

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH SKILLS APPLICATION AMONG COLLEGES OF EDUCATION LECTURERS IN KADUNA STATE

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ABSTRACTS: *The study focused on evaluation of research skills application among lecturers of Colleges of Education in Kaduna State. The descriptive survey design of causal comparative type was adopted in the study with a population of 206 academic staff in colleges of education in Kaduna State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study using the researcher's developed instrument entitled "Evaluation of Research Skills Opinion Questionnaire" (ERSOQ). To ensure appropriate validity and reliability of the ERSOQ, it was given to three experts, two in Measurement and Evaluation and one in English Language, to ensure face and content validity of the instrument. The instrument was pilot tested using Cronbach Alpha reliability method and the index ranged from .71 to .85. The stated null hypotheses were tested using population and independent sample t-test and the result of the data analysis revealed that research skills application among lecturers of Colleges of Education is low. It was also revealed that research skills application among lecturers of Colleges of Education is high in terms of literature review and data collection. The study also pinpoints the implication of research skills acquisition as a tool for functional education and quality research delivery. It was recommended that there should be adequate training for academic staff to equip them with the necessary training to plan and implement research activities.*

KEYWORDS: evaluation, research skills application, Kaduna State

INTRODUCTION

Research is the bedrock of the human capital development of any nation. Developed countries of the world like China, Japan, Russia, and United States of America among others have achieved various breakthroughs due to their commitment to ensuring a functional research practices and qualitative educational system in their countries. Research is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to increase our understanding of a phenomenon under study. It is also a vehicle utilized for population systematic and analytical knowledge and information designed to aid the understanding of educational phenomena, planning and practices of educational changes which are essential for educational reform. According to Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary (2010), research is a careful study of a subject especially in order to discover new facts or information about it. Therefore, it is expected that every research activity should be adequately and effectively conducted because the conduct of research is necessary for lecturers of College of Education and those of other tertiary institutions like Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Health Technology. The academic staffs of Colleges of education are compulsorily required to carry out research activities as their promotions are primarily based on their research outputs. Apart from the academic staff being promoted through research publications, research activities enhance

their credibility, status, and also add value both to their immediate community and the larger global community.

McCabe and McCabe (2000) noted that academic staff members of colleges of education and other tertiary institutions are provided the opportunity to focus on an area of inquiry develop a research program and later share the knowledge with students and others in the drive to develop professional skills, which can be appropriately achieved by application of research skills. This is due to the fact that quality research skills provide a good platform for academic staff of college of education to become successful academics. It is important to note that research skills application develops academic knowledge and reinforce the skills needed for effective knowledge transfer. It also inspires academics towards hard work. It also fills the gaps of previous researches, and creates an opportunity for future research. Most of the research productivity of academics is disseminated via publications.

The quality of research being carried out by most college lecturers has been adjusted to be of low standard, when compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world (Emunemu, 2009). According to the author, the poor quality of research output may be associated with poor research skills application by lecturers in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing.

Since the world is a global village, it is expected that research findings from the nation's colleges meet international standard. That is to say, lecturers of colleges of education are expected to develop the skills required to effectively embark upon and successfully complete research activities. This is because the products of lecturers in colleges of education are being evaluated with those of other colleges all over the world. It is so disheartening to note that no tertiary institution in Africa features among the hundreds in the world in terms of research skills application (Owan, 2005). This is a likely indication of the low quality of research activities in Nigeria and African at large. Owan, (2005) informed that some of the nefarious attitude displayed by our lecturers of colleges of education in research practices which include; add-me-in-your paper mentality, lackadaisical attitude in attendance to conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia on new trends in research endeacours, copy and paste mentality in research undertakings and shyness in presenting papers at conferences.

From all available evidences, research issues on education, human capital development and economic sustainability have been the major concern of the nations of the world, most especially, in the face of the present global economic crisis. Therefore, adequate education on research skills application can develop lecturers of tertiary institution to be self-productive and offer most of them with part time employment which will have a positive impact in sustaining the economy of the nation. It is pertinent to note that well conducted research remains a vital tool for education, socio-economic development. Wealth creation and poverty reduction. Countries of the world with poor or inadequate research capacities will become poorer since research activities leads to knowledge creation and advancement and a key to economic sustainability (Emunemu, 2009). This explains why many tertiary institutions all over the world are doing all they could to promote research activities as not to be considered inferior or relegated to the bottom. Colleges of education in Kaduna cannot afford to pay mere lip service to research skills but must stand up to justify the purpose of their

establishment and existence by getting involved in ground-breaking researches (Aniedi & Effiom, 2011).

Creswell (2012) reported that research skills if judiciously applied not only aids solving practical problems and brings about material improvements, but is also provides insight into new ideas that improve human understanding of various social, economic and cultural phenomena (human and economic development). It is against the above background that this paper aims at evaluation of research skills among lecturers of colleges of education in Kaduna State: Implication in education, human capital development and economic sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

Research as the surest means of acquiring dependable knowledge that can be used for generalization has been poorly carried by most scholars in the academia. The problem is so much that most research output presented for national and international publication has been adjudged to be below standard. Evidence from developed countries like United State, Germany, France and China showed that the foundations for quality research output are anchored on quality research skills application. Personal interaction with most lecturers of colleges of education showed that the decline in research output may be as a result of lack of appropriate research skills application in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing in modern research methods.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund) in corroboration with most tertiary institution has been outstanding in encouraging academic staff development in research endeavour by financial assistance and other forms of assistance to promote quality in research output both on individual and group basis. In spite of these lofty efforts there still lingers poor skills in accomplishing the task of quality research undertaking by most of these lecturers. So disheartening to say that some lecturer shy away from research tainting on Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Turn-It-In Anti Plagiarism Software training, research seminars, workshops, symposiums and other packages that could help them improve their research skills application. Therefore, the problem of this study is: What is the level of research skills application do lecturers of colleges of education display in carry out research activities? What are the gender differences in the application of research skills by lecturers? What are the implication of research skills in education, human capital development and economic sustainability?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to carry out an evaluation of research skills application: a pathway to functional education strategy for quality research delivery among lecturers of colleges of education in Kaduna State, Kaduna. Specifically, the study aimed at:

1. Ascertaining the extent of research skills application in terms of [problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing.
2. Examining the gender differences in research skills application by college lecturers.

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study;

1. What is the extent of research skills application in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing among college lecturers?
2. To what extent do male lecturers differ from female lecturers in terms of their research skills application?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

1. Research skills application among lecturers in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing is not significantly high.
2. Male lecturers do not differ significantly from their female counterparts in terms of their research skills application.

Theoretical and Empirical Review

Research skills acquisition in college of education in Kaduna state cannot be overemphasized. This is because one of the strategies for determining research productivity is to assess the quantity of research skills in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing researches conducted. This is shown in the nature of publications which researchers communicated through primary or other sources. Research involves collecting and analyzing data. Productivity results from writing, and publishing research reports in professional refereed journals, and displaying it on the web, or making it known to the public through any other means. According to Creswell (2012), research skills is the extent to which a scholar displays proficiency and expertise knowledge in their own research and publish scientific articles in refereed journals, conference proceedings, writing a book or a chapter, gathering and analyzing original evidence.

Uzun (2002) observed a sharp decline in the research productivity of academic in terms of the number of articles published in Kaduna from to 1999 in an analysis of 21 cores Kaduna journals indexed in the Social Science Citation Index database. This decline was attributed to poor skills in research activities in terms of problem formulation, data analysis and discussions. Chiemeké, Longe, Longe, and Shaib (2009) conducted an empirical study on the research skills application and output from Kaduna tertiary institutions. The design was a descriptive survey research using 213 academic staff from tertiary institutions in Kaduna state. A researcher's developed instrument was administered to the respondents and the analysis was executed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that publication remained a yardstick for promotion in the academia in higher institutions in Kaduna state. The study also revealed that though most academic staff of tertiary institutions lacks the necessary research skill to developed their research work effectively which have limited their publication power to only local journals.

Braimoh (2010) reviewed the role of African tertiary institution in national and continental developments. The study emphasized upon the significance of research and publication efforts among lecturers in improving their teaching and demonstrating their abilities to create

and disseminate knowledge to solve societal problems. According to the author, the quality in research can maximally be achieved if academic staff develops their skills in research practices. However, most lecturers may show high quality in searching for relevant literature and data collection though may not be able to identify and utilize the appropriate test statistical analysis that may be suitable for the generated data. The study also concludes that this could be the major reason why most researchers embark on qualitative at the expense of quantitative study.

Agboola and Oduwole (2005) investigated the publication output and research skills necessary for quality paper writing by academic staff of tertiary institution. Their study sought information on the status of the academic staff of tertiary institution, publication requirements for promotion, frequency of staff seminars, role of seminar secretaries, categories of staff involvement, order of paper presentations, and comments on the role of staff seminars in enhancing staff research skills and publication output. The study used the survey design with a sample of 345 academic staff. A structured instrument on research output and skills was developed and the data collected was subjected to percentages and frequencies. They claimed that out of the 345 academics in their subject area that had responded, 2.94% had more than twenty publications nationally, 8.82% had between ten and fifteen publications most of which were local journals, 17.56% has between six and nine local journals, 11.77% had between one and five publications local application in terms of how to appropriately formulate research topic/problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing.

Gender analysis is a critical aspect in women desire to develop their research skills in academics. Gender analysis is necessary to determine the existing gender balance, and to assess the way in which a policy or programme will impact women and men who are in the field of education. Stiver, Barnes and Harding (2004) observed that, across the world, there is a gender gap in the academia having two dimension status and power differentials among tertiary institutions across the country. World statistics indicates that women make up more than half of the population, do 64 percent of the working hours, and receive 10 percent of the income and own only one percent of the property (Federal College of Education, Women Association, 2008).

In recent years, women have put aside gender inequality, marginalization and inferiority complex in all academic activities most especially in research and publication practices due to the publish or perish syndrome. This has motivated most women to embark on courses, seminar, conferences nationally and international that can boast their research skills acquisition. Although majority of college lecturers feels that in spite of women being academics, they are mostly expected to keep their homes. Women carry a dual burden that they must pursue both their academic interest while meeting traditional obligations, for which they get little or no help from their male partners and spouses. A woman academic is concerned with childbearing and rearing, cooking and domestic household chores which may have negative effect on the pursuit of academic activities and their supervision (Odejide, 2001).

Study by Odejide (2001) on the topic gender and research skills application among lecturers of tertiary institutions. The study adopted a survey design with a sample of 234 lecturers.

Data was collected with a surveys instrument titled Research Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (RSAQ) and the analysis was done with independent t-test. The study found that women academics are confronted by sexual prejudice that abound among their male counterparts and the lack of a suitable framework within which they can articulate their concerns. These affect their quest for research undertakings.

Yolonfoun (2003) carried out a study on the topic gender and academic staff input in colleges of education. The study utilized the ex-post facto design with a sample of 1265 lecturers drawn from 16 Colleges in California. Data was collected with a researcher's developed instrument titled Research Inputs in Colleges Questionnaire (RICQ), and the analysis was executed with population t-test. The findings revealed that women lecturers are far behind their male counterparts in terms of research inputs in colleges of education in California and generally perceived as being less knowledgeable, and also have to work twice as hard to legitimize their position and authority. It was also concluded from the study that women academics need to develop masculine heart in their approach to academic work (research skills) in order to live up to expectation. Specifically, the women academic in the study area has the peculiar problem of having to cope with the role of the token woman i.e. a woman to be seen but not heard, lack of role models to learn from, feelings of isolation, strains of coping with male prejudice and overt or covert discriminations from senior colleagues. Despite the fact that female lecturers constitute just about 20.3% of lecturers in higher institutions in Kaduna state, is worthy of note that a few women have come out as pace-setters.

Babajide (2015) reported that female lecturers are subjected to greater work-related pressures than their male counterparts. Teaching in the University in itself is a very high-pressure job. Part of these pressures include the 'publish-or-perish' syndrome, teaching and research work load, paper writing for conferences, seminars and workshops, marking of scripts, meeting deadlines, supervising students projects and other (practical work. Related contributory factors include attending and making meaningful contributions at post-graduate thesis and dissertations meetings, emergency meetings at departmental and faculty levels as well as membership of various administrative committees.

On the part of the male factor, the issue of marriage has subjected women to be totally responsible to men. This traditional authority has given the man the ability to dictate what he likes his wife to do, and in all cases not what the woman would like to do. Such dictates can make or mar such women especially in their desire to be productive in research oriented field and career development. For the married woman, no matter the level of education, the finding is that she can rise as high and as fast as it is convenient for the husband and the home. For example, participation in conferences and seminars which are necessary complements and supplements for a successful academic career may be out of the question if the timing is very inconvenient for the woman due to "primary responsibilities". Jonathan and Stone (2009) also came out with findings that female lecturers living and working under great pressure, and the resultant stress, expressed complaints of constant fatigue and exhaustion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design of causal comparative type. This type of design was adopted because according to Meheshwari (2018), it seeks to find the relationship between dependent and independent variables after an action or event has already occurred.

The population of this study comprised of 206 academic staff in colleges of education in Kaduna State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted. In doing this, the First stage was to group the colleges based on schools, the second stage was to purposively sample 117 lecturers from two colleges of education in the State. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher's developed instrument entitled "Evaluation of Research Skills Opinion Questionnaire" (ERSOQ). The instrument comprised of two sections, section A comprised information on bio data of the respondents like school type and gender. While section B consisted of structured items on the sub-dimensions of research skills. To ensure validity and reliability of the ERSOQ, it was given to three experts, two in measurement and evaluation and one in English Language in order to ensure face and content validity of the instrument. Their correction and modifications on the instrument were fully incorporated in the final copy before administration. The instrument was pilot tested using Cronbach's Alpha reliability index and the index ranged from .71 to .85. The null hypotheses were tested using population t-test and independent t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the data analysis are presented in table 1 and 2 as shown below.

TABLE 1

Summary of one sample t-test with research skills application among college lecturers in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing (N = 112).

S/N	Variable	\bar{X}	SD	M	p-value	Decision
1.	Problem articulation	14.16	6.87	15.00	.231	Accept
2.	Literature review	19.12	5.43	15.00	.000	Reject
3.	Data collection	16.00	7.01	12.5	.002	Reject
4.	Data analysis	11.08	4.19	12.5	.443	Accept
5.	Data presentation and interpretation	14.02	4.14	15.00	.625	Accept
6.	Discussion of findings	14.11	5.71	15.00	.471	Accept
7.	Referencing	13.02	5.00	15.00	.523	Accept
8.	Over all research skills	65.06	14.18	100	.524	Accept

Reject H_0 if $p < .05$ and accept H_0 if $p > .05$.

It can be discerned from table 1 that with population t-test of the analysis with research skills application among college lecturers in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing. The p-value was found to be greater than the chosen alpha for problem articulation, data analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that research skills

application among lectures for theses skills listed above is low. However, for literature search and data collection, the null hypothesis was rejected as the p-value was less than the chosen alpha, which implies that research skills application for these skills is high.

TABLE 2

Summary of independent sample t-test gender on research skills application

Variable	N	X	SD	p-value
Male	66	14.42	3.08	.038
Female	46	13.93	1.57	
P<.05				

It can be discerned from the result in Table 2 that with independent t-test of the influence of gender on research skills application, with 112 respondents of which 66 are male while 46 are female with mean and standard deviation for male of 14.42 and 3.08 while female has a mean of 13.93 and standard deviation of 1.57. The p-value was found to be .038 which was less than the chosen alpha of .05. thus the null hypothesis is rejected which implies that male lecturers differ significantly from female lecturers in terms of their research skills application.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study is discussed hypothesis – by hypothesis as presented below.

Hypothesis one on research skills application among college lecturers in terms of problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing. The result of the findings revealed that college lectures displays low research skills in problem articulation, data analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing. This may be due to the lack of proper attendance to research training of how to effectively apply these skills in education. The findings are in consonance with Chiemeké, Longe, Longe, and Shaib (2009) swtudy which revealed that though most academic staff of tertiary institutions lacks the necessary research skill to develop their research work effectively which have limited their publication power to only local journals. In the same vein Agboola and Oduwolé (2005) attribute poor research skills in terms of how to appropriately formulate research topic/problem articulation, literature search, data collection and analysis, data presentation and interpretation, discussion of findings and referencing to college lecturers in ability to boldly present papers in conferencing, attendance of workshops on how to improve in statistical packages and cut and paste mentality. However, the study disagree with that by Braimoh (2010) whose findings reviewed most lecturers shows high quality in searching for relevant literature and data collection, though may not be able to identify and utilize the appropriate test statistical analysis that may be suitable for the generated data, this could be the major reason why most researchers embark on qualitative study at the expense of quantitative study.

Hypothesis two on gender differences and research skills application by college lecturers revealed that there is a significance on gender and research skills which favour the male to their female counterparts as a result of the bunch of domestic activities attached to the female. The findings agree with that by Odejide (2001) found that women academics are confronted by sexual prejudice that abound among their male counterparts and the lack of a suitable

framework within which the present findings Yolonfoun (2003) findings revealed that women lecturers as far behind their male counterparts in terms of research inputs in colleges of education in California and generally perceived as being less knowledgeable, and also have to work twice as hard in order to legitimize their positions and authority. In the same vein, Jonathan and Stone (2009) also came out with findings that female lecturers living and working under great pressure, and the resultant stress, expressed complaints of constant fatigue and exhaustion.

Implication of research findings

Research skills application by lecturers has inference in education, human capital development an economic sustainability in the following ways:

Firstly, research skills acquisition helps in improvement in Educational Practices: One of the greatest relevance of research skills application is that it helps in development of relevant strategies and methods of learning and teaching new concepts can be learnt from other works and adapted to improve instructional effectiveness. A lot of changes have taken place in teaching situations today and many more will still take place as long as educational research is being conducted. Educational research is an academic endeavour which is geared towards finding new ways in which the approaches used in providing educational activities in the school system can be improved.

Secondly, Research skill acquisition by lecturers of colleges of education can promote quantitative education that makes acquisition of useful skills, desirable values, knowledge, attitudes, ideas and competencies necessary for self-reliance can only be possible through adequate research work. It also results to qualitative instrument, articulate and confident graduates for the society's develop[mental activities. The quality of the citizens of a country depends on the quality of their education. When research work leads to quality education, the desired manpower required to serve in the various sectors of the economy is guaranteed.

Thirdly, research skill acquisition if properly applied will have long lasting implication in the overall national development and progress (Human Capital Development): Research serves as the catalyst for achieving national development through the production of manpower required for the labour force. Development means improving the total circumstances of man on this earth, satisfying his spiritual and material needs and granting him mastery of his environment (Aminu, 2006). To Bell (2008), development involves a process of establishing people to accomplish things that they could not do before that is, to learn and apply information, attitudes, value and kills previously unavailable to them. Development is a product of research. National development therefore, is a state in which people in a country, through learning, are stimulated to achieve satisfaction by applying themselves to overcome problems of living (Owan, 2005). As a matter of fact, results or findings from several research works have greatly accelerated human development over the years. Knowing fully well that a lot of benefits accrue from research activities, the nation cannot go to sleep when the nations of the world are breaking new and fallowed grounds through their research activities.

Fourthly, research activities (skill acquisition) can help a country liberate from Ignorance and poverty: Research activities and findings liberate man from poverty and ignorance. Research

findings can liberate man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency through exposure. Ignorance and illiteracy are serious leading causes of socio-economic retrogression and poverty in the countries of the world including Kaduna. The advanced countries of the world like Japan, America etc, are said to be advanced because of the progress they have made in the various fields of human endeavours. No nation in the world has ever thrived on the wings of illiteracy. Adequate research leads to the discovery of new techniques, ideas and ways of doing things which will in turn, lead to wealth creation.

Also, research skills acquisition if judiciously applied in the research process can lead to improvement in standard of living this is because research findings that are worth-while do transform the society positively and also improve the overall quality of life. Without research, old knowledge will only be recycled and at a point will become anachronistic. It is Important then that research work should show novelty of ideas and not repetitive but reproductive so as to have impact on the life of the society. The variety of results that come from research will expose facts, provide evidence, discover the unknown and ultimately, expand the frontier of knowledge in the different areas of studies (Emunemu, 2009). All these will improve the standard of living, increase chances of employment, pave way for economic opportunities and upward social mobility.

Finally, adequate research skills application can help provide solutions to counterparty problems: When researchers effectively embark upon and successfully complete researchers designed to understand and explain various aspects of society or nature, there will be solutions to the social and natural problems that impinge on human well being in the immediate environment and globally (Ajayi, 2009). Take for instance, the nation can benefit from research findings or discoveries that will provide solutions to some naughty issues like climate change, HIV/AIDS and other related health problems. Through scientific explorations, means of curing myriads of terribly devastating sickness and diseases can be discovered and consequently, reduce the mortality rates.

CONCLUSION

Research is an indispensable tool for academic excellence in all area of academic endeavor. This is because quality research work is vital to academic success. However, there is the need for re-orientation and repositioning of academics with respect to conducting groundbreaking researchers which will make them enjoy the same academic rating, status and recognition like their counterparts in other tertiary institution. When research skills are adequately, the nation's higher institutions will be as competitive, respectable and socially relevant as other tertiary institutions in some other parts of the world. Therefore, there is need for more zeal among lecturers of colleges of education to develop their skills acquisition.

Recommendations

Therefore, the following recommendations were drawn from the study.

There should be adequate training for academic staff to equip them with the necessary training to plan and implement research activities. The governments should generously release funds and checkmate the disbursement of these funds by colleges of education and other tertiary institutions for research purpose. The funds released for educational research projects should be seriously monitored to avoid diversion.

Provision of adequate research grants should be made to enable the academic staff to carryout qualitative research. The government should endeavour to provide functional generating sets as an alternative source of power supply for schools. Provision and access to ICT-based facilities for qualitative research should be supplied to all tertiary institutions of learning. Capacity building for academic staff in the areas of research and development should be organized on regular basis. Philanthropists and alumni of tertiary institutions should rise to assist educational endeavours in the country. This will reduce the financial constraints facing educational research in the institutions.

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) should extend their operation to the education sector to free it from the grip of looters. Sanctions that would have deterrent effects on would be culprits should be applied and recovered loots invested in research work. Researchers should learn how to write grant-winning proposals to attract the highly needed finances to execute their research projects.

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