



ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE ACADEMIC STAFF OF UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Agricultural sciences play a crucial role in enhancing food security, improving food quality, and promoting sustainable food production practices that minimise environmental impact. By focusing on research and development, agricultural sciences aim to address pressing global challenges. The major areas are crop and animal breeding, pest and disease management, soil and water conservation, and agricultural product processing. These initiatives contribute to improved farm productivity, efficiency, and profitability, ultimately benefiting farmers, consumers, and the environment.

In universities, career advancement for academic staff is driven by contributions recognized through advancements in rank, responsibilities, and pay. Advancement in rank, or promotion, is a key performance metric marking significant career milestones (Kaimer et al., 2019). To achieve rank advancement, staff must meet specific criteria, including delivering quality teaching, publishing research, engaging in professional development, and contributing service or scholarship. The requirements for promotion vary across academic ranks and disciplines, with distinct criteria for different faculties. Organisational factors, such as leadership efficacy, mentorship initiatives, infrastructural

resources, workload management, and financial support, play a crucial role in shaping career advancement. Effective leadership, mentorship programs, and adequate resources support staff growth and development, while excessive workload and insufficient funding can hinder performance and productivity.

Emeka (2019) studies the relationship between leadership effectiveness and academic staff job productivity in some selected state universities in South East Geo-political zone of Nigeria. Five null hypotheses were formulated based on the specific objectives of the study. Survey research design was employed in the study. A population of two thousand three hundred academic staff were involved in the study, out of this population, two hundred and twenty (220) respondents were selected to collect data, the selection was carried out using stratified random sampling technique. Two sets of instruments were used to collect data; the instrument was validated by three research experts and the study supervisor. Data collection exercise was conducted personally by the researcher. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. Result revealed that leadership effectiveness of school managers correlates significantly with academic staff job productivity.

Eboh (2016) researched on the influence of Heads of Department leadership effectiveness and lecturers research output; the study was based on five specific objectives under which five research questions and null hypotheses were generated. An ex-post facto research design was used in the study. Literature was reviewed according to the sub-variables of the study; the population of the study was six thousand six hundred (6600) lecturers in Federal Universities in South-South Geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Stratified and simple random sampling technique was used to select seven hundred (700) lecturers as respondents for the study, two sets of questionnaires were used in the study to collect data. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data generated. Result shows that leadership effectiveness of HODs significantly influences research output of lecturers.

Ebisinkemefa and Lucky (2022) examined the association between academic mentorship and lecturers performance in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa state, Nigeria. The main aim of the study was to determine the link between academic mentorship and lecturers' performance. The study utilized data collected from a sample of 334 junior lecturers from a population of 2,030 junior lecturers from six tertiary institutions in the state. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The validation of the instrument was determined through expert opinion, while its reliability was confirmed through test-retest method. The Spearman Rank correlation was used as test statistics, resulting in SPSS, the result of the study showed that a positive and significant correlation between mentorship and lecturers job performance. The result indicates that active listening, collaborative learning, shared experience, and corrective feedback relate to lecturers job performance with coefficients of 0.79 to 0.82.

Undiyaundeye and Basake (2017) in their study of mentoring and career development of academics in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria, 570 out of 1075 population of chief lecturers and young lecturers were sampled through multi-stage sampling technique, to find whether there is any significant relationship between mentorship and career development of academics. To achieve this purpose, one research question and null hypothesis was formulated. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. An instrument tagged Mentoring and Career Development for Academics Questionnaire (MCDAQ) containing 12 items was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by three experts with reliability coefficient of 0.82. Mean rating and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions. While independent t-test was used in testing the hypothesis, the major findings of the study revealed that mentoring is in practice in colleges of education in Cross River State, Nigeria; and that mentoring has significant relationship with career development of academics.

Babarinde, Omoyeele, Opadere, and Afolabi (2022) examined the impact of mentoring program on career development of junior teaching staff in selected universities in Nigeria, the study adopted mixed methods (i.e., quantitative and qualitative analysis). Data was collected through a structured questionnaire as well as web research and literature review. 70% of the 200 respondents confirmed that mentorship has positive impact on their career. Chi-square value of 9.459 and a P-value of 0.009 at 0.05 level of significance indicates that mentoring effectiveness has significant impact on career development of the respondents. It is backed on these theoretical backdrop that the study was conducted on organisational factors on career advancement of agricultural

science academic staff of universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implications for improved Agricultural Production in Nigeria.

Problem statement

Organizational factors are crucial in shaping career advancement within academic environments, encompassing leadership efficacy, mentorship initiatives, infrastructural resources, workload management, and financial support. Effective leadership and mentorship programs facilitate professional growth, while adequate resources and manageable workloads enable staff to thrive. Conversely, excessive workload and insufficient funding can impede performance and hinder career advancement. By prioritizing these variables, universities can foster a supportive environment that promotes academic staff's career development and advancement, ultimately driving institutional success.

Research objectives

The main purpose of this study was to organisational factors on career advancement of Agricultural Science academic staff of universities in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implications for improved Agricultural Production in Nigeria, thus the study examined the influence of;

- Leadership effectiveness on career advancement of academic staff
- Mentorship programmes on career advancement of academic staff.
- Availability of school facilities on career advancement of academic staff

Research questions

The following research questions will be raised in the study;

- To what extent does leadership effectiveness influence career advancement of academic staff?
- To what extent does mentorship programmes influence career advancement of academic staff?
- How does availability of school facilities influence career advancement of academic staff?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be stated to guide the study.

- i. Leadership effectiveness does not significantly predict career advancement of academic staff.
- ii. Mentorship programmes do not significantly predict career advancement of academic staff.
- iii. School facilities do not significantly predict career advancement of academic staff.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The study utilized an Ex-Post Facto research design, adopting a descriptive survey approach to examine the relationship between institutional variables and academic staff career advancement in universities. The population consisted of 423 academic staff from the University of Calabar and University of Cross River State. The study adopted the purposive sampling and a sample of 316 respondents was selected. Data were collected using the validated "Organisational Factors and Career Advancement of Academic Staff Questionnaire" (OFCPASASQ). The analysis involved hypothesis-by-hypothesis testing, with clear identification of independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Test of Hypotheses

The stated hypothesis for the study was tested at a .05 alpha level. The decision rule is that a null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value associated with the computed test statistic is less than .05 but retained if otherwise. Hypotheses one to five were analysed using Simple Regression Analysis, while hypothesis seven was analysed using multiple linear regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 1.

Hypothesis one

Leadership effectiveness does not significantly predict career advancement of academic staff. To test this hypothesis of the study, simple linear regression analysis was employed with leadership effectiveness as predictor (independent) variable and career advancement as criterion (dependent) variable. The results obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Regression of career advancement on leadership effectiveness

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate		
.142 ^a	.020	.019		8.11197		
Sources of variation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression		891.752	1	891.752	13.552	.000
Residual		43364.862	314	65.804		
Total		44256.614				
Variables		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)		27.221	1.743		15.617	.000
Leadership effectiveness		.352	.096	.142	3.681	.000

*p<.05

Table 1 gives an interpretation of the results of the simple linear regression analysis of leadership effectiveness and career advancement. An r-value of .142 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of .020. This implies that the variation in leadership effectiveness can account for about 1.4% of the total variation in career advancement; thus, the p-value (.000) associated with the computed F-value (13.552) is less than .05. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that leadership effectiveness significantly predicts career advancement, with both the regression constant (27.221) and coefficient (.352) making a significant contribution to the prediction model ($t=15.617$ & 3.681 respectively, $p=.000 < .05$). The mathematical relationship of the

regression model is depicted by the following equation $y=27.221+.352x$ thus, $x=$ leadership effectiveness and $y=$ career advancement.

Hypothesis two

Mentorship programme does not significantly predict career advancement of academic staff. To test this hypothesis of the study, simple linear regression analysis was employed with mentorship programme as predictor (independent) variable and career advancement as criterion (dependent) variable. The results obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Regression of career advancement on mentorship programme

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate		
.153 ^a	.024	.022		8.09807		
Sources of variation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression		1040.234	1	1040.234	15.862	.000
Residual		43216.380	314	65.579		
Total		44256.614	315			
Variables		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)		26.731	1.736		15.396	.000
Mentorship programme		.379	.095	.153	3.983	.000

*p<.05

The simple linear regression analysis revealed that mentorship programs significantly predict career advancement. The R-squared value of 0.024 indicates that about 2.4% of the variation in career advancement can be attributed to mentorship programs. The p-value associated with the computed F-value is less than 0.05,

leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that mentorship programs have a significant impact on career advancement. The regression model shows that both the constant (26.731) and coefficient (0.379) make significant contributions to the prediction model. The mathematical relationship between

mentorship programs and career advancement can be represented by the equation $y = 26.731 + 0.379x$, where x represents mentorship programs and y represents career advancement. Overall, the findings suggest that mentorship programs play a crucial role in promoting career advancement.

Hypothesis three

The study's findings indicate that school facilities do not significantly predict career advancement of academic staff. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was employed, with school facilities as the predictor variable and career advancement as the criterion variable. The results of the statistical analysis are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Regression of career advancement on school facilities

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate		
.229 ^a	.053	.051		7.97635		
Sources of variation		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Regression		2329.630	1	2329.630	36.617	.000
Residual		41926.984	314	63.622		
Total		44256.614	315			
Variables		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	p-value
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	
(Constant)		23.367	1.708		13.681	.000
School facilities		.563	.093	.229	6.051	.000

*p<.05

The simple linear regression analysis in Table 3 revealed that school facilities significantly predict career advancement. The R-squared value of 0.053 indicates that about 5.3% of the variation in career advancement can be attributed to school facilities. The p-value associated with the computed F-value is less than 0.05, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that school facilities have a significant impact on career advancement. The regression model shows that both the constant (23.367) and coefficient (0.563) make significant contributions to the prediction model. The mathematical relationship between school facilities and career advancement can be represented by the equation $y = 23.367 + 0.563x$, where x represents school facilities and y represents career advancement. Overall, the findings suggest that investing in school facilities can have a positive effect on the career advancement of academic staff.

Summary of Results

The results of the study can be summarised as follows

1. Leadership effectiveness significantly predicts career advancement of academic staff.
2. Mentorship programmes significantly predict career advancement of academic staff.
3. School facilities significantly predict the career advancement of academic staff.

Discussions of finding

The findings as outlined and discussed according to the stated null hypotheses tested in the study. Thus;

Hypothesis one showed that leadership effectiveness significantly predicts career advancement of academic staff. These findings may be because leaders have a profound impact on their overall work environment. Effective leaders create an atmosphere of trust and respect, which in turn fosters creativity and collaboration. Leaders must be able to adapt their leadership styles to the organisation and the challenges it is currently facing, as well as the needs of the people in it. The findings agree with the study of Adeyemi (2010) findings showed that democratic leadership style constituted the dominant leadership style exercised by the

principals under study. Equally, Emeka (2019) and Eboh (2016) result shows that leadership effectiveness significantly influences the research output of lecturers.

The results of hypothesis two showed that mentorship programme significantly predict career advancement of academic staff. This means that mentoring programmes play a role in knowledge transfer, career advancement and fostering human connections. This two-way exchange of feedback and ideas positively impacts individuals and organizations by increasing retention, advancement and professional growth. The present finding is in line with the study of Ebisinkemefa and Lucky (2022) result of the study showed a positive and significant correlation between mentorship and lecturers' job performance. In the same vein, Undiyaundeye and Basake (2017) findings of the study revealed that mentoring is in practice in colleges of education in Cross River State, Nigeria; and that mentoring has a significant relationship with career development of academics.

Finally, hypothesis three showed that school facilities significantly predict career advancement of academic staff. Based on the findings, the study concluded that school facilities are very essential for the achievement of students' quality academic performance in any school. Adequate facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, sports facilities, medical rooms, sanitation facilities, and computer labs are essential for creating a conducive learning environment. The present findings align with the study of Ramili and Esoung (2016) result of the study shows that E-learning, teaching aid and library are among others were all significant to impact teachers attitude to work. Again, Mpho (2012) and Mbanwi (2018) findings showed that the indispensable role of school facilities was approved by almost all the respondents that school facilities predict lecturers' job effectiveness significantly.

Recommendations

Based on the study's results, the following recommendations are made:

- University administrators should prioritize leadership development programs to enhance their effectiveness, which in turn will positively impact staff career advancement .
- Institutions should establish and support mentorship initiatives that pair experienced staff with junior faculty, providing guidance, support, and opportunities for growth.
- Universities should invest in maintaining and upgrading school facilities to create a conducive work environment, which will contribute to staff career advancement and overall job satisfaction.

Implications for improved Agricultural Production in Nigeria

Improved agricultural production in Nigeria has far-reaching benefits, including boosting GDP, increasing food security and affordability, enhancing employment and rural livelihoods, promoting economic diversification, and strengthening resilience against climate change. The basic drivers of this growth include the adoption of technology, such as improved seeds and digital platforms, alongside improved infrastructure, effective government policies, access to finance, and sustainable resource management practices, all of which contribute to a more robust and resilient agricultural sector.

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