

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION AND LECTURER PRODUCTIVITY IN THE OBAFEMI AWOLOWO UNIVERSITY, ILE-IFE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Lecturer Productivity (LP) is the level of personal or joint effort employed by a lecturer or group of lecturers in attaining quality research publication. The LP in terms of Research Publication (RP) was low. Previous studies on LP focused on institutional supports and leadership practices without Leadership Succession (LS). This study, therefore, examined LS and LP in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife in Nigeria, using correlational research design. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 8 faculties and 49 departments (i.e., 60% of 13 and 82) respectively. Three lecturers were sampled randomly in each department, and data were collected using two instruments with a 0.95 reliability coefficient. Research questions and hypothesis were answered and tested using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The LP on both local and international publications ($\bar{x} = 2.67; 2.71$) in OAU were high. The extent to which LS is being practiced was low ($\bar{x} = 2.98$). Low correlation exists between LS and LP, $r = (0.21), 0.03, P < .05$. The LS has not been taken into consideration and relationship exists between LS and LP. The LP should be maintained and sustained. Efforts should be made by management to find a means of reshaping the LS of the institution so that the level of RP could be improved.

Keywords: Lecturer productivity, succession, leadership succession, research publication

Introduction

Globally, lecturers are the backbone of universities, and no university can achieve its mission and vision without them. They are the driver of missions and visions through which their productivity is achieved. They are expected to teach, research, and make themselves available for community service. The ability to dedicate and commit themselves diligently to teach in the classroom, carry out research, and serve the community in and outside the university as expected from time to time, makes lecturers productive. However, it appears that some lecturers hardly cope with their routine activities, ranging from teaching, research, project supervision, students' work assessment, seminars, and community service.

Researchers like Ani, Ngulube, and Onyancha (2017) reported that the level of lecturers' productivity in terms of research across disciplines is low and inconsistent in Nigerian federal universities. This could be due to poor funding, the absence of basic facilities, and poor infrastructure, among others. Onayinka, Falebita, Awoniyi, Nweze, and Opele (2023) submitted that publication of lecturers in

Nigerian universities is of low quality when compared with their counterparts in developed nations due to a lack of research funding, infrastructure challenges, heavy teaching workload, bureaucratic processes, poor mentorship, and motivation. Lecturers' productivity can be defined as the level of personal or joint effort employed by a lecturer or group of lecturers in attaining quality research publication and graduation through effective teaching in Nigerian universities. However, this present study uses research publications as an indicator of lecturers' productivity.

Nigerian universities are expected to conduct quality research that would have an impact on institutions and national development. Hence, quality research in Nigerian universities would become only as good as the quality of the system. Considering research at the global level, it seems Nigerian universities are lagging in terms of quality research. A completed research without publication is certainly meaningless to the entire university system and stakeholders in society. The quality of research publication is the measure of academic excellence among lecturers, while several publications serve as an indicator of lecturer productivity. Hence, the essence of lecturers' publication in Nigerian universities is to measure their productivity and evaluate lecturers for promotion to the next level of academic cadre and research grants (Raji and Oyediji, 2021). This implies that lecturers are expected to be evaluated every three years based on their research publications made in reputable national and international journals.

Quality research publications are required to serve as public consumption, promotion for lecturers and image of the universities, enrich lecturers' curriculum vitae, and solve societal problems. It provides a platform for lecturers to become successful scholars. It also enhances the quality of teaching and reinforces many of the skills that are required for effective teaching. Adeyanju and Oshinyadi (2017) stated that research publication is the chief means of communicating research, a primary means of recognition and reward in academic work. Hence, it cannot be handled with kid gloves in universities. Therefore, there is a saying that says Publish or perish, A university lecturer without research publication seems to be perishing in the system, and such a lecturer may contribute to the low ranking of the university at the global level.

However, observation shows that lecturers of the universities are not as committed and dedicated to quality research publication as they ought to be, which could mean there is a problem. Some lecturers seem to supervise several undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students over a specified time frame without publishing their research. Olasupo (2017) adopted a descriptive survey research design and 302 academic staff as the sample size to conduct the study on research publication in the university, and found that the publication of co-authored textbooks, patents, textbooks, and certified inventions was poor.

Adeyanju and Oshinyadi (2017) reported that the average rate of research publication is low among lecturers at Nigerian universities. Atanda and Olasupo (2018) attributed low research productivity (publications) in Nigerian tertiary institutions to poor and irregular funding, poor incentive for research, and increasing workloads linked to worsening staff/student ratio, which drastically reduces the time meant to be committed to research, among others. However, to ensure that the lecturers are

productive in terms of research publication in federal universities, there is a need for mentoring an academic leader who will successfully replace the predecessor in the academic circle.

Leadership succession concerns how academic leaders emerge in the university. The new academic leaders are expected to groom lecturers on how to use research methodology and write proposals for research grants. This type of grooming will go in long way in achieving lecturers' productivity in the area of research output. According to Abiodun-Oyebanji and Oyedeji (2022), leadership succession is the process of recognizing and grooming fresh personnel who can take the place of aged academic leaders when they retire, leave, or are no more to sustain and maintain quality research output. For instance, it is expected that the newly appointed Head of Department (HOD) will make changes and thus impose mandates to improve the productivity of lecturers. The imposition of HOD or academic administrators into the system without due process or consensus would not only affect lecturers' productivity but also reduce the quality of research publications. The more externally appointed academic leaders, the higher the likelihood of lecturers' productivity. Abiodun-Oyebanji and Oyedeji (2023) reported that the successors of academics did not have an antecedent to follow, which may contribute low productivity of lecturers in Nigerian universities. The researchers further stated that, over the years, most academic leaders (vice chancellors, deans and heads of departments) who succeeded their predecessors in universities confront encounters of time frame to attain their dreams because some of them do not prepare for leadership position which eventually affect lecturer productivity in the area of research publication.

Ahmed (2020) pointed out that a lack of leadership succession may tend to lower research output and cause challenges to the missions and visions of universities. The purpose of leadership succession is to address the needs of universities in the area of research methodology, research grants, and quality of high-impact journals as old academic leaders retire from the system. Abiodun-Oyebanji and Oyedeji (2022) stated that the main reason for leadership succession is to help sustain the prospect of academic research and publication.

Based on the review of previous studies, leadership succession is expected to enhance the quality of the research publications of lecturers. Hence, it is expected that when a new leader emerges, lecturers' productivity in the area of research publication will be improved. Sanito, Engstrom, Reetz, Schweinle, and Reed (2009) found that as the academic staff ranking increases, the research productivity decreases. This indicates that once academic staff reach the peak of their career, their motivation to publish will continue to fall. Therefore, it suggests that lower-ranking lecturers, such as assistant lecturers, lecturers II, and lecturers I, are more likely motivated by conducting quality research and publishing in outlet journals compared to professors/ associate professors who are older in the system.

Previous studies conducted have been carried out to address lecturers' productivity from different standpoints. Most of these studies (Raji and Oyedeji, 2021; Olawuyi, 2017; Abba, Anumaka, and Gaite, 2016; and Bland, 2005) focused on institutional support, organisational culture, leadership practices, and formal mentoring rather than leadership succession and lecturer productivity. This

study, therefore, examined leadership succession and lecturers' productivity in OAU, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Lecturers' productivity in federal universities seems to be low in the area of research publication. Research publication seems to be diminishing as many lecturers appear not to be committed and dedicated to quality research publication. Reports also showed that some research publications, like co-authored textbooks, patents, textbooks, and certified inventions, are rarely published among lecturers in federal universities. The implication is that, if low lecturers' productivity is not addressed by stakeholders in the university system, their universities may continue experiencing a low ranking compared to their counterparts in the rest of the world. There will be no promotion for lecturers in federal universities, and universities will be seriously undermined in society. It is assumed that this could be a result of the effective leadership succession that university management fails to put in place to enhance the quality of research publications. However, numerous studies have been conducted on lecturers' productivity within and outside the Nigerian university system, and the problem persists. This study, therefore, examined leadership succession and lecturers' productivity in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general objective was to examine the relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity in Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives were as follows: find out the level of lecturer productivity; examine the extent of leadership succession; and ascertain the relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity in OAU, Ile-Ife in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered.

- i. What is the level of lecturer productivity in OAU, Ile-Ife in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the extent of leadership succession in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was tested in the study

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria

Methodology

The correlational research design was adopted for this study. The population comprised 1,380 lecturers, 13 faculties, and 82 departments in OAU, Ile-Ife. The sample size for this study comprised 147 lecturers across five (5) faculties and 28 departments in OAU. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 8 faculties and 49 departments (i.e., 60% of 13 and 82) respectively. Three (3) lecturers in each department were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. Two instruments, the Leadership Succession Questionnaire (LSQ) and the Publication Checklist

(PC), were used for data collection. The LSQ had two sections, Section A was designed to collect information about lecturers' demographic data, such as sex, age, faculty, and department, among others. Section B considered leadership succession with 12 items. The Cronbach's coefficient of 0.95 obtained was considered adequate for the internal consistency of leadership succession. However, 111 (75.5%) lecturers completed the distributed questionnaire. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered using descriptive while hypothesis 1 was tested using inferential statistics.

Results

1. What is the level of lecturer productivity in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of lecturer productivity in terms of research publications

S/N	Publicatio n	Local					International				
		NIL	1-5	6-10	11- 15	(\bar{X})	NIL	1-5	6-10	11- 15	(\bar{X})
1	Patent Work	3 (2.7)	45 (40.5)	46 (41.4)	17 (15.3)	2.69	6 (5.4)	35 (31.5)	40 (36.0)	30 (0)	2.85
2	Textbook Published	13 (11.7)	30 (27.0)	29 (26.1)	39 (35.1)	2.85	8 (7.2)	47 (42.3)	28 (25.2)	28 (25.2)	2.68
3	Chapters in Books	20 (18.0)	37 (33.3)	35 (31.5)	19 (17.1)	2.48	13 (11.7)	28 (25.2)	40 (36.0)	30 (27.0)	2.78
4	Articles	11 (9.9)	30 (27.0)	41 (36.9)	29 (26.1)	2.79	27 (24.3)	30 (27.0)	14 (12.6)	40 (36.0)	2.60
5	Conferenc e Papers	10 (9.0)	51 (45.9)	30 (27.0)	20 (18.0)	2.54	18 (16.2)	25 (22.5)	35 (31.5)	33 (29.7)	2.75
6	Book Review	20 (18.0)	31 (27.9)	29 (26.1)	31 (27.9)	2.64	10 (9.0)	45 (40.5)	30 (27.0)	26 (26.4)	2.65
7	Co- authored textbooks	10 (9.0)	31 (9.2)	40 (0.9)	30 (0)	2.81	14 (12.6)	37 (33.3)	40 (36.0)	20 (18.0)	2.59
8	Technical reports	16 (14.4)	40 (36.0)	25 (22.5)	30 (27.0)	2.62	10 (9.0)	40 (36.0)	34 (30.6)	27 (24.3)	2.70
9	Monograp hs	11 (9.9)	45 (40.5)	20 (18.0)	20 (18.0)	2.58	8 (7.2)	35 (31.5)	45 (40.5)	23 (20.7)	2.75
Weighted Average		2.71									

Note: Men value ranges from 0-1.4= Very Low, 1.4-2.4 = Low, 2.5- 3.4 = High, 3.5 and above Very High. Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Table 1 indicates the level of lecturer productivity in the Obafemi Awolowo University within six years (2013/2014-2018/2019 academic sessions), average score of each item was calculated. This is sub-categorised into local and international publications in the table. Considering the result in Table 1, it is indicated that some of the lecturers in this institution decided not to reveal the true status of their publications. Hence, they are categorised under nil, which does not dominate the result. However, the nine items of local publication had a weighted of 2.67 out of the maximum obtainable 4.0. The obtained mean values for the items are as follows: patent work (mean=3.63); textbook published (mean= 3.00); chapters in books (mean=3.57); articles (mean =4.73) conference papers (mean=3.39); book review (mean =3.28); co-authored textbooks (mean=3.45), technical reports (mean=3.35) and monographs (mean=3.00). Based on the weighted score of 2.67, the finding shows that local publication was above the cut-off point of 2.5. This implies that local publications were found to be high.

Concerning international publications, all nine items of international publications were also considered in the table and had a weighted score of 2.71 out of a maximum obtainable 4.0. The mean values for the items of patent work (mean=3.00); textbook published (mean=3.00); chapters in books (mean=3.00); articles (mean=4.51); conference papers (mean=3.00); book review (mean=3.45); co-authored textbooks (mean=3.00), technical reports (mean=3.00) and monographs (mean=3.00). Based on the weighted average score of 2.71, the result indicates that the international publications in OAU were above the threshold of 2.5. This indicates that international publications were also high. It, therefore, could be found that lecturer productivity in terms of research output on both local and international publications in OAU was generally high when considering the weighted average score of local and international publications together.

2. What is the extent of leadership succession in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in Nigeria?

Table 2: Extent of leadership succession

S/N	Statements	E	VG	G	F	P	(\bar{X})
1	Objectively identify successors to fill key academic positions	23 (20.7)	33 (29.7)	23 (20.7)	23 (20.7)	9 (8.1)	3.31
2	Building research culture through leadership succession	13 (11.7)	23 (20.7)	35 (31.5)	24 (21.6)	16 (14.4)	2.90
3	Making plans for leadership succession	16 (14.4)	22 (19.8)	41 (36.9)	23 (20.7)	9 (8.1)	2.81
4	The transition committee works in line with the missions and vision of the university	16 (14.4)	17 (15.3)	36 (32.4)	27 (24.3)	15 (13.5)	3.03
5	Transition committee identifies potential successor	16 (14.4)	24 (21.6)	32 (28.8)	32 (28.8)	9 (26.4)	2.90
6	Smoothness of transfer of leadership responsibility	14 (12.6)	23 (20.7)	34 (30.6)	28 (25.2)	12 (10.8)	2.94
Weighted Average		2.98					

Key: Excellent (E) =5, Very Good (VG)=4, Good (G)=3, Fair (F)=2, Pass (P)=1 Decision Rule if mean is less than 3.0 = low; above 3.0 = high

Table 2 shows the extent of leadership succession in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria. For instance, objectively identify successors to fill key academic positions (mean = 3.31); building research culture through leadership succession (mean = 2.90); making plan for leadership succession (mean = 2.81); transition committee works in line with the missions and vision of the university (mean = 3.03); transition committee identify potential successor (mean = 2.90) and smoothness of transfer of leadership responsibility (mean = 2.94). The mean values for all items were rejected as rated below the threshold of 2.50, with a weighted average of 2.98, except items one and four, whose values are more than 3.0. This indicates that the extent to which leadership succession is being practiced in OAU, Ile-Ife in Nigeria, was expressed as low.

H₀₁: There is no relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in Nigeria

Table 3: Leadership Succession and Lecturer Productivity

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	r	Sig(P)	Remarks
Leadership succession	111	74.8	25. 2	0.21	0.03	Significant
Lecturer productivity		29.2	9. 1			

(P< .05)

Table 3 establishes the relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. From the table, there was a significant and positive but low correlation between leadership succession and lecturer productivity, $r = (0.21, 0.03, P < .05)$. Based on this table, the hypothesis was rejected. This reveals that there is a significant relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question one found that the level of lecturer productivity in terms of research output on both local and international publications in OAU was high. The result of this study is in line with finding of Olasupo (2017) and Raji and Oyedepi (2021) who found that the research output of the academic staff in university was outstanding in the publishing of chapters in books, scientific peer-reviewed, conference papers, monographs, journal articles, book chapters, bulletins and technical reports. However, one of Olasupo's (2017) findings confirmed that research output is poor in publishing co-authored textbooks, patents, and certified inventions. The result of this study contradicts the submissions of Olayiwola and Alimi (2015), Adeyanju and Oshinyadi (2017), and Aduma and Njoku (2022), who observed that research output in Nigerian universities was found to be low. The likes of Olayiwola and Alimi (2015); Aduma and Njoku (2022) attributed the low research output to the poor funding, infrastructure, research motivation, in collaboration and linkages with key international partners, among others.

The findings of research question two indicated that the extent to which leadership succession is being practiced in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria was expressed as low. The findings of this study are tantamount to the submission of Farah, Elias, Clercy, Bassam, Rida, Cristine, and Rowe (2020), which indicated that leadership successors with a low level of optimism are more likely to be forced out of their position. This is also consistent with the submission of Abiodun-Oyebanji and Oyediji (2023, p. 314), who reported that the successors of academic leaders did not have an antecedent to follow and contribute to the low productivity of lecturers.

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between leadership succession and lecturer productivity in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria. This finding aligns with that of Akinyele, Ogbari, Akinyele, and Dibia (2015), who found that there is a significant positive impact of succession planning and career development on organisational survival. Likewise, the result is also in line with the findings of Tunji (2014), who found that a positive relationship exists between succession planning practices and employee retention.

Conclusions

The study paper concluded that research productivity in terms of research output was considered to be high while leadership succession of the institution was low. This is an indication that the transition of retired academic leaders to the new ones has not been taken into consideration while appointing or electing academic leaders in OAU. The paper also concluded that the relationship that exists between leadership succession and lecturer productivity indicates that leadership succession contributes to lecturer productivity.

Recommendations

- Lecturers' productivity should be maintained and sustained since the research output of lecturers in OAU was reported to be high.
- Efforts should be made by the management of OAU to find a means of reshaping the leadership succession of the institution so that leadership crises could be minimized and the level of research publications of lecturers could be improved.

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