

Research Report Writing Skill, Communication Skill and Lecturers' Job Effectiveness in Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study sought to examine research report writing skill, communication skill and lecturers' Job effectiveness in University of Calabar of Cross River State, Nigeria. Literature review was carried out according. The survey research design was used for the study. Two null hypotheses formulated to direct the investigation. The population of the study was 1856, from the University of Calabar (UNICAL). The instrument for data collection was constructed by the researchers using a four likert scale questionnaire titled; Research Report Writing Skill, Communication Skill and Lecturers' Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (RRWCSLJEQ). The face and content validity was checked by experts in Measurement and Evaluation who vetted the items developed. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using the Cronbach Alpha method and the co-efficient ranged from .70 to .82. The stratified sample technique was used to sample 420 lecturers, for the study. Statistical tool employed for data analysis was the simple linear regression at 0.05 level of significance, with 341 degree of freedom. The result of the analysis revealed that research report writing skill, communication skill significantly relates with lecturers' Job effectiveness. It was recommended that Government should established computer skills acquisition centres in universities to increase computer literacy and that trained and qualified ICT personnel should be employed as instructors for better skills acquisition.*

KEY WORDS: research report, writing skill, communication skill, lecturers' job, universities, Cross River State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The responsibilities saddled on academic staff to meet the needs of diverse student groups as well as their personal development are unremunerous. Research demands are increasing. They are expected to impart knowledge to their students, assist them in writing research reports, and publish original research of which they are evaluated for productivity/promotion. Universities are increasingly basing their assessment of research quality on the ability of researchers to attract outside funding, as well as on the volume of research conducted and published in reputable journals. Research customers are becoming more demanding in the quality of the proposals they require and the end products they expect. Among the skills which researchers now need are: proposal writing; networking and fund raising for projects; managing PhD students and researchers; project management, particularly relating to international partnership projects (Okpa, 2015).

In the face of an ever-increasing array of expectations and growing complexity of work, it is inevitable that academic staff will have greater strengths in some areas than others, and that their interests and productivity will change over time. There is an overwhelming job ineffectiveness noticed among academic staff of universities as manifested in the quality of graduates produced nowadays into the labour market. Asiyai (2013) points to poor quality of academic staff in higher institutions in Nigeria as a barrier to education that is worthwhile and which empowers the recipients with relevant skills, knowledge, ideas, values and attitudes needed in their future carriers. Osaat and Ekechukwu (2017) note that poor performance of students in examination and engagement in examination malpractices are proofs that a lot has not been done by lecturers in terms of teaching apart from other contributory factors. Academic staffs of universities are supposed to be qualified and knowledgeable educationists assigned with the functions of upholding the academic standard of their institutions. More importantly, the government expects universities to attain their goal of ensuring high level relevant manpower training as well as acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which would enable the individual to be self-reliant and useful member of the society. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). The actual implementation of this goal rests on the shoulders of academic staff since they have direct contacts with students through teaching and research.

Unfortunately, it has been observed that most academic staff display poor knowledge of the subjects they teach in class, as they rarely plan their lessons or consult different sources of academic materials suitable for use. Lecturers' ineffectiveness in teaching, publication and community services would probably be curbed if academic staff consciously pay attention to the acquisition of desired research skills and be interested in the use of computers for research. This situation of job ineffectiveness is a general problem among university academic staff as noted by Bamidele (2014). Management of universities are worried that this may bring about non-attainment of the university goal and may lead to non-accreditation of university

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK programs, faculties or the entire institution. More so, quality university output is dependent on the selection of qualitative and knowledgeable academic staff well-grounded in research skills such as research report writing and communication. This is because, research as one of the core mandates of the university, is meant to be inseparable part of education, both as continuous self-education and as a course of study in schools and colleges (Brahms 2016). It is impossible to find any academic staff who writes and publishes papers, without making advanced research.

Every successful research involves information sourcing from field, library or internet. To gather information, a well formulated outline is needed to guide the type of information needed, as well as avoid time wastage, , it is a time killing stage that can lead to not meeting of research deadline. Researchers are required to construct questionnaires and interviews for the collection of data from respondents, either face to face or through the use of computer.

It is embarrassing to note here that there are cases where some lecturers ignorantly make serious mistakes while teaching and students have to put them right especially in current and technological issues. Others lack the ability to properly use modern digital technologies and internet in their project supervision in which case supervisors have to make long journeys to meet their teaching, research and community services. Many students have complained of dissatisfaction in the assessment of their written test and examinations, especially when assessed in areas they were never taught. The inability to use modern technologies have made most students to abandon their studies, especially during project writing. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to provide answer to the question: to what extent does research report writing skill and communication skill of academic staff relates to their job effectiveness in universities in Cross River State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research report writing and lecturer Job effectiveness.

Every successful investigation must be followed by a report, either formal or informal, to communicate the findings of such investigation. Report is an account or feedback that is communicated to an interest group about an event or phenomenon. It is an informational writing... made with the intention of relaying information. It is a document that presents information in an organized format for a specific audience and purpose. Chukwuma and Otagburuagu (2008: 193) defined a report as a document providing an account of events witnessed, work carried out, or investigation conducted, together with conclusion and often recommendations arrived at and the result of the investigation. They also noted that report writing is concerned with a particular situation, and requires specific relationship of reader and writer to the situation, and functional language that suits the situation.

Report is an organized writing that requires enough skills, research and details. It follows a particular procedure that is acceptable by the interest group or audience. Different kinds of

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An investigative report is that written after a research had been carried out, it is an organized and systematic process of detailed writing. Every institution has its own format of research report writing which must be adhered to. The purpose of every report should be known, readers considered, and important information included as well as the time limit. For the research report writing (thesis) of the University of Calabar, “60,000 and 100,000 words are recommended as maximum for masters and Ph.D degrees respectively” (Graduate School University of Calabar 2016:23). Every report written, whether for academic, organizational or private purposes, has certain features which include; heading or title, introduction, body of the report in sections, summary, conclusion, suggestion or recommendation

Warring (2017) studied the impact of writing on students’ achievement using End-of-Grade-Testing and Quasi experimental design. 41 controlled and 75 experimental groups were used and two tests given to the groups at different times. Independent t-test was used for data analysis with a 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed a significant increase in students’ achievement (94.6%) as there was increase in writing (85.4%). It was also observed that students in the lower grade achieved less proficiency score of 263.49, compared to the score of those in the higher grade (268.3) who were instructed on writing process. The author noted that writing helps in the development of abilities and capabilities to wonder raise questions, and think; and that it requires instructions for a successful and a more meaningful communication to occur.

Dahunsi (2017) also investigated Nigerian graduate proficiencies and areas of deficiencies in written English. A written test was given to 1500 graduates, out of which 150 were selected as subjects of the study. Error analysis was used to analyze the data in the areas of grammar, lexis, content and punctuation. The result of the study revealed that 67% of the subject scored low average of 1% to 40% proficiency; 23% subject scored high average proficiency of 41% to 60% while only 10% subject scored very high average of 61% to 100%. The result of error analysis in writing shows that most Nigerian graduates have communication problems, low vocabulary, poor knowledge of the subject, among others, which result in a poor and non coherence report writing. Frequent writing was emphasized by the author as well as proper guidance to enhance development of good communication skills for employability. The author noted that every report is written to communicate fact observed, discussed, investigated or experimented, and should therefore be readable and must communicate understandably to the audience so as to serve as working document both for the present time and in the future. He warned students to avoid common errors found on report writing such as language mix (British and American), language inconsistency, poor paragraphing, poor content development and coherency, poor punctuation and so on.

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On the other hand, some researchers argued that research report writing has no link with skill acquisition hence, does not determine students' academic development. This is seen in the research conducted by Maher (2013) to determine what influence report writing ability had on academic performance of students in South African tertiary institutions. 125 first year Psychology students from the University of Witwatersrand wrote argumentative essays that were analyzed quantitatively using the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (W.A.T.II) scoring systems. T-Test and regression statistical models were used and the finding revealed no statistical significance effect of research report writing on students' performance as this was rated 11.5% among other competitive variable.

Fleethem (2017) is of the opinion that skill is imparted to students in classroom situation by demanding that they solve problems, organize information, construct plans or structures, evaluate ideas, interpret actions and make decisions. It can here be deduced that students' poor performance on communication effectiveness problem solving ability interpersonal relations and computer/internet proficiency cannot be blamed on students' research writing skill.

Bappah and Yarim (2015) finding seem to toll the same line in their study of proficiency in technical report writing skills among the Bachelor of Engineering and Bachelor of Technology streams in Nigeria. Stratified random technique was used to sample 90 respondents from all pre-service bachelors of engineering and pre-service bachelors of technology of 2014 Batch B National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Instrument used was Dantes Test Preparation Technical Writing Practice Examination and was analyzed using T-Test, standard deviation and mean score distribution statistical tools. The result showed no significant difference between the mean score of stream A (41.20%) and stream B (40.33%) pre-service graduates in their technical report writing skill, but, significance difference was observed between the mean scores of stream A (41:2%) and stream C (48.60%) pre-service graduates in their technical report writing skills. The result also revealed a direct relationship between the skills acquired from the technical communication skills and their mean score in Dante Test. The authours however suggested that the report writing skills of Engineering graduates should be enhanced. Report writing can be documented on print material (hard copy) or on electronic devices like computer (soft copy) audio or video. The storage medium notwithstanding, it is important to ensure that research report or any kind of report is well written since it can be useful for the following reasons: means of information update, means of internal communication, facilitate decision making and planning, for framing of policies, for problem solving, organizational document, and reference material.

Research communication skill and lecturers' Job effectiveness.

Research presentation skill as used in this study is synonymous to communication skill. It helps a researcher sale the worth of his work to the audience at the end of report writing and

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also get feedbacks from the audience. It involves speaking to a group of people - academics or peers, in order to make a point, educate or share information. Research presentation is usually oral, with or without visual aids like, slides, whiteboard, projectors or flipchart. In universities, presentations are done by academic staff, for the purpose of lectures, an award of higher degrees or promotion. (Dien and Bassey 2019).

Bankowski (2010) investigated skills for effective academic presentation in English with the aim to conduct presentation skill training for year 1 Art and Social Science students of Hong Kong Baptist University. Out of 217 students, the researcher randomly selected 14 students from 4 different areas of studies as samples who were being observed while they each engaged in a 5 minutes oral presentations at different times, that is, before and after the training, and on different topics. Both deductive and inductive qualitative analyses were used and the finding revealed that presentation skills were higher in the 2nd Semester after the training than in the first semester. Most students in the first semester were said to be nervous and reliant on their notes and others completely lost out of context. It was observed that students lacked the capability to captivate the attention of the audience even though they had good eye contact, good knowledge of the subject matter, good preparation and average use of visual aids in the second semester. The author recommended independent research and presentation training as a means to helping academics excel whenever would have to face and audience for any form of presentation.

Khan, Khan, zia-Ul-Islam & Khan (2017) examine communication skill of a teacher and its role in the development of the students' academic success. Questionnaire titled Professional Attitude Skill (PAS) was used for data collections. The population of the study was 14 universities that offered sport sciences and physical education programmes in Pakistan. The percentage technic was used to sample 418 students and regression analysis was used to analyse the data using SPSS version 20. The finding show that teachers communication skill had (0.34), that is 3% effect on students academic performance and that one (1) unit increase in teacher communication skill caused .236 units overall increase in students' academic performance. The researchers noted that effective teaching does not only depend on the knowledge of the teacher, but, also on the method/style of teacher communication skill. They concluded that teachers good communication skill enhanced their job effectiveness.

Benderly (2017), in an online survey of Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), to identify professional development programs offered by universities to prepare graduate students for a broad range of careers. 857 academic staffs, comprising deans, directors and chairmen Of 226 institutions in North America were used. 62% of the respondents indicated that their institutions offered professional development programmes which enable them to obtain core academic skills and beyond, of which one third was teaching skills and job search skills. Fewer than half (375 or 44%) of respondents representing. 134 Institutions (59% of the total) reported having existing formal programme for graduate students to develop skills for none academic

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK carriers. The report was said to be used to help University of administrators improve services for students. This study comparatively is in line with the study of Meerah, Osman, Zakaria, Ikhsan, Krish, Lian & Mahmud (2012) who measured the research skills of graduate students and found research communication (presentation) to be significantly high with mean score of (3.99) and standard deviation of (0.47).

In the report presented by Gallo (2014) on the attitude of Professional Americans on presentation, Prezi-the Cloud-based presentation Plat form Company collaborated with Harris to survey employed American professionals and the result showed that 20% respondents said they would do anything to avoid giving presentations on their behalf, including pretending to be sick or asking a colleague to give the presentation. 75% of those who have given presentation said they would want to be better at it and captivate their audience, while 70% said presentation is critical for career success, and should be encouraged.

Many factors such as: fright, complex, social background and the composition of the audience, stand against an academic staff's ability to deliver formal presentation/communication, irrespective of the fact that the success of the institution rests on their shoulders in terms of job effectiveness and growth.

Femi (2014) investigated the impact of communication on workers' performance in selected organizations in Lagos State using descriptive survey and stratified random sampling to select 120 respondents from 150 workers of 4 organizations. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data, which was analysed using percentages and Chi-Square. Finding revealed a relationship between managers' communication skills and workers' performance. Strong communication skill is important in the work place and very compulsory for organizational leader, who will always need and provide constructive feedbacks, investigate or calm crises. It is worth noting that hard conversations are important, though painful, as they open doors to growth and change. An effective academic staff, therefore needs to belt up for hard conversations and treat them intelligently when they arise, especially when discharging their services.

Ifeyanyi-Uche and Chima (2013) investigated inquiry-based method and students' academic achievement in Home Economics using two study groups randomly sampled from 4 out of the 15 secondary schools in Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State from where 20 SSI students were selected. The experimented group was taught with inquiry-based method while the control group had lecture method. Home Economics achievement test was developed for data collection; simple percentage was used to analyze the students' scores and t-test statistics used to test the hypothesis. Findings showed that students taught with inquiry-based method achieved more (53.5) mean scores than control group (25.5), when tested the t-cal showed 17.1 at 0.05 level of significant. The authors recommend the use of inquiry-based method desired research skills for school management.

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Tang, (2018) investigated the importance of soft skills acquisition by teachers in higher institutions so as to determine importance soft skills in the teaching profession. Both questionnaire and interviews research instrument were used, lecturers and students from 4 programme of the international college in Khan Kaen, Thailand formed the population of the study from we eight (8) lecturers and 163, students were sampled randomly. Standard deviation and independent t-test were used for data analysis. While quantitative finding revealed communication skill has being most importance soft skill needed by lecturers for effective instructional delivery, quantitative findings revealed that delivery of effective and quantity teaching as well as career development and enrichment were the most important aspects of lecturers acquisition of communication skill. It was noted excellence teaching originated from lecturers with communication skills which enables them comprehend at capability and knowledge speed of the different students and also convey their own knowledge to students impressively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was survey. The study area is Cross River State in South South Nigeria. The population of the study was 2,333 academic staff of the two public universities in Cross River State, that is, 1,856 from the University of Calabar, and 477 from Cross River University of Technology. Stratified sampling technique and accidental sampling techniques were used to select respondents. A total of 350 subjects were selected which is 15% of the total population. Thus: 278 from University of Calabar and 72 from Cross River University of Technology. The Research Report Writing Skill, Communication Skill and Lecturers' Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (RRWSCSLJEQ) was the instrument used for data collection. Experts in the fields of Measurement and Evaluation as well as Educational Management checked the relevance of the items used in the questionnaires to ensure that they measured what they purport to measure.

In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested using 50 academic staff with similar characteristics, from Athur Jarvis University, who was not part of the study area. The Cronbach Alpha Method was used for the analysis. The coefficient ranged from 0.70 to 0.82 and the instrument was confirmed to be consistent in achieving the objective of the study. The researchers visited the different faculties of the Universities and personally administered the questionnaires. Adequate information was given to respondents on the manner to respond to the questionnaire and their sincere and objective responses were solicited. A total of 320 questionnaires were administered and collected immediately after their completion.

Presentation of result

In this section each hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out to test it is presented. Each hypothesis of the study was tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between research report writing skill and lecturers' job effectiveness. The independent variable in this hypothesis is research report writing skill; while the dependent variable is lecturers' job effectiveness. To test this hypothesis, research report writing skill was correlated with Lecturers' job effectiveness using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between research report writing skill and lecturers' job effectiveness (N=343)

Variables	X	SD	r-value	p-value
Research report writing skill	21.5335	1.58148	0.929*	.000
Lecturers' job effectiveness	36.1312	3.11903		

* Significant at .05, p-value = .000, df = 341

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.929 is significant at .05 level of significance with 341 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant positive relationship between research report writing skill and lecturers' job effectiveness was rejected. This result implied that, research report writing skill has a significant relationship with lecturers' job effectiveness. The positive r indicated that the higher research report writing skill the higher the lecturers' job effectiveness tend to be. On the other hand the lower research report writing skill the lower lecturers' job effectiveness tend to be.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between research communication skill and lecturers' job effectiveness. The independent variable in this hypothesis is research communication skill; while the dependent variable is lecturers' job effectiveness. To test this hypothesis, research communication skill was correlated with lecturers' job effectiveness using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the relationship between research communication skill and lecturers' job effectiveness (N=343)

Variable	X	SD	r-value	p-value
Research communication skill	19.9883	2.25427	0.222*	.000
Lecturers' job effectiveness	36.1312	3.11903		

* Significant at .05, p-value = .000, df = 341

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.222 is significant at .05 level of significance with 341 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between research communication skill and lecturers' job effectiveness was rejected. This result implied that, research communication skill has a significant positive relationship with lecturers' job effectiveness. The positive r implied that the higher research communication skill, the higher lecturers' job effectiveness tends to be. On the other hand the lower research communication skill the lower lecturers' job effectiveness tends to be.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the first hypothesis revealed there is a significant relationship between research report writing skill and lecturers' job effectiveness. The finding of this hypothesis is in agreement with the view of Dahunsi (2017) who revealed that 67% of the subject scored low average of 1% to 40% proficiency; 23% subject scored high average proficiency of 41% to 60% while only 10% subject scored very high average of 61% to 100%. The result of error analysis in writing shows that most Nigerian graduates have communication problems, low vocabulary, poor knowledge of the subject, among others, which result in a poor and non coherence report writing. Frequent writing was emphasized by the author as well as proper guidance to enhance development of good communication skills for employability. The author noted that every report is written to communicate fact observed, discussed, investigated or experimented, and should therefore be readable and must communicate understandably to the audience so as to serve as working document both for the present time and in the future. He warned students to avoid common errors found on report writing such as language mix (British and American), language inconsistency, poor paragraphing, poor content development and coherency, poor punctuation and so on.

Skill is imparted to students in classroom situation by demanding that they solve problems, organize information, construct plans or structures, evaluate ideas, interpret actions and make decisions. It can here be deduced that students' poor performance on communication effectiveness problem solving ability interpersonal relations and computer/internet proficiency cannot be blamed on students' research writing skill. Report writing can be documented on print material (hard copy) or on electronic devices like computer (soft copy) audio or video. The storage medium notwithstanding, it is important to ensure that research report or any kind of report is well written since it can be useful for the following reasons: means of information update, means of internal communication, facilitate decision making and planning, for framing of policies, for problem solving, organizational document, and reference material.

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Every successful investigation must be followed by a report, either formal or informal, to communicate the findings of such investigation. Report is an account or feedback that is communicated to an interest group about an event or phenomenon. It is an informational writing... made with the intention of relaying information. It is a document that presents information in an organized format for a specific audience and purpose.

The result of the second hypothesis showed that research communication skill has a significant relationship with lecturers' job effectiveness. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the study of Bankowski (2010) who revealed that presentation skills were higher in the 2nd Semester after the training than in the first semester. Most students in the first semester were said to be nervous and reliant on their notes and others completely lost out of context. It was observed that students lacked the capability to captivate the attention of the audience even though they had good eye contact, good knowledge of the subject matter, good preparation and average use of visual aids in the second semester. The author recommended independent research and presentation training as a means to helping academics excel whenever would have to face and audience for any form of presentation.

Benderly (2017) also indicated that their institutions offered professional development programmes which enable them to obtain core academic skills and beyond, of which one third was teaching skills and job search skills. Fewer than half (375 or 44%) of respondents representing 134 Institutions (59% of the total) reported having existing formal programme for graduate students to develop skills for none academic carriers. The report was said to be used to help University of administrators improve services for students.

Communication skill has being most importance soft skill needed by lecturers for effective instructional delivery, quantitative findings revealed that delivery of effective and quantity teaching as well as career development and enrichment were the most important aspects of lecturers acquisition of communication skill. It was noted excellence teaching originated from lecturers with communication skills which enables them comprehend at capability and knowledge speed of the different students and also convey their own knowledge to students impressively.

CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and findings of the study, it was concluded that research report writing skill and research communication skill significantly relate to lecturers' job effectiveness.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should established computer skills acquisition centres in universities to increase computer literacy and that trained and qualified ICT personnel should be employed as instructors for better skills acquisition.
2. Academic libraries should be stocked with up-to-date books and materials, also that library services to students be made accessible.

3. Regular seminars and workshops is recommended for researchers to update and sustain their skills in research.
4. The use of inquiry-based method desired research skills for school management should be encouraged.

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