

**INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH FOR QUALITY
PERSONNEL OUTPUT IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN RIVERS STATE**

Gladys Ejimole Aleru, Ph.D

*Department of Educational Management,
University of Port Harcourt,
Rivers State.*

And

Danladi A. Saliu, Ph.D

*Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology (CSET)
University of Port Harcourt,
Rivers State.*

Abstract

The study investigated innovative educational research for quality personnel output in higher education in Rivers state. The study used two research questions and research hypotheses. The sample size of 849 respondents represents 32% of the population of 2,656 in three higher institutions in Rivers State. The participants were also selected using sample random sampling technique. Instrument for data collection was Innovative Educational Research for Quality Personnel Output in Higher Education questionnaire (IERQPOHEQ). To validate the instrument, the researcher presented the questionnaire to two experts in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education of the University of Port Harcourt for scrutiny. A reliability coefficient index of 0.90 was obtained using pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The mean (\bar{x}) and rank order was used to analysis the questionnaire while the hypotheses were tested using the Z-statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that for quality research output in both Federal and State Universities in Rivers State, motivation is required either as extrinsic or intrinsic to academic staff.

Keywords: Innovative, Educational Research, Quality, Personnel Output.

All over the world, education is generally accepted as the main instrument for growth and development of any nation. No nation can develop beyond the quality of its educational output, that is, its educational research and innovation from higher education institutions. In Nigeria, the tertiary or the higher education institution is the highest level education that draws from the available pool of persons who have completed a wide variety of secondary education. The functions of this higher education institution include teaching, research and innovation, virile staff development, generation and dissemination of knowledge and others. This agreed with Chinamasa (2012) universities are the highest academic institutions distinguished from other institutions of higher learning by their key function of research, knowledge dissemination and academic freedom. Based on this study, educational research remains the focal point.

What then Is Educational Research?

Research is a search or investigation which is directed to the discovery of some facts by careful consideration or study of a subject (Ayeni, 2010). Shabbir, Noor, Saeed and Ata (2015) considered research to be an outcome of man's incessant quest for knowledge in the wider sense. Whereas it is a well-established fact that socio-economic development of any country is extensively reliant on wide, relevant and quality research work conducted by its academicians in every field generally and

in every aspect particularly, this leads to economic growth, social solidity and prosperity in the long run. Also, Altbach and Balán (2007) asserted that research universities were defined as academic institutions “committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge, in a range of disciplines and fields, and featuring the appropriate laboratories, libraries, and other infrastructures that permit teaching and research at the highest possible level”. The academic staff of higher education institutions is the key research resource.

However, for quality personnel output in higher education, academic staff engages in research activities and productivity which serve as a benchmark for attaining great success and recognition in the higher education institutions both locally and internationally. This leads to fringe benefits such as awards (locally and internationally), promotion and others academic motivational incentives. Muhammad and Azhar (2011) supported that research publications enable academicians to earn better salary package and get better tenure. Furthermore, research activities and publicity provides an important background for academic staff to become successful lecturers. The quality of teaching in higher education institutions is strongly connected to quality research which plays a significant role in shaping the teaching and learning process by academic staff (Mahmood, 2011). This statement support Lertputtarak (2008) cited in Newman (2014) that research enhances the quality of teaching effectiveness and reinforces many of the

skills that are required for effective teaching by lecturers. It is believed that lecturers actively involved in research activities are usually in touch with the latest developments in their field and are more likely to be on the forefront of their discipline, compared to the research dormant lecturers (Sulo, Kendagor, Kosgei, Tuitoek, and Chelangat, 2012 cited in Newman, 2014).

In spite of research activities and publication to academia, the motivational aspect of research has being a question-mark. A well-motivated academia in research work can build a local, national and international reputation for himself/herself and the higher institutions respectively. Based on such a profile, it may have a positive significant impact on the ability of the university to attract more students, research funds and consultancy contracts not only locally but internationally and world-class. Thus, among all the functions of higher institutions (federal and state universities) in Rivers state, research output remains one of the focal point of show casing knowledge by academic staff. Academic staff in federal and state universities in Rivers state are motivated either extrinsic or intrinsic for quality research output. Extrinsic motivation occurs when academic staff are courage by higher institutions management indirectly through incentives (monetary rewards, bonuses, research grants and research subsidizes) for quality research output. In contrast, intrinsic motivation is apparent when academic staff's is oriented towards promotion, self-actualization and self-

recognition in research output rather than to obtain material rewards.

However, academic staff in higher institutions in Rivers state will put in more effort in research work when they know that their efforts will be rewarded by the higher institutions, government and non-governmental bodies. Thus, the academic staff in federal university may enjoy added advantage when compare to the state universities in Rivers state. This could be as a result of affiliation of the federal university with reputable foreign universities aboard through their scholars, association with international journals for publication and other fringe benefits for research. However, the state universities may be constrained to this affiliation. There are other factors that might affect academia research activities like poor research motivation (research grants/subsidies for international or world publication, incentives and other), obsolete research facilities, outdated apparatus and materials, lack of research focus, linkage between research and industrial sector and others. Therefore, it is vital to ensure quality of research in higher education institutions by adopting international standard used in assessing research quality and address factors which could affect the quality of academic research and publications (Ahmed and Hoil, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

International trends consider ranking universities on the basis of their research output a normal requirement for social accountability. It is an accepted

phenomenon based on the human need to compare, compete and create benchmarking standards (Chinamasa, 2012). In higher institutions in Nigeria and Rivers state in particular, academia focused more on the teaching aspect, with research work being relatively neglected. This is because of poor research motivation for publication. The consequence of neglect in research work and poor research motivation by academia are the result seen in our higher institutions and societies today. These range from brain drain, unqualified graduates to be employed, poor innovation among undergraduate on entrepreneurship, companies down siding and social vices. Despite the above, has educational research by academia yielded any positive impact in society and nation at large? This study seeks to investigate innovative educational research for quality personnel output in higher education in Rivers state.

Objectives of the Study

This study investigated innovative educational research for quality personnel output in higher education in Rivers state. Specifically, the study was designed sub-objectives:

1. To determine how academic staff are motivated for quality research output in higher education.
2. To investigate the challenges facing academic staff for quality innovative educational research in higher education.

Research Questions

1. How are academic staff motivated for quality research output in higher institutions in Rivers state?
2. What are the challenges facing academic staff for quality innovative educational research in higher institutions in Rivers state?

Hypotheses

Based on the above stated research questions, the following hypotheses will be formulated to guide the investigation.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities academic staff on how academia are motivated for quality research output in higher education in Rivers state.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities academic staff on challenges facing academia for quality innovative educational research in higher education in Rivers state.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

Population

The population for this study consisted of three (3) universities in Rivers state. The universities in this study are University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University of Science and Technology and Ignitus Ajuru University of Education Rivers State. The

respondents were 2,656 teaching staff both in Federal and state Universities. There were one thousand and seventy-one (1,071) academic staff in University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT); there were academic staff of seven hundred and twenty-four (724) in Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), and while there were academic staff of six hundred and fifty-eight (658) in Ignitus Ajuru University of Education Rivers State.

Source: Pay roll unit of the bursary department of the Federal and State Universities, 2013.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size of 849 respondents represents 32% of the population of 2,656. The study employed stratified sampling technique for the selection of the respondents. The respondents were also selected using random sampling method of balloting without replacement. This gave all respondents equal chance of being selected for the study. The strata comprise are academic staff from the federal and state university respective. The academic staff from federal university (UNIPORT) selected was 484 while the academic staff from state universities was 360 for the study. There were 197 academic staff in RSUST and 163 academic staff in Ignitus Ajuru University of Education in Rivers State.

Instrumentation

The instrument was a structured questionnaire titled Innovative

Educational Research for Quality Personnel Output in Higher Education Questionnaire (IERQPOHEQ). The questionnaire which contained 11 items was divided into sections A and B. Section A, elicited information on the demographic background while section B dealt with issues innovative educational research for quality personnel output in higher education in Rivers state. This section is structured on a modified Likert four-point rating scale; that is:

Strongly Agree (SA) - 4 points

Agree (A) - 3 points

Disagree (D) - 2 points

Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1 point

To get the criterion mean for scoring the questionnaire, all the points of the alternative responses was added up and divided by 4, that is $(4+3+2+1)/4 = 10/4 = 2.50$. Therefore any mean value that is 2.50 and above was accepted and anyone below it (2.50) was rejected.

Validity

To validate the research instrument, the researcher presented the questionnaire to two experts in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education of University of Port Harcourt for scrutiny. The corrections and observations made were incorporated into the final draft.

Reliability

To determine the reliability, the instrument was administered on 10 respondents outside the study area. After two weeks, the same instrument was administered on the same respondents.

The scores obtained were collated and computed using the statistical method known as Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The reliability coefficient index for the study was determined at 0.90.

Administration of instrument

The researcher used two weeks to go round the schools. The researcher observed, administered and retrieved the instruments from the participants. The researcher administered eight hundred and forty-nine (849) instruments on the participants and was able to retrieve 800 instruments. This showed 94.2 percent return rate of instrument from the field.

Method of Data Analysis

The research questions were analyzed with the mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (SD) and rank order statistics while the hypotheses formulated were tested with the z-test analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation and Analysis of data

Research Questions 1: How are academic staff motivated for quality research output in higher institutions in Rivers state?

Table 1: Academic Staff are Motivated for Quality Research Output in Higher Institutions.

| S / N | Items | Federal university (Academic staff) N= 450 | State universities (Academic staff) N= 350 | Weighted mean | Rank Order | Remark |
|-------|---|--|--|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| | | \bar{X} | \bar{X} | | | |
| 1 | Subsidize for research publication by management of higher institutions or private organizations motivate academic staff. | 2.98 | 2.76 | 2.87 | 1 st | Agree |
| 2 | Awards for quality research work by management of higher institutions, government and non-governmental bodies serve as a motivation to academic staff. | 2.78 | 2.70 | 2.74 | 2 nd | Agree |
| 3 | Access to international and world class journal for publication through higher institutions serve as a motivation to academic staff. | 2.66 | 2.66 | 2.66 | 4 th | Agree |
| 4 | Adequate and updated facilities for research work motivate academic staff for quality research output. | 2.65 | 2.76 | 2.71 | 3 rd | Agree |
| 5 | If recommendations from research works in higher institutions are accepted and applied for industrial productivity and political stability, academic staff will be motivated for more research. | 2.67 | 2.55 | 2.61 | 5 th | Agree |

From table 1, the high mean scores ranging from 2.87 to 2.61 indicated that all the items identified were accepted as academic staff are motivated for quality research output in higher education in Rivers state. The mean scores were above

Innovative Educational Research For Quality Personnel Output In Higher Education In Rivers State - Gladys Ejimole Aleru, Ph.D and Danladi A. Saliu, Ph.D

the criterion mean. It is evident that, subsidizes research for publication by management of higher institutions or private organizations and awards for quality research work by management of higher institutions, government and non-governmental bodies had the higher weight mean score from the items. In summary, the items identified that academic staff are motivated for quality research output in higher institutions (federal and state universities) in Rivers state.

Research questions 2: What are the challenges facing academic staff for quality innovative educational research in higher institutions in Rivers state?

Table 2: Challenges Facing Academic Staff for Quality Research in Higher Institutions.

| S/N | Items | Federal university (Academic staff) N= 450 | State university (Academic staff) N= 350 | Weighted mean | Rank Order | Remark |
|-----|--|--|--|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| | | \bar{X} | \bar{X} | | | |
| 6 | Lukewarmness of private organizations support of quality research work by lecturers is a challenge. | 2.89 | 2.78 | 2.84 | 2 nd | Agree |
| 7 | Misappropriation and diversion of research funds for lecturers' capacity building in research is a challenge facing academic staff. | 2.96 | 2.84 | 2.90 | 1 st | Agree |
| 8 | Poor motivation of government on research work to lecturers in higher institutions rather than seeking expertise abroad. | 2.58 | 2.68 | 2.63 | 4 th | Agree |
| 9 | Obsolete facilities for quality research work such as ICT's facilities, libraries, laboratories and others are some challenges facing academic staff | 2.43 | 2.38 | 2.41 | 5 th | Reject |
| 10 | Low research motivation for academia such as grant/subsidies, fringe benefits, bonuses, promotion and awards from higher institutions. | 2.36 | 2.24 | 2.30 | 6 th | Reject |
| 11 | Inadequate funding of research projects by higher institutions and government leading to frustration, delay and abandon project by researchers (academic staff). | 2.81 | 2.85 | 2.83 | 3 rd | Agree |

From table 2, the high mean scores ranging from 2.90 to 2.30 indicated that item 6-8 and 11 identified were accepted as the challenges facing academic staff for quality innovative educational research in higher education in Rivers state. The mean scores were above the criterion mean. While, item 9 and 10 were rejected because the mean scores were less than criterion mean. It is evident that, misappropriation and diversion of research funds for lecturers' capacity building in research and lukewarmness of private organizations support of quality research work by lecturers are some of the challenges facing academic staff and other had the higher weight mean score. In summary, the items identified were challenges facing academic staff for quality research output in higher education in Rivers state.

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities academia on how academia are motivated for quality research output in higher education in Rivers state.

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation, And Z-Statistic on How Academia are Motivated for Quality Research Output in Higher Education

| | N | \bar{X} | Std | Z-cal | Z-cri | DF | Decision |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| Federal university (Academic staff) | 450 | 2.75 | 0.72 | 1.22 | ± 1.96 | 798 | H ₀ was accepted |
| State university (Academic staff) | 350 | 2.69 | 0.68 | | | | |

Note: Level of significance = 0.05; N=800

The data in table 3, showed that the z-calculated value of 1.22 is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 798 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis (H₀₁) is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities lecturers on how academia are motivated for quality research output in higher education in Rivers state.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities lecturers on challenges facing academia for quality innovative educational research in higher education in Rivers state.

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Z-Statistic on the Challenges Facing Academia for Quality Innovative Educational Research in Higher Education

| | N | \bar{X} | Std | Z-cal | Z-cri | DF | Decision |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------------|-----|-----------------------------|
| Federal university (Academic staff) | 450 | 2.66 | 0.65 | 1.22 | ± 1.96 | 798 | H ₀ was accepted |
| State university (Academic staff) | 350 | 2.58 | 0.60 | | | | |

Note: Level of significance = 0.05; N=800

The data in table 4, showed that the z-calculated value of 0.566 is less than z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 798 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis (H_{01}) is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities lecturers on the challenges facing academia for quality innovative educational research in higher education in Rivers state.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study is that academic staff are motivated for quality research output in higher institutions (both Federal and State Universities) in Rivers State. Research output among other remains one of the cardinal requirements for the existence of any higher institution in the world including Nigerian Universities (also, Universities in Rivers State). For quality research output in both Federal and State Universities in Rivers State, motivation is required either as extrinsic or intrinsic to academic staff. Any academic staff that is well motivated in research work can establish a local, national and international reputation and recognition for himself or herself and the higher institution respectively. Based on such profile, it may have a positive significant impact on the ability of the University (Federal or State University) to attract more student, research funds and consultancy contracts not only locally but internationally too.

The Federal Universities may have an added advantage here when compared with the State Universities. This

could be as a result of the affiliation of the Federal Universities with some reputable foreign Universities abroad and participation of private organization in support of quality research work. These foreign Universities have association with International journals for publications, access to research funds/grants and other fringe benefits. Some local journals are affiliated with some of the foreign institutions with international journals for publication at a subsidized rate. These serve as a motivation to academic staff, to show case their potential/knowledge and enhance capacity building in research. For State Universities in Rivers State, they may be limited to these huge benefits enjoyed by the Federal Universities. This is because there is no affiliation with foreign Universities for international journals for publication. But due to NUC compulsion of international publications for academic staff, this has threatened and stretched academic staff in the State Universities to meet up with lecturing and research publications (both locally and more internationally). Based on the hypothesis testing, which shows that the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of Federal and State universities lecturers on how academia are motivated for quality research output in higher education in Rivers state. The study found out that academic staff of both Federal and State Universities in Rivers State are motivated either extrinsic or intrinsic for quality research output.

The second finding of the study is that academic staff are face with challenges for quality research output in higher institutions (both Federal and State Universities) in Rivers State. Motivation to do research and publication is low in higher institution (both Federal and State) in Rivers State. This is because research grants may be available, but the process to get it, is discouraging and tedious. This has led to many lecturers been unable to publish in reputable international and world class journal. In some cases, before the research grant/fund is provided by the higher institution management the conferences/seminar are over. This has led to lecturers' to channel their potential/knowledge to local journals for publications limiting their potentials to show case in international journals.

Apart from the above misappropriation and diversion of research funds by higher institution management for lecturers research. There are situation where research funds by private organization are channels through higher institution authorities and did not get the group of researchers or the researcher. This has hindered good research work as a result brings low motivation. When the private organizations expectation for the result of the research is not forth coming. This will lead to non participation of private organization support and lost of confidence for higher institution authorities (delegates) for further research. Based on the hypothesis testing, which shows that the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean

rating of Federal and State universities lecturers on the challenges facing academia for quality innovative educational research in higher education in Rivers state. The study found out that academic staff of both Federal and State universities in Rivers State were faced with challenges of the process of accessing research grants and misappropriation and diversion of research funds for other purposes.

Conclusion

Higher education research is seen as one of the most powerful instruments known for nation's development. Research output among other remains one of the cardinal requirements for the existence of any higher institution in the world including Nigerian Universities (also, Universities in Rivers State). For quality research output in both Federal and State Universities in Rivers State, motivation is required either as extrinsic or intrinsic to academic staff. Motivation to do research and publication is low in higher institution (both Federal and State) in Rivers State. This is because research grants may be available, but the process to get it, is discouraging and tedious and misappropriation and diversion of research funds for other purposes are challenges faced by academic staff in these higher institutions.

Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1. Government at all levels and non-governmental organization should support higher education institutions by

motivating academia for quality educational research and innovation. This will raise the quality of graduates' in higher education institutions', enhance individuals' capacity building and above all nation development.

2. Since, there is a significant relationship between lecturers' research productivity; they should be motivated through awards by government and higher institutions' management. Lecturers' with more international publications at the end of the year should be award and reward for quality research and innovation institutionally, locally and internationally.

3. Higher institution management should design strategies that will serve as research motivation to lecturers' for high research productivity. This could be done by providing research grants/subsidize and bonuses for research work for academic staff in higher institutions. This serve as research motivation to lecturers.

4. If recommendations from research works in higher institutions are accepted and applied for industrial productivity and political stability, academic staff will be motivated for more research. This leads to national productivity and development.

References

- Ahmed, A. S. A. and Holi, I. H. A. (2015) Quality Research in Higher Education Institutions in Oman: Some Views of Teacher Researchers. *Australian International Academic Centre, Australia*. Vol. 6(3):
- Altbach, G. P. and Balan, J. (2007) (Eds). *Transforming Research Universities in Asia and Latin America: World class worldwide*. Johns Hopkins university press, Maryland, pp.323.
- Ayeni, M. A. (2010) Higher Education Research and Environmental Development. *European Journal of Educational Studies*. Vol. 2(3),
- Chinamasa, E. (2012). Factors Influencing Lecturer Research Output in New Universities' In Zimbabwe. *Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research*. Vol. 24(2):162-175
- Lertpputarak, S. (2008), *An Investigation of factors Related to Research Productivity in a Public University in Thailand: A case Study* (Unpublished, PhD thesis). Victoria University, Australia.
- Mahmood, S. (2011). Factors affecting the quality of research in education: students' perceptions. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2, 34-40.
- Muhammad, Z. I. and Azhar, M. (2011). Factors Related to Low Research Productivity at Higher Education Level. *Asian Social Science*. Vol. 7(2)

Newman, W. (2014). Publish or Perish: Impediments to Research Output and Publication. *International Journal of Education Science*. Vol. 6(1): 57-63.

Shabbir, A., N. Noor, N., Saeed, A. and Ata, G. (2015). Analysis of the Extent to Which Individual and Institutional Factors are Responsible for Lack of Inclination towards Quality Research in Pakistan. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*. Vol. 9(1): 25–51.

Sulo, T., Kendagor, R., Kosgei, D, Tuitoek D., and Chelangat S. (2012). Factors Affecting Research Productivity in Public Universities of Kenya: The Case of Moi University, Eldoret. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences (JETEMS)* 3(5): 475-484.