

ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between transformative professional development 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 five federal universities in South East Nigeria using a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using two researcher-developed questionnaires titled *Transformative Professional Development Questionnaire (TPDQ)* 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 null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed, among other things, that transformative professional development has a significant and very strong positive relationship with the job performance of university lecturers. The study concluded that transformative professional development is a significant predictor of lecturers' job performance. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the National Universities Commission (NUC), as the regulatory agency responsible for university education in Nigeria, should establish and promote comprehensive transformative professional development programmes for lecturers across Nigerian universities to enhance their effectiveness and overall job performance.

Keywords: Professional Development, Job Performance, University Lecturers and Relationship.

INTRODUCTION

Transformative Professional Development (TPD) of lecturers is at a very low ebb as such has a negative influence on their job performance in South East, Nigeria. Nwagbara (2023) noted that professional development can be described as those skills and certificates in educational programme acquired by educational workforce in order to upgrade their academic status and performance in assigned duties. In order to facilitate lecturers' professional development in the public universities, there is need for information and communication technology training to ensure compliance to technological driven educational environment, instructional mobility training, human capital development, national health insurance, good housing or quarters, accessible professional development funds, incentives and fringe benefits, in-service training, pre-service training and off-the-job training amongst others for lecturers in South East, Nigeria. Olatunbosun (2019) described professional development as a process engaged into in order to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the lecturers in performing outstandingly in their job. This implies the responsibility to create, preserve, evaluate and transmit knowledge through continuing learning process and training outcome.

The success or failure of the educational system greatly depends solely on the quality of the instructors who are incidentally teachers. Nwagbara, (2023) is of the view that lecturers that are exposed to professional development training acquire more conceptual and technical knowledge, skills and competence in their instructional delivery and pedagogy which helps to improve efficiency in their job performance. Kazmi in Ngerem and Ogedi (2023) described professional development as the process of gaining new skills through continuing education and career advancement in order to contribute meaningfully in the profession. This can be said to be conceived from the organization's acknowledgement that effective job performance to a large extent depend on training and re-training of the workforce which are the ideas for transformative professional development

Transformative professional development (TPD) is an advanced model of human capital development and as such it becomes necessary for discourse in this study. Fleming (2022) stated that transformative professional development is a deep, reflective process that goes beyond simply acquiring skills, focusing instead on fundamental shifts in a professional's understanding, attitudes and practices. The author further stated that it often leads to critical self-reflection, engagement with broader social issues, and the formation of new, more inclusive frameworks for understanding the world. It encourages professionals to question existing assumptions, challenge power structures and adopt new perspectives that enable more ethical approaches to their work and the wider society. Put differently, Ghamrawi (2024), defined transformative professional development as a training that creates significant and lasting change in educators' beliefs, practices, and even personal lives, fostering critical thinking, ethical action and a commitment to social justice. The author further stated that it includes experiential learning, reflection, sustained support from mentors and peers in collaborative communities and a focus on

building agency and critical consciousness among educators. Rezk-Marey, Ashraf, Heba, & Andrew (2025) noted that transformative professional development program employed instructional strategies and digital assessment tools that provoke critical and creative thinking and transforming learning experiences into meaningful thought-provoking lessons that support students with the new styles of assessing higher order skills rather than testing for memorization. From the above definitions, transformative professional development is a conscious effort by lecturers to develop and skill up themselves in such a way that there will be significant and lasting changes in them and in what they do. For transformative professional development programme to remain relevant in equipping lecturers in their academic practices and job performance, it is important to understand that professional development requires a functional and implementable curriculum-based training programme that would support lecturers in their instructional programmes.

Transformative professional development should be relevant to institutional need and the individual needs in capacity building and necessary dynamics in the educational system. Rezk-Marey, *et. al.* (2025) argued that teachers (lecturers) should be mentored to incorporate transformative professional development content confidently and fluently in their classroom practices. They should also be supported to enhance their reflective decisions about how to personalize the content to meet their learners' needs. Colomo and Casado (2020) averred that transformative professional development is transformative in strategies as well as various means by which all the categories of lecturers in a university are encouraged to improve their capabilities and be more effective in their areas of assignment. In this study, transformative professional development techniques such as digital content and technological tools programme, human capital development programme, lecturers mobility programme or engagement in sabbatical programme and other transformative professional development should be ensured to align with the instructional needs strategically so as to meet with the emerging 21st century organizational skills. This may also help to promote and enhance lecturers' confidence on their instructional activities, foster self-directed learning and reconstruction of knowledge and inquiry-based testing. University lecturers should be acclimatized with innovative digital content and technological programmes in a bid to enhance their job performance in this high-tech era.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

University lecturers are expected to develop professionally and be transformed through different professional and 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. However, recent observations show that the university education system in South East Nigeria is facing significant challenges, despite efforts to improve lecturers' job performance through transformative staff development and empowerment strategies. 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 current transformative professional development programs seem inadequate in transforming lecturers and many use training opportunities to migrate abroad. This trend threatens the quality of education and service delivery, leading to doubts about the validity of university education in Nigeria. 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 professional development relate to job performance of lecturers in South East Nigeria?" Hence, this study filled this gap.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between transformative professional development and job performance of university lecturers in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which transformational professional development jointly relates to job performance of lecturers.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. To what extent does transformational professional development jointly relate to job performance of lecturers?

HYPOTHESIS

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

H₀₁: There is no significant joint relationship between transformational professional development and job performance of university 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 Central 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), University 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 properly 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 does transformational professional development jointly relate to job performance of lecturers? Data for answering research question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation matrix of relationship between Transformational Professional development and job performance of lecturers

Source		DCD	HCD	LMD	Joint	JPL
DCD	Pearson Correlation	1				.815
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.001
	N	313				313
HCD	Pearson Correlation		1			.883
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
LMD	Pearson Correlation			1		.722
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
Joint	Pearson Correlation				1	.803
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313

DCD = Digital Content Development, HCD = Human Capital Development, LMD = Lecturers' Mobility Development, 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 0.815 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.80 and above, indicating very high extent relationship. This result shows that digital content development to a very high extent, relate to job performance of lecturers. The Table also revealed a correlation coefficient (r) value of .883 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.80 and above, indicating very high extent relationship. This result indicates that human capital development to a very high extent, relate to job performance of lecturers. Data in the Table further show a correlation coefficient (r) value of .722 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.60-0.79, indicating high extent relationship. This result indicates that lecturers' mobility development to a high extent, relate to job performance of lecturers. Finally, it was found from the Table, a correlation coefficient (r) of correlation (r) value of .803 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of range of 0.80 and above, indicating very high extent relationship. This result indicates that transformative professional development to a very high extent, relate to job performance of university lecturers in South East, Nigeria.

To determine the relative contributions of transformative professional development (Digital Content Development, Human Capital Development, and Lecturers' Mobility Development) on job performance of lecturers, a Scheffe test was carried out and the predictive indices of transformative professional development are presented as shown in Table 4.8 below:

Table 2: Relative Contributions of Transformational Professional development and job performance of lecturers

Source		DCD	HCD	LMD	Joint	JPL (%)
DCD	Pearson Correlation	1				.815(33.1)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.001
	N	313				313
HCD	Pearson Correlation		1			.883(40.1)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
LMD	Pearson Correlation			1		.722(26.8)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313
Joint	Pearson Correlation				1	.803(61.2)
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000
	N	313				313

DCD = Digital Content Development, HCD = Human Capital Development, LMD = Lecturers' Mobility Development, JPL= Job Performance of Lecturers, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that the predictive indices of transformative professional development of Digital Content Development, Human Capital Development, and Lecturers' Mobility Development are .815, .883 and .772 respectively. These however represent 33.2, 40.1, and 26.8 percentages of relative contributions of Digital Content Development, Human Capital Development, and Lecturers' Mobility Development. In other words, Human Capital Development had the highest percentage contribution of 40.1%, followed by Digital Content Development with 33.2, and lastly the Lecturers' Mobility Development with 26.8% relative contribution. Summarily, joint transformative professional development had 61.2% contribution on job performance of lecturers in South East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis

There is no significant joint relationship between transformational professional development and job performance of university lecturers.

Data for testing hypothesis 4 was presented in Table 3

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Extent of Relationship between Transformational Professional development and job performance of university lecturers

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6806.522	4	1701.631	45.155	.000 ^b
Residual	11644.356	309	37.684		
Total	18450.878	313			

The data in Table 3 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 transformational professional development and job performance of university lecturers.

Discussion of Findings

The results showed that transformative professional development has a significant and strong positive relationship with the job performance of university lecturers. This implies that the job performance of university lecturers is substantially influenced by the transformative professional development opportunities available to them. In other words, the more lecturers are exposed to transformative professional development programmes, such as digital content development, human capital development, and lecturer mobility initiatives, the more effectively they are likely to perform their professional responsibilities, and vice versa. This finding is consistent with that of Garcia (2016), who reported that transformative professional development significantly enhances employees' job effectiveness. The finding also corroborates the study by Colomo and Casado (2020), who maintained that transformative professional development encourages lecturers at all career levels to enhance their competencies and improve their effectiveness in carrying out their academic and professional responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

This study provided empirical evidence on the relationship between transformative professional development 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 professional development has a significant and very strong positive relationship with the job performance of university lecturers in the region. This finding suggests that inadequate exposure to transformative professional development programmes may adversely affect lecturers' job performance. Consequently, there is a need for sustained investment in professional development initiatives that enhance lecturers' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the National Universities Commission (NUC), as the regulatory body for university education in Nigeria, should develop and promote comprehensive transformative professional development programmes for lecturers across Nigerian universities.

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