



# STAFF RELATIONSHIP AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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## ABSTRACT

The study examines the relationship between staff and job performance in universities in south-south, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested by using multiple regression technique to justify the truth or otherwise of the hypotheses. The tested null hypotheses were rejected and the alternate hypotheses retained. From the findings, it is observed that a significant correlation exists between the heads of department relationship with staff and job performance. There was also a significant relationship between role task analysis and job performance among heads of department. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that there should be cordial relationship between heads of department and staff. This will help to enhance job performance in our institutions of learning. A well-defined roles and tasks should be designed for departmental heads to provide leverage for them and pave ways for effective and efficient performance of their jobs. This will lead to the overall growth of the students, staff and the university community.

**KEYWORDS:** Staff relationship, job performance, higher institutions, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Relationship at work according to Dewar, (2002), is how employers and employees behave in the work environment. Leaders and managers can study, train and be coached. But if they fail to work on their interpersonal skills, they will not succeed when given more complex responsibilities. The ability to relate to and connect with others helps confer influence and leadership success.

Until recently, there has been little focus on what goes on within the relationship between two people in an organization. Finally, valued work relationships can influence organizational outcomes by increasing institutional participation, establishing supportive and innovative climates, increasing organizational productivity and indirectly reducing the intent to turnover.

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The primary relationships that have been studied by organizational theory scholars are those relating to strategy and structure, structure and performance, and the congruence of strategy and structure with performance (Jeminson, 1981). The general conclusions are that organizations must fit structure and processes if the strategy wants to produce positive results. The relationship between structure and performance, however, is more tenuous and is mediated by many other organizational constructs. An organizational structure consists of activities such as task allocation, co-ordination and supervision which are directed towards the achievement of organizational aims.

Studies by Tsiakkiris & Pashiardis (2002) have shown that the behaviour of workers determine the success or failure of the organization. This presupposes that there are certain organizational arrangements that lead to positive results on the part of the workers while the reverse may bring negative outcomes. Some conditions like provision of adequate lecturers and supportive staff in the work environment to improve worker productivity. While other likes poor funding, poor incentive to staff and bureaucratic interference of the government in running the schools tend to reduce their level of performance in an organization (Eze, 2006). For the success of an administrator, there is a need for increased awareness and understanding of the signs that could indicate obstacles in the school system.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Heads of department are saddled with different administrative duties which may induce depression in the person's life and as such may affect the person's health and job performance or even lead to death. This study sets out to examine the relationship between administrative obstacles and job performance of heads department of universities in south – south, Nigeria. Many organizations still need to identify the importance of the staffing they employ. As such, the most important means of securing loyalty, commitment, and determination to maintain the standard of teaching and learning is a significant challenge faced by the management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

The most difficult challenges are inadequate teaching and research facilities, poor salary scale, unfavourable policies such as the tax rate increase, salary reduction, and poor workers' security. The lack of adequate funding for tertiary institutions is said to hurt the performance of university employees. This, coupled with employees' lack of trust in the organization regarding their welfare, will bring about a lack of commitment, which affects employee performance. Thus, the poor welfare packages, poor teaching and research facilities and inadequate salary packages of tertiary institutions in Nigeria are fundamental issues affecting employee performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. According to Edeh (2019), head of department of universities in Nigeria are face with the issue of administrative obstacles which has adversely affected their job performance.

The main purpose of this study is to find the correlation between the heads of department relationship with staff and job performance in South-South, Nigeria universities.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Conceptual Overview**

Staff relationship refers to the interactions, dynamics, and connections between employees within an organization. It encompasses various aspects, including communication, collaboration, working together to achieve common goals, conflict resolution, trust and respect, feedback and support, teamwork as well as diversity and inclusion. Positive staff relationships can lead to improved productivity, enhanced job satisfaction, increased employee engagement, better decision-making, effective problem-solving and reduced turnover and absenteeism. Fostering positive staff relationships is crucial for creating a healthy, productive, and successful work environment.

Job performance on the other hand, refers to the effectiveness with which individuals perform their job responsibilities and achieves the expected outcomes. It encompasses various aspects, including quality of work, quantity of work, job knowledge, problem-solving ability to analyze and resolve issues as well as willingness to take on new challenges.

The nexus between staff relationship and job performance is significant, as positive staff relationships can enhance job performance, while poor relationships can hinder it.

By nurturing positive staff relationships, organizations can improve job performance, increase productivity, and achieve better outcomes.

### **Determinants of job performance**

A meta-analysis of selection methods in personnel psychology found that general mental ability was the best overall predictor of job performance and training performance. Campbell (1990) also suggested determinants of performance components. Individual differences on performance are a function of three main determinants: declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and skill, and motivation. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge about facts, principles, and objects. It represents the knowledge of a given task's principles, facts and ideas, among others.

If declarative knowledge knows what to do, procedural knowledge and skill knows how to do it. For example, procedural knowledge and skill includes cognitive skill, perceptual skill, and interpersonal skill. The third predictor of performance is motivation, which refers to "a combined effect from three choice to expend effort, choice of level of effort to expend and choice to persist in the expenditure of that level of effort" (Nwangwu, 2006). It reflects the direction, intensity, and persistence of volitional behaviours. Davey (2000) emphasized that the only way to discuss motivation as a direct determinant of behaviour is as one or more of those choices. Campbell (1990) also mentioned several performance parameters that may have important implications for the job performance setting and should be investigated by industrial and organizational psychologists.

The first one is the distinction between speed and accuracy. This distinction is similar to the zone between quantity and quality. Important questions that should be considered include: which is most valued by the organization, maximized speed, or some balance between the two? What kind of tradeoffs should an employee makes? The later question is important because speed and accuracy for the same task may be independent of one another.

The second distinction is between typical and maximum performance. Zedeck, and Fogi (1999) did a study on supermarket cashiers and found that there was a substantial difference between scores reflecting their typical performance and scores reflecting their maximum performance. This study suggests the distinction between typical and maximum performance. Regular work situations reflect varying levels of motivation which result in typical performance. Special circumstances generate maximum employee motivation which results in maximum performance.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study is anchored on the Resource-Based View Theory. The assessment of Wright & McMahan (2011) when assets are critical to an organization infers that assets are scant, crucial, explicit or challenging to move for such an organization. This could happen if the organization utilizes human resource management practices, for example, recruitment of fundamental workers and remunerating them advantageously.

Human resource management practices are likely to influence the organization's performance. Wright & McMahan (2011) likewise demonstrated the connection between technique, practices and human asset capital pool. The organization sets up and actualizes new measures, for example, recruitment and selection, training and employee performance. An organization consistently prepares its employees to expand efficiency. The asset-based view hypothesis has made it conceivable to connote the role of staff or personnel to an organization because of how the organization can utilize its human need to maximize goals.

### **Empirical Studies**

Carrol and Gmelch (1992) carried out study on the relationship of heads of department's roles to the importance of their duties. The purpose of the study was to investigate what University and colleges heads of department believe are the most important duties of their position, how they view their roles, and the relationship of perceived roles and duties. The possible role definitions included seeing heads of departments' work as leader, scholar, faculty developer, or manager.

The study surveyed 800 heads department from 100 higher education institutions with a 36 – item questionnaire. 539 were returned. Analysis of the result indicates that heads of department view those items, which are to immediate benefit to the faculty and departments they head as more important than activities which may benefit the university as a whole. The findings revealed that of the 10 duties of heads of department selected as most important, 8 described aspect of faculty development, suggesting that heads department see assisting colleagues as of primary important in their jobs. A clear association was observed between deans in which heads of department believe they are effective and duties which they regard as most important. In addition, leader and manager heads of department who head soft discipline department gave greater emphasis to providing informal faculty leadership than did their hard discipline counterparts.

In another study by Seedorf (1992), on the problems of heads of department in universities. The purpose of the study was to identify the problems met by heads of department in universities, and also describes the most common method of dealing with them. Data were gathered by both qualitative methods using a national survey of 808 heads of department (with a 70.2% response rate), as well series of semi-structured open-ended interviews. The theoretical framework for the study employed notions of organizational socialization, focusing on the third stage of “learning the ropes “which is identified as the adaptation phase. The findings of the study revealed that three main surprises challenge most head of departments in the areas of dealing people, coping with the bureaucracy of the university, and counteracting the negative effect which being a head of department has on research productivity. In general, heads of department accept the volume of paperwork required in the position, without effort to change it. The study concludes that heads of department use a variety of strategies to respond to the demand of working with and being available to other people and to respond to the need of the find time for their own research.

In a study by Allen (2006), on positive interpersonal relationships at work: an examination of dispositional influence and organizational citizenship behaviour. The purpose of the study was to provide a clearer understanding of the antecedents and consequences of positive interpersonal relationships at work, to facilitate the application of a Positive Relationships at Work perspective to new and established areas of organizational behavior, organizational theory, and organizational strategy. The authors use structural equation modeling to analyze data from 438 frontline service employees from a casual dining, national restaurant chain in the United States. The findings of the study support the hypotheses that extraversion, agreeableness and emotional stability are each positively related to forming valued interpersonal relationships at work. In addition, interpersonal citizenship behavior is hypothesized and supported as an outcome of positive interpersonal relationships at work. Testing a full model of all the hypotheses enabled us to identify valued interpersonal relationships as an intermediary variable of the relationship between personality and interpersonal citizenship behavior. This study is related to the present study because it dwelled on positive relationship which is a key variable.

Eboka (2008) reported a study conducted by Eagly and Johnson (1990) on meta-analysis on gender leadership styles. The purpose of study was to determine the influence of meta-analysis on leadership styles. The study compared the leadership of women and men. Evidence from their investigation showed the presence and absence of gender different in their study. The findings of the study led to two major conclusions on this important subject. Their first conclusion was that the similarities between men and women leaders tend to out-weigh the differences. The second conclusion indicated that gender different that existed indicate that females employ a more democratic or participative leadership style than men while men employed a more autocratic and directive leadership behaviour than females.

Uko (2002) studied gender, leadership styles and administrative effectiveness of principals in Cross River state. The purpose of the study was to determine gender, leadership styles and administrative effectiveness in Cross River State. A sample 1000 teachers and 200 principals and vice principals randomly selected from 100 secondary schools in Cross River state. A chi-square analysis of influence of gender on principal leadership style showed that woman scored low on human relations because they were seen to be more officious in their leadership with people including staff, students and visitors. Men on the other were seen to be able to camouflage their emotional problems to the extent that they could easily handle difficult situation. The finding of the study revealed that men are better school administrators.

Olanipekun et al. (2024) investigated the correlation and nexus between staffing and employee performance. The research employs a cross-section correlational method as the research design, with data analysis methods ranging from analysis of frequency to analysis of descriptive data and multiple regression analysis. The paper used a simple random sampling technique to select respondents for the research directly. As such, 374 respondents from both the academic and non-academic staff of Olabisi Onabanjo University were selected. Findings revealed that all independent variables have a notable positive relationship with employee performance. The research thus recommended that other staffing practices not discussed in this research should be carried out in line with employee performance.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The study adopted a correlational research design to establish the extent of the relationship between staff and their job performance. A correlational study according to Nworgu (2006) is the research design in which the investigator set out to find the extent to which variation in one factor correspond with variation in one or more factors based on correlation coefficient. This type of study seeks to establish

the relationship existing between two or more variables.

**Sample and population of the study**

The population of this study comprise of all the 331 heads of department in the universities of the south-south zone of Nigeria. This includes 284 male heads of department and 47 female heads of department. The entire 331 heads of department from six universities selected were used as sample in view of expert’s opinion that to study entire population is the best for any study since it eliminates sampling errors (Uzoagulu, 1998).

**Statement of ethical consideration**

This paper titled “staff relationship and job performance in higher institutions: the Nigerian experience” collected data through the use of questionnaire and analyzed the data through the use of descriptive and quantitative technique. The survey was conducted without putting respondents under any form of duress; hence participation as a respondent in the survey was absolutely voluntary and anonymous. In order to ensure no detriment to the public, the primary data used in this study has been put through stringent ethical guidelines during their compilation and reuse.

**Model Specifications**

A model represents a simplified depiction of real-life phenomenon (Lewin, 2008). The multiple linear regression model was used to test the nexus between staff relationship and job performance. Staff relationship was disaggregated into relationship with heads of department and role task analysis. The functional relationship of these equation can be expressed thus:

**Model I**

$$JOP = f (RHD, RTA) \dots\dots\dots (3.1)$$

The ordinary least squares multiple regression model is given as:

$$JOP = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1RHD + \alpha_2RTA + et\dots\dots\dots (3.2)$$

Where:

- $\alpha_0$  = Regression constant
- $\alpha_1$  and  $\alpha_2$  = Regression Parameters
- JOP = Job performance
- RHD = Relationship with head of departments
- RTA = Role task analysis

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS****Test of hypotheses****Hypothesis 1**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between the heads of department relationship with staff and job performance

**Table 1:** Regression analysis of the heads of department relationship with staff and job performance

Variable	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
Regression	11.61	1	11.61	61.17	0.00
Residual	19.93	330		0.19	
Total	31.53	331			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 1 (H<sub>01</sub>), regression analysis was used. The result in Table 1 shows that an F-ratio of 61.17 with associated probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05 and it was found to be significant because 0.00 was less than 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and inference drawn that, there is a significant correlation between the heads of department relationship with staff and job performance. The finding of this study is in line with French and Caplan (1984) who upheld that relationship at work is another head of department source of

stress. They opined that poor relationship with co-workers, supervisors and bosses give rise to inadequate communication, low job satisfaction and feeling of job-related threat, low trust, low supportiveness, low interest in listening to and trying to deal with problem that confront the organizational matters.

**Hypothesis 2**

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between role task analysis and job performance among heads of department.

**Table 2:** Regression analysis of role task analysis and job performance of heads of department

Variable	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
Regression	25.86	1	25.86	117.40	0.00
Residual	73.13	329		0.22	
Total	98.99	330			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 2 (H<sub>02</sub>), regression analysis was used. The result in Table 2 shows that an F-ratio of 117.40 with associated probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05 and it was found to be significant because 0.00 was less than 0.05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and inference drawn that, there is a significant relationship between role task analysis and job performance among heads of department. The findings of this study is in line with the finding of Oboegbulem, (1995), and Smylie (1999), which identify role task analysis as being associated with stress, including style of management of an administrator. As suggested by Ngoka (2000) Jarvis (2002) and Michie (2002) among others, some of the role task analysis;

particularly conflict and ambiguity, tend to prevent an individual from attaining or completing a task. It becomes a constraint on individuals need to achieve and be productive.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings and discussion of study, it is observed that a significant correlation exists between the heads of department relationship with staff and job performance. There was also a significant relationship between role task analysis and job performance among heads of department. Based on the findings of this study, there should be cordial relationship between heads of department and staff. This will help to enhance job performance in our institutions of learning.

A well-defined roles and tasks should be designed for departmental heads to provide leverage for them and pave ways for effective and efficient performance of their jobs.

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