive indices of empowerment strategies are presented as shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Relative Contributions of Empowerment Strategies on job performance of lecturers

Source		ENT	LST	INT	Joint	JPL (%)
ENT	Pearson Correlation	1				.709(28.6%)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.003
	N	313				313
LST	Pearson Correlation		1			.745(31.5%)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
INT	Pearson Correlation			1		.838(39.9)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
Joint	Pearson Correlation				1	.746(61.8)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313

ENT= Entrepreneurial Training, LST= Leadership Training, INT= Instructional Training, JPL= Job Performance of Lecturers, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that the predictive indices of empowerment strategies of Entrepreneurial Training, Leadership Training and Instructional Training are .709, .745 and .838 respectively. These however represent 28.6, 31.5, and 39.9 percentages of relative contributions of Entrepreneurial Training, Leadership Training and Instructional Training. In other words, Instructional Training had the highest percentage contribution of 39.9%, followed by Leadership Training with 31.5, and lastly the Entrepreneurial Training with 28.6% relative contribution. Summarily, empowerment strategies jointly had 61.8% contribution on job performance of university lecturers in South East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis

There is no significant joint relationship between empowerment strategies and job performance of university lecturers.

Data for testing hypothesis was presented in Table 3

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Extent of Relationship between Empowerment Strategies on job performance of university lecturers

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6660.645	4	1665.161	44.113	.000 ^b
Residual	11664.132	309	37.748		
Total	18324.777	313			

The data in Table 4.18 indicates a P-value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between empowerment strategies and job performance of university lecturers in Southeast.

Discussion of Findings

The results revealed that empowerment strategies have a significant and strong positive relationship with the job performance of university lecturers in South East Nigeria. This implies that the job performance of university lecturers is substantially influenced by the empowerment strategies available to and experienced by them. In other words, the more lecturers benefit from effective empowerment strategies, the more likely they are to perform their duties efficiently and effectively, and vice versa. This finding is consistent with that of Francescato and Aber (2015), who argued that empowerment strategies equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to enhance creativity and maximize productivity. The finding also corroborates the study by Udo, Uwa, and Etim (2018), who maintained that empowerment strategies enhance employees' dignity, self-worth, and overall job performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between transformative empowerment strategies and the job performance of university lecturers in South East Nigeria. Based on the analyses conducted and the findings obtained, it was concluded, among other things, that transformative empowerment strategies have a significant and strong positive relationship with the job performance of university lecturers in the region. This finding implies that university management should develop, strengthen, and effectively implement robust empowerment strategies to enhance lecturers' job performance. Accordingly, the study recommends that university rankings should, among other

criteria, take into account the extent and quality of staff empowerment programmes, particularly those targeted at academic staff, as an important indicator of institutional effectiveness.

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