



## **JOB RESOURCES AND TASK PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined the nexus between job resources and task performance of business educators in public universities in Nigeria. A correlational survey research design was adopted and data were collected from a randomly selected sample of 142 business educators (12 HODs and 130 lecturers) in universities in South-South, Nigeria. Research questions were answered while hypotheses tested. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts, two in business education and one in measurement and evaluation. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation matrix and linear regression. Pearson correlation matrix was used to answer the research questions and simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses. The results showed positive correlation between overall job resources and task performance of business educators. Specifically, the results showed a significant but low correlation between colleagues/HOD support, performance feedback and task performance as well as a significant but moderate correlation between job autonomy and task performance of business educators. This means that as job resources increase, there is a tendency for business educators to perform better on the job.*

**Keywords:** *business educators, colleagues/HOD support, job autonomy, job resources, performance feedback, task performance.*

### **Introduction**

Business education is a competency-oriented programme that is planned and organized to equip recipients with skills and knowledge required to confidently be engaged in an entrepreneurial career and lifelong learning tasks upon graduation.



To achieve these missions, competent business educators are required. The need for competent business educators in tertiary institutions is of great concern to major stakeholders of business education programme because of their important role in preparing recipients for career progressions in various professions and occupations immediately after graduation (Oonk, *et al.*, 2020). The need for competent business educators in the university system may be attributed to their potential role in executing high level of task-related activities.

Business educators are business education graduates that are trained to perform the task of equipping recipients at the secondary and post-secondary school levels with skills and knowledge to confidently pursue entrepreneurial career and lifelong learning tasks. This means that business educators in the university system have a salient role to play in performing the task of equipping students with fundamental skills and knowledge required to confidently engage in entrepreneurial careers and lifelong learning tasks upon graduation. This clarification informed the need for special interest in business educators and how they perform different responsibilities that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of business education programme, especially at the university level.

The job performance of business educators could be referred to as the execution of different job activities contributing to the achievement of the goals of business education programme, which represent two dimensions: task performance and contextual performance. For the purpose of this study, the authors focused on task performance. Task performance consists of behaviours that directly contribute to core technical activities, namely teaching, research and administration.

Teaching task is usually carried out in the classrooms, workshops and laboratories where modern technologies are utilized for instructional purposes. It include the use of PowerPoint, the Internet, Skype, among others and various “hands-on” activities. Business educators are expected to also conduct scientific research through which they grow academically and professionally and contribute meaningfully to economic development worldwide. Research tasks include the use of special software packages to develop research models; the use of anti-plagiarism software to check similarities index in research manuscripts; the use of PROCESS macro, LISTREL, AMOS and other statistical packages for data analyses. Business educators also perform administrative tasks through which the mission of business education is accomplished. Administrative tasks include heading a unit, department, faculty, or an institution; involving in admission/registration exercises; functioning as course advisers as well as planning, organizing, leading and controlling resources.

From the foregoing, it can be observed that business educators perform complex activities, which could better contributed to poor task performance and, in turn, hindered the acquisition of skills needed by students to be employable upon graduation. This situation can be surmounted through business educators’ experiences of job resources such as receiving support from HODs/colleagues, receiving feedback on the jobs done and having control of the job done. Job resources represent a motivational pathway of job characteristics and appear to be the major factors leading to better task performance (Batchelor, Abston, Lawlor &



Burch, 2014). Job resources can be defined as those general aspects of working conditions that incorporate specific resources which represent physical, social or organizational aspects of a job that might reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs (Davidescu, *et al.*, 2020). Job resources play either intrinsic or extrinsic motivational role because they are seen as a major factor leading to better performance of task. They may play a major role on job performance through intrinsic and extrinsic motivational processes. It means that job resources may help trigger intrinsic motivational processes during task performance (Vansteenkiste, Ryan & Soenens, 2020). In a specific task such as teaching, research or administration, an extrinsic motivational processes may be triggered when there are supportive colleagues to whom one can ask for help when needed; when there are opportunities to control one's job as well as when there are constant provision of information about the task already performed. However, the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational processes might foster an employee's willingness to invest energy and enthusiasm during job activities such as teaching, research and administration.

Colleague/HOD support could be defined as a factor that provide a chance for an employee to receive support from a colleague or an HOD. Colleague/HOD support in an institution refers to interpersonal support between colleague and colleague and between HOD and colleague at work. Colleague and supervisor support is the interpersonal work relationships that has the potential to promote the well-being or coping abilities of those receiving the support (Mack & Rhineberger-Dunn, 2019). Job autonomy means providing employees the freedom to schedule task performance (Lu, Brockner, Vardi & Weitz, 2017). It can also be defined as a responsibility given to employees to make decisions towards tasks performed (Sisodia & Das, 2013). Therefore, job autonomy could provide business educators the freedom to schedule task for better outcomes, develop their abilities to think and be creative and, in turn, lead to better task performance. Performance feedback is defined as information given to employees after their performance, which helps them to improve current task performance (Palmer, Johnson & Johnson, 2015). It represents specific information about the comparison between employee's task performance and their standard. Performance feedback can, therefore, play an important role in reinforcing employees' desirable behaviour towards the implementation of better task performance (Danish & Usman, 2010). As such, performance feedback can be used by HODs to reinforce better task performance of business educators which, in turn, contribute to the objectives of business education programme.

The prevalence of job resources are specifically relevant for business educators because of the complex/demanding nature of their job. Although, several authors have argued that employees in the public sector (which by implication include the business educators in public universities) can be motivated by their job resources (Miao, Rhee & Jun, 2020). For instance, a business educator who exert a high level of freedom in making job decisions, who receive support from HODs/colleagues and who receives feedback on the job done may perform better on the job. It is therefore expected that if a business educator is highly exposed to



job resources, he/she may be happy and satisfied with the job and, in turn, lead to better job performance. Taken together, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), focus on how job resources such as colleagues/HOD support, job autonomy and performance feedback ultimately determine better task performance. This study, therefore, theorize that job resources may predict better task performance. This implies that job resources and task performance can be considered as a salient asset for tertiary institutions. It is on this that this study determined the nexus between colleagues/HOD support, job autonomy, performance feedback and task performance of business educators in universities in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Business educators in the university system in Nigeria perform complicated and multiple job activities, which can be grouped under task performance and contextual performance. Business educators' task performance include imparting knowledge, engaging in research and managing resources. Their contextual performance includes helping colleagues, implementing institutional rules as well as supporting, endorsing and defending institutional goals. If business educators perform their job responsibilities effectively, it would help equip recipients with skills and knowledge to become gainfully employed and lifelong learners upon graduation. However, it has been observed that most employers in Nigeria seem to be complaining about the quality of business education graduates who are deficient in skills to carry out their job activities in the workplace. It seems that the experiences of low job resources and poor job performance as well as other negative work-related outcomes among business educators have led to the issue of skills gap among business education graduates. Despite the numerous studies conducted in developed countries on the nexus between job resources and task performance, there is dearth of such studies in developing countries such as Nigeria that examine whether relationships exist. However, most of the studies were not able to link job resources to task performance. Most of the studies did not focus on business educators as participants and most of them did not also focus on universities in South-South Nigeria as their area of coverage. These are the gaps this study closed.

### **Research Questions**

The following research question guided the study.

1. What is the nexus between colleague/HOD support and task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. What is the nexus between job autonomy and task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria?
3. What is the nexus between performance feedback and task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria?



### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

1. Colleague/HOD supports do not significantly predict task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.
2. Job autonomy does not significantly predict task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.
3. Performance feedback does not significantly predict task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

### **Method**

Correlational survey research design were employed in the study. This research design was suitable for the study because it determines the nexus between job resources and task performance of business educators in different public universities in South-South Nigeria. The entire population of 142 business educators (12 HODs and 130 lecturers) were used for the study without sampling because the size is not too large and can be managed by the researchers. The instruments for data collection are two structured questionnaires, one for HODs and one for lecturers, which were adapted from existing scales. The instrument for lecturers was titled “Questionnaire on Job Resources of Business Educators (QJRBE)” and that of HOSs was titled “Questionnaire on Task Performance of Business Educators (QTPBE)”. Instrument for lecturers comprised of 12 items in three dimensions in line with variables covered. Business educators rated their own experiences of job resources on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 4 = always; 3 = sometimes; 2 = rarely; 1 = never. Instrument for HODs comprised of 25 items, which measure task performance (that is, teaching, research and administration). HODs rated their own experiences of task performance of business educators on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 4=very rarely, 3=rarely, 2=sometimes, and 1=not at all.

The instruments for data collection were subjected to face validity by three experts, two in business education and one in measurement and evaluation. The face validity of the instrument was done with respect to relevance, sentence structure and adequacy. Their corrections were effected in the final copies of the instrument and was reproduced for answering of the research questions and testing of the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. To establish reliability of the instrument, 20 copies of the instrument on job resources were administered on business educators and 20 copies of the instrument on job performance were administered on HODs who were not part of the sample used for the study. Thereafter, Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items of both instruments. The coefficients alpha values provided the reliability for each variable such as job resources ( $\alpha = .950$ ) and task performance ( $\alpha = .953$ ).

Copies of the instruments were distributed personally to the respondents, with the help of six research assistants who were briefed on the procedure to follow. The subjects were contacted via letters before the research instruments were administered on them using direct contact mode. The subjects were allowed to complete the instruments and were given the chance to submit them in two weeks. The questionnaire on job resources were administered on the business



educators since the scales that measure the constructs were self-report measures. Conversely, the questionnaire on task performance were administered on the HODs to respond about the business educators since the scale was an alternate measure. Data were analyzed using inferential statistics such as Pearson correlation matrix, linear regression and bias corrected (BC) bootstrap estimates. Pearson correlation matrix was used to answer the research questions. Linear regression were used to test the research hypotheses.

The decision rule for the use of correlation matrix was based on a range of coefficient value (*r*) as recommended by Uzoagulu (2011) in the following order: Coefficients *r*-value between ± .8 and ± 1.0 means very high relationship; ± .6 and ± .8 means high relationship; ± .4 and ± .6 means moderate relationship; ± .2 and ± .4 means low relationship; ± .0 and ± .2 means very low relationship; ± 1.0 means perfect relationship; and coefficient *r*-value of 0 means no relationship. Note that when a coefficient *r*-value is a negative value, it is a negative relationship; which means also that as one variable increases the other decreases. When a coefficient *r*-value is a positive value, it is a positive relationship; which means that as one variable increases the other increases. For linear regression estimates, probability *p*-value less than or equal to .05 implies significant (reject *H0*) while probability *p*-value greater than .05 implies not significant (accept *H0*).

**Results**

Research Question 1: What is the nexus between colleague/HOD support and task performance of business educators in public universities?

Research Question 2: What is the nexus between job autonomy and task performance of business educators in public universities?

Research Question 3: What is the nexus between performance feedback and task performance of business educators in public universities?

**Table 1: Bivariate Correlations between Job Resources and Task Performance**

S/N	Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Colleague/HOD Support	1				
2.	Job Autonomy	.601**	1			
3.	Performance Feedback	.643**	.655**	1		
4.	Job Resources	.932**	.806**	.834**	1	
5.	Task Performance	.396**	.412**	.399**	.456**	1

Note. \*\**p* < .01, \**p* < .05, *N* = 142.

Table 1 show the data on the bivariate correlations between job resources and task performance. Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient of between variables range from .396 to .655. The correlation between colleague/HOD support and task performance is positively low (*r* = .396). The correlation between job autonomy and task performance is positively moderate (*r* = .412). The correlation



between performance feedback and task performance is positively low ( $r = .399$ ). The correlation between overall job resources and task performance is positively moderate ( $r = .456$ ). In all, there is generally positively moderate relationship between job resources and task performance of business educators.

Hypothesis 1: Colleague/HOD support do not significantly predict task performance of business educators in public universities.

**Table 2: Coefficients of Simple Linear Regression for the Aggregated Colleague/HOD Support Predicting Task Performance**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	Decision
	<i>B</i>	SEB	Beta ( $\beta$ )			
Constant	11.546	3.279		3.521	.001	Reject H0
Colleague/HOD support	1.423	.280	.396	5.081	.000	

$R^2 = .157$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .151$ ,  $F(1, 139) = 25.816$

Results of the data presented in Table 2 show the estimates of coefficient of correlation between Colleague/HOD support and task performance. The Table shows the significant coefficients ( $F = 25.816$ ,  $\beta = .396$ ,  $t = 5.081$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which is also a confirmation of the results obtained in Table 2. The corresponding adjusted r-square (.151) shows that 15.1% of variances in task performance is determined by colleague/HOD support. Thus, colleague/HOD support is found to be a significant but low predictor of task performance of business educators.

Hypothesis 2: Job autonomy does not significantly predict task performance of business educators in public universities.

**Table 3: Coefficients of Simple Linear Regression for the Aggregated Job Autonomy Predicting Task Performance**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	Decision
	<i>B</i>	SEB	Beta ( $\beta$ )			
Constant	8.959	3.605		2.485	.014	Reject H0
Job Autonomy	3.269	.613	.412	5.334	.000	

$R^2 = .170$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .164$ ,  $F(1, 139) = 28.449$

Results of the data presented in Table 3 shows the estimates of coefficient of correlation between job autonomy and task performance. The Table shows the significant coefficients ( $F = 28.449$ ,  $\beta = .412$ ,  $t = 5.334$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which is also a confirmation of the results obtained in Table 3. The corresponding adjusted r-square (.164) shows that 16.4% of variances in task performance is determined by job autonomy. Hence, job autonomy is found to a significant but moderate predictor of task performance of business educators.



Hypothesis 3: Performance feedback does not significantly predict task performance of business educators in public universities.

**Table 4: Coefficients of Simple Linear Regression for the Aggregated Performance Feedback Predicting Task Performance**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		P	Decision
	B	SEB	Beta ( $\beta$ )	T		
Constant	9.744	3.595		2.710	.008	Reject H0
Performance Feedback	3.055	.596	.399	5.129	.000	

$R^2 = .159$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .153$ ,  $F(1, 139) = 26.307$

Results of the data presented in Table 3 show the estimates of coefficient of correlation between performance feedback and task performance. The Table shows the significant coefficients ( $F = 26.307$ ,  $\beta = .399$ ,  $t = 5.129$ ,  $p < .01$ ), which is also a confirmation of the results obtained in Table 3. The corresponding adjusted r-square (.153) shows that 15.3% of the variations in task performance is determined by performance feedback. Hence, performance feedback is found to be a significant but low predictor of task performance of business educators.

### Discussion of Findings

The study examined the nexus between job resources and task performance of business educators in public Universities in South-South Nigeria. The outcome of the study has contributed not only to the study of task performance of business educators, but it also provides the support for the assumptions of job demands-resources theory. Using the inferential statistics of bivariate correlation, the results showed that there is positive low correlation between colleague/HOD support and task performance, positive moderate correlation between job autonomy and task performance, positive low correlation between performance feedback and task performance and positive moderate correlation between job resources and task performance of business educators.

The test of the first hypothesis revealed that colleague/HOD support is found to positively predict task performance, as colleague/HOD support accounts for 15.1% of variations in task performance. Therefore, colleague/HOD support is found to predict task performance of business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This means that when business educators experience high levels of job resources such as receiving support from or providing support to colleagues or HOD, they perform the tasks of teaching, research and administration better. This finding is in line with the study by Min and Yong (2014) who found that colleagues support has a positive influence on task performance. The finding also support the view of Nwanzu and Adams (2019) who argued that healthy employee-employee and leader-employee relationships are necessity for task performance as they are indication of conducive, harmonious work environment which give force to productive work behaviour. The finding also support the studies by Jayaweera (2015) and Lankeshwara (2016) who found that work



environmental factors, which include colleague and supervisor support have a significant interplay with task performance.

The test of the second hypothesis showed that job autonomy is a significant positive predictor of task performance, as job autonomy accounts for 16.4% of the variations in task performance. Therefore, job autonomy is found to positively predict task performance of business educators. This means that when business educators are given the chances to control or the autonomy to make decisions concerning their job, they perform the tasks of teaching, research and administration better. The finding also support a study of Langfred and Moye (2004) who found that job autonomy positively influence task performance. The finding align with the view of Saragih (2011) who argued that job autonomy influences task performance because employees with high job autonomy perceive that they are trusted to perform the task. The finding also support the study of Khoshnaw and Alavi (2020) who reported that job autonomy has a potential role in promoting task performance due to increased job satisfaction, work self-efficacy and mitigate job stress.

The test of the third hypothesis showed that performance feedback is a significant predictor of task performance, as performance feedback accounts for 15.3% of variations in task performance. Therefore, performance feedback is found to positively predict task performance of business educators. This means that when business educators are constantly provided with information concerning how well they are performing on the jobs, will make them to be engrossed with their core technical activities, which include teaching, research and administration. Thus, performance feedback is found to positively predict task performance of business educators. The finding support the view of Koopmans *et al.*, (2011) who reported that performance feedback helps employees to adopt a development-oriented state of mind, leading them to have knowledge about themselves, their behaviour, and ultimately influence their job performance. The finding also support the studies by Evans and Dobrosielska (2019); Wei and Yazdanifard (2014); Zhang, Gong, Zhang and Zhao (2017) and Zheng, Diaz, Jing and Chiaburu (2015) who found that performance feedback is a significant positive predictor of task performance.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the study, the researchers conclude that job resources such as colleague/HOD support is a significant positive predictor of task performance of business educators. The study also conclude that job resources such as job autonomy is a significant positive predictor of task performance of business educators. The study further conclude that job resources such as performance feedback is a significant positive predictor of task performance of business educators.



### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Universities administrators and managers should endeavour to device strategic measures to create challenging and resourceful work environment as this will provide opportunity for business educators to perform better on the job.
2. Business educators and heads of department should endeavour to provide support for their colleagues as this will help to motivate them to be engrossed with their work and, in turn, perform better on the job.
3. Business educators and heads of department should be given the opportunity to control or make decisions concerning their job as this will lead to better performance in the tasks of imparting knowledge, conducting research and managing resources.
4. Heads of department should endeavour to constantly provide information on the job performance of business educators as this will make them to buckle up on their areas of deficiencies and make them to improve more on the areas of better performance.

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