



Work meaningfulness and sense of responsibility as correlates of work performance among heads of departments of federal universities in south-south geo-political zone, Nigeria

Felicia EH Etuk¹, Victoria C Onyeike², Stephen C Anyamele³

¹⁻³ Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

The study investigated work meaningfulness and sense of responsibility as correlates of work performance of Head of Departments of Federal Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. Two research questions were answered while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The study adopted a correlation design. The population for the study was 378 HoDs in 378 Departments in six Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size was 310 HoDs representing 82.01% of the population. Two self-designed instruments titled Work Meaningfulness and Sense of Responsibility Scale (WMSRS) and Work Performance scale (WPS) were used for data collection. Face and content validities were ensured by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. Simple regression was used to answer the research questions while t-test associated with simple regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05. It was found among others that work meaningfulness significantly predicted work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria while sense of responsibility did not. It was recommended that the Heads of Departments should value and approach their job with achievement drive in order to effectively make use of their multiple skills. The principal officers in the university should clearly spell out the job responsibilities of the HoDs in their various units and departments in order to encourage job autonomy.

Keywords: work meaningfulness, sense of responsibility, work performance, federal universities, south-south

Introduction

The success of any organization in achieving its goals depends on the performance of the employees working in it particularly in universities. Performance is considered to be the main aspect that all management efforts are focused since its efficiency depends on human resource level of performance. Job performance is paramount importance in sustaining an enviable position in any organization whether it is education sector or corporate enterprises. Work performance has been an area of interest to researchers in different fields, education, government, businesses and society over time now. Administration is an indispensable component and its importance is obvious when there is work to be executed by people in any organization. In the universities, academic staff and administrative staff are entrusted with statutory sundry of works in order to advertise and project the image of the university. Institutions will delay administrative duties if components that facilitate distinctive performance are neglected by the management. Work performance is of primary importance in sustaining an enviable reputation of the institution.

Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sa (1993) ^[3] pointed out that performance is the action or behaviour that contributes to the organization's goals that can be measured according to the individual's level of proficiency. This implies that only behaviours that contribute to the goals of the organization are relevant but behaviours that do not contribute to outcome are irrelevant. The behavioural aspect is what people do when they are at work place, the action itself (Campbell *et al*, 1993)

^[3]. Performance comprises specific behaviour, for example, programming computer software, sales conversations with customers, teaching statistics to undergraduate students, computation of student's grade point average GPA, compilation of students' results and assembling parts of a product.

The result aspect is the outcome of person's behaviour. Statistically, the behavioural and result aspects are related but there is no complete overlapping since the outcome or result dimension is influenced by other predictors other than the behavioural aspects. Job performance features by Campbell (1993) ^[3] are as follows: work performance such as performance versus Organizations' outcomes, goal relevance and multidimensional aspect.

Performance versus outcomes

Campbell *et al*, (1993) ^[3] asserted that performance is behaviour, something that is done by an individual. This concept differentiates performance from outcomes. Outcomes are the result of an individual's performance, but they are also the result of other influences. Performance comprises mental productions such as answers or decisions or judgment.

Organization's goal relevance

Another feature that explains performance is goal relevance and that performance must be directed towards organization's goals that are relevant to the job. For instance, if the university goal is to ensure that her students are technology inclined then relevant activities such as administration providing equipment,

laboratories, computers and experts to teach how to handle the practical must be made readily available.

Multidimensional

Performance is multidimensional and not a single unified concept.

However, work performance is conceptualized as a multi-facet construct comprising more than one kind of behaviour. Basically, one can differentiate between process aspect of behaviour and an outcome aspect of performance behaviours (Borman & Motowidlo as cited in Etuk, 2018).

Performance is multidimensional and is classified into task performance and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo as cited in Etuk, 2018): Task performance is individual's proficiency with which he or she performs activities which contribute to the organization's technical core and the contribution can be direct in case of work production or indirect in case of management of staff or personnel to the goals. It has several components such as job-specific task and non-job specific task proficiency. Contextual behaviours are the behaviours that do not fulfill specific aspect of the job's required role. Contextual behaviour has two dimensions which aimed at mainly at smooth functioning of the organization as it is at the present moment (complying with prescribed job requirements) and proactive behaviours (goes beyond what is formally set rules) which aim at changing work procedures and organizational process for improvement. Contextual behaviours include citizenship behaviour which has five components, altruism, conscientiousness, civic courtesy and sportsmanship. Citizenship behaviours are behaviours which is discretionary and extol role not directly recognized by the formal reward system and in the aggregate contributes to the goals of the organization. Counterproductive behaviours on the other hand are deviant behaviours are deliberate activities that violate organization's norms and in so doing threatens the well being of the organization and its members. HoDs who exhibit counterproductive behaviours as promoting cultism and cheating among students will thwart the vision of the institution. It is a truism that task performance and contextual performance cannot be separated because both contribute to organization's goals. Task performance is a predictor of contextual performance.

Taxonomy of Job Performance

Murphy (1994) developed a scientific classification of performance for the US Navy into four perspectives. *Task-oriented behaviours*: Task-oriented behaviours are similar to task specific and are any tasks relevant to someone's job. *Interpersonal oriented behaviours*: These are represented by any interaction the focal staff has with other staff in the organization. These are non-task related behaviour. This dimension contrasts Campbell's taxonomy because it involves behaviours that are not targeting organization's goal. *Down-time behaviours*: Down-time behaviours are behaviours that workers engage in during their free time either at work or off-site. Down-time behaviours which occur off-site are only considered work performance when they subsequently affect job performance. For instance, outside behaviours that causes absenteeism.

Work performance is a set of behaviours that expresses how well employees execute their jobs (Wang, Yen & Liu, 2015).

Work performance is measurable behaviours that are relevant to the achievement of organizational goals. It is the ability of employees to complete an identifiable piece of work, meeting standards and expectations for the achievement of organizational goals. Performance is the record of outcomes produced on specific job activity during a specified time period (Bernardin & Beatty, 1984). Although a person's job performance depends on some combination of ability, motivation and situation constraints that can be measured only in terms of some outcomes. This definition contrasts with the stand of Campbell and colleagues that individual job performance should not be defined in terms of outcomes, but rather behaviours (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002). It could be inferred that work performance is amorphous that construct that change from job to job or an abstract construct that cannot point to the physical and concrete state that it is job performance.

There may be a link between work meaningfulness and job performance. Work meaningfulness is seen as all the incentives that are attached to the work that makes it intriguing, interesting and satisfactory. Hatice, Keles and Mine (2016) ^[6] opined that meaningfulness of work is defined as the importance of the purpose of work in people's view of life, and attitude can be connected with variables in the field of organizational behaviour. Yet another variable that can impact on workers performance in an organization is workers sense of responsibility. Bailey and Madden (2016) ^[2] saw work sense of responsibility as being highly motivational, leading to improved performance, commitment and satisfaction. Sense of responsibility is the knowledge and awareness of workers towards the tasks areas. Works are said to be responsible when they are able to define the scope and functional areas of the job. The HoDs in the universities are provided with their various duty areas that will make them responsible in the office. Some of them seem not to be responsible in their duty areas and as such may be grappling with their statutory duties in the office. Not having work meaningfulness and sense of responsibility may impair and dampen the efficiency and effectiveness of the HoD in discharging their duties. Against this background, this study is set to find out whether work meaningfulness and sense of responsibility are correlates of work performance of HoDs in federal universities in South-South Geo-Political, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It is becoming worrisome these days that Heads of Departments working in Universities in South-South Nigerian seem to be getting dissatisfied in the jobs they are assigned to perform. Most of these HODs may not have been provided the opportunity to plan their own work schedule. Rather, they are subjected to the control of the management at the top, who restrict them in choosing how to do their job and when to do the job. Majority of the Heads of Departments sometimes die untimely as a result of work pressure. Those who are still living are under accumulated stress that could result to terminal illness. Furthermore, some HODs in these institutions seem not to have in-depth knowledge of the work they are doing; thereby ending up repeating the same job everyday with little output. This gives room to boredom and delay in administrative activities. However most of these HODs do not

seem to have any feeling of responsibility despite the challenging jobs before them. The lack of commitment by HODs might be because the management do not give them the freedom to plan, control, take decisions on their jobs, execute and evaluate their performance. As a result, they are denied the opportunity to exploit wide range of abilities to improve on their jobs. The researcher is bothered on the extent to which work meaningfulness and sense of responsibility independently predict work performance among HODs staff of federal universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate work meaningfulness and sense of responsibility as correlates of work performance of HoDs in Federal Universities in Geo-Political, Nigeria. Specifically, the following objectives guided the study.

1. To investigate how work meaningfulness would predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.
2. Determine how sense of responsibility would predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent does work meaningfulness predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria?
2. To what extent does sense of responsibility would independently predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance

1. Work meaningfulness does not significantly predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.
2. Sense of responsibility does not significantly independently predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlation design. The population for the study was 378 HODs in 378 Departments in six Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size was 310 HODs representing 82.01% of the population. Two self-designed instruments titled Work Meaningfulness and Sense of Responsibility Scale (WMSRS) and Work Performance scale (WPS) were used for data collection. The Work Meaningfulness and Sense of Responsibility Scale has two sections of A and B. Section A contains the demographic information of the respondents while section B contains 21 items while Work Performance Scale contained 15 items respectively. Face and content validities were ensured by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability coefficients of 0.81 and 0.85 were computed for WMSRS and WPS respectively. Simple regression analysis was used to answer the research questions while t-test associated with

simple regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05.

Results

The results of this study were presented as shown below:

Research Question One

To what extent does work meaningfulness predict work performance among Head of Department of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria?

Table 1a: Simple regression analysis on the prediction of work meaningfulness on work performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.137 ^a	.019	.015

a. Predictors: (Constant), meaningfulness

b. Dependent Variable: work performance

Table 1a showed that meaningfulness has regression coefficient (R) of 0.137 and regression square (R²) coefficient of 0.19. The coefficient of determinism that shows the extent of prediction was 1.9 (100 X 0.019). This shows that meaningfulness predicts work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria by 1.9%.

Hypothesis One

Work meaningfulness does not significantly predict work performance among HoDs of Federal Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

Table 1b: t-test analysis associated with simple regression on the independent prediction of work meaningfulness on work performance among HoDs

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	36.121	.398		90.832	.000
1 meaningfulness	.028	.012	.137	2.419	.016

a. Dependent Variable: work performance

Table 1b revealed that the t-test value associated with simple regression was 2.419 which is significant at 0.016 when subjected to an alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. By implication, work meaningfulness significantly predicted work performance among HoDs of Federal Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

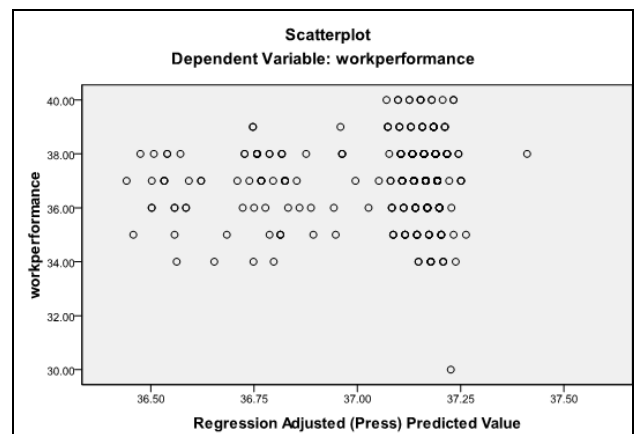


Fig 1: Graphical representation of the prediction of work meaningfulness on work performance among HoDs of Federal

Universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria

Research question two

To what extent does sense of responsibility would independently predict work performance among HoDs of Federal Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria?

Table 2a: Simple regression analysis on the independent prediction of sense of responsibility on work performance among HoDs

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square
1	.080 ^a	.006	.003

a. Predictors: (Constant), sense of responsibility
 b. Dependent Variable: work performance

Table 2a showed that sense of responsibility has regression coefficient (R) of 0.080 and regression square (R²) coefficient of 0.006. The coefficient of determinism shows that the extent of prediction was 0.6% (100 X 0.006). This shows that sense of responsibility predicts work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria by 0.6%.

Hypothesis Two

Sense of responsibility does not significantly independently predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Table 2b: t-test associated with simple regression analysis on the independent prediction of sense of responsibility on work performance among HoDs

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	37.600	.391		96.159	.000
	Sense of responsibility	-.033	.023	-.080	-1.410	.159

a. Dependent Variable: work performance

Table 2b revealed that the t-test value associated with simple regression was -1.410 which is not significant at 0.159 when subjected to an alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. By implication, sense of responsibility does not significantly predict work performance among HoDs of Federal Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria.

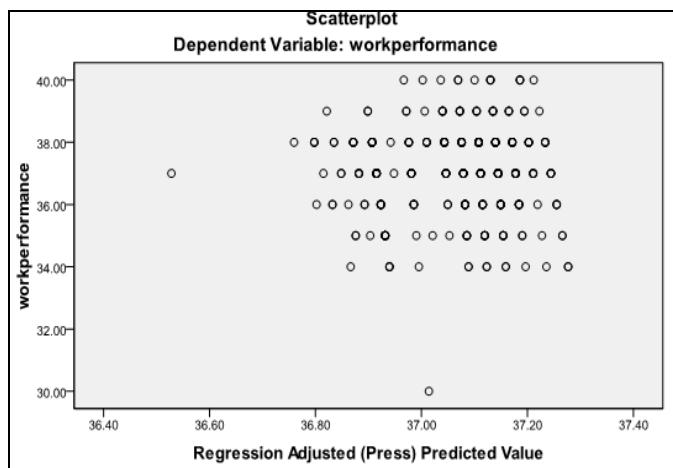


Fig 2: Graphical representation of the prediction of sense of responsibility on work performance of HoDs

Summary of Finding

The finding of the study was summarized as shown below

1. The finding showed that that work meaningfulness predicts work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria by 1.9%. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. By implication, work meaningfulness significantly predicted work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.
2. This shows that sense of responsibility predicts work performance among HoDs staff of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria by 0.6%. Sense of responsibility does not significantly predict work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were discussed as shown below:

Meaningfulness and Work Performance

The finding showed that that meaningfulness predicts work performance among HoDs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria by 1.9%. The researcher expected that job meaningfulness would have predicted work performance to a very high extent but the reverse was the case of this study. One of the reasons why the researcher expected high prediction of job meaningfulness on work performance was because job meaningfulness encompasses skill variation, task identification and significant contribution. Job meaningfulness also expresses the degree to which individual is motivated or feels that the job is meaningful and valuable. This is why Salau, Adeniji and Oyewunmi (2014) ^[9] reported that work meaningfulness contributes to work performance in the workplace. Work meaningfulness comprises skill variation or use of multiple skills, task identification of one’s job to the overall situation and significant contributions of a person’s job to people’s lives relating to achievement of set goals. Supporting the finding of this study was Vijay and Indradevi (2015) who found that job meaningfulness correlates with work performance in supervised work arena.

It was found work meaningfulness significantly predicted work performance among administrative staff of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. The essence of the significant prediction could be attributed to the indispensable importance attached to valuing allotted responsibilities for the achievement of organizational goals.

Sense of Responsibility and Work Performance

This shows that sense of responsibility predicts work performance among HODs of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria by 0.6%. The low prediction recorded by sense of responsibility is not surprising to the researcher because no man is an island in the work place. This goes on to disagree with the fact that every work man needs some level of supervision by the superior. The finding of this study is not in agreement with finding of Mondy, Moe and Premeaux (2002) who found that sense of responsibility encompasses

autonomy and discretion in one's work for recognition and achievement. Autonomy in the workplace may be of no

importance where everyone is expected to work as a team. University environment is such that high level of discretion and autonomy is not profitable in the achievement of goals and objective because no worker knows it all. Vijay and Indradevi (2015) found that task significance characteristic gives the employee sense of belonging and that his work is valuable to the institution. Sense of responsibility does not significantly predict work performance among administrative staff of federal universities in South-South Zone, Nigeria. The common reason why sense of responsibility did not significantly predict work performance of staff of federal universities could be because university staff does not work autonomously but is answerable to their superiors.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that work meaningfulness is a significant determinant of work performance among Head of Departments of Federal Universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria while sense of responsibility is not.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

1. The Head of Departments should value and approach their job with achievement drive in order to effectively make use of their multiple skills.
2. The principal officers in the university should clearly spell out the job responsibility of the HoDs in their various units and departments in order to encourage autonomy.

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