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Staff Mentoring and Job Rotation as Correlates of Lecturers' Task Performance in an Era of Digitization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated staff mentoring and job rotation as correlates of lecturers' task performance in an era of digitilization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Three specific purposes, three research questions, and three hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 4,240 teaching staff (2,778 in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; UNIZIK and 1,462 in Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo; AE-FUNAI). A sample of 424 teaching staff were drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instruments were validated and internal consistency coefficients of 0.88, 0.79, and 0.91 were obtained for LMRS, JRRS, and LTPRS respectively using Cronbach's Alpha statistical method. Out of the 424 copies of the instruments administered, 408 copies (96.22%) were retrieved duly completed, and used for data analysis. The study findings revealed that there is a very strong and significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The findings also revealed that there is a very strong positive and significant correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is a very high positive and significant joint correlation existing among staff mentoring; staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria with R-square value of 0.649 (64.9%) ;and *p*-value of 0.001. Therefore, the study concluded that staff mentoring and job rotation are significant variables that strengthens lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that school management should implement structured mentoring programs that pair experienced lecturers with newer staff to enhance skill development, job satisfaction and task performance.

Keywords: Staff Mentoring; Job Rotation; Lecturers' Task Performance; Digitalization, University.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right that empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills required to succeed in life. It is essential for personal, professional, social, and economic development; and it plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals, communities, and nations. According to Okechukwu et al., (2024), education is one of the most important aspects of human development, as it empowers individuals with knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities. He further maintained that education plays a crucial role in shaping one's personality, providing an understanding of the world and its various aspects, and helping individuals make informed decisions. Like every other educational system in different climes, the Nigerian educational system is systematically structured into primary education, basic education, senior secondary education, and tertiary education. University education in Nigeria is defined as the pinnacle of formal education, aimed at fostering advanced learning, research, and innovation (Okechukwu et al., 2024) According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), University education is pivotal in the development of human resources necessary for socioeconomic growth. The policy outlines several objectives of University education, including the acquisition, development, and inculcation of the proper value-orientation for the survival of the individual and society, the development of the intellectual capabilities of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments, and the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills to enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (FRN, 2013).

University education is a trans-formative process, equipping graduates with the knowledge and skills to contribute to national development. Adebayo & Ayodele (2018) argued that universities are crucial in bridging the gap between academic theory and practical application; which is essential for addressing Nigeria's socioeconomic challenges. Beside, Ugwoke et al., (2020) highlighted the need for universities to innovate in curriculum design to meet the demands of the 21st-century job market and ensure

economic growth. These objectives and recent perspectives underscore the need for continuous reforms to address challenges such as funding, curriculum relevance, and quality assurance and the role of university education in nurturing well-rounded, globally competitive graduates who are capable of driving Nigeria's development; especially in this era of digitalization.

Digitalization is the integration of digital technologies into all areas of an organization, fundamentally changing how operations are conducted and how value is delivered. In the context of educational management and planning in universities, digitalization involves the integration of digital technologies into all aspects of academic and administrative processes, transforming traditional practices to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and innovation (Amin & Ahmad, 2021). This transformation encompasses the digitization of records, the use of online platforms for teaching and learning, and the automation of administrative tasks. Digitalization also supports data-driven decision-making in universities, enabling administrators to analyze patterns in staff performance and professional growth, which can inform more targeted and effective mentoring strategies (Smith & Jones, 2022). Digital tools can streamline the process of job rotation by automating scheduling, tracking skill development, and ensuring that staff members are placed in roles that align with their career goals and the institution’s strategic objectives (Jackson, 2019). Van Laar et al. (2020) asserted that digitalization promotes a culture of continuous learning by providing staff with access to online courses and resources, which can be integrated into mentoring and job rotation programs. Similarly, Jackson (2019) noted that digitalization facilitates more effective staff mentoring and job rotation by providing tools and platforms that enhance communication, collaboration, and continuous professional development. Mentoring programmes can leverage digital platforms to match mentors with mentees, track progress, and provide resources and feedback in real-time, regardless of geographical barriers (Ming, 2020). Thus, digitalization in university management enhances the mentoring process and job rotation by making these systems more

efficient, accessible, and responsive to the needs of staff and the institution. The integration of digital tools not only improves operational efficiency but also fosters a culture of continuous professional development and adaptability in a rapidly changing educational environment (Luthra & Sharma, 2022). Thus, the integration of digital tools in education not only streamlines operations but also contributes to a more effective and responsive learning environment that enhances lecturers' task performance.

Lecturers are responsible for imparting knowledge, skills, and values to their students, and they play a crucial role in shaping the academic and personal development of their students. They not only provide instruction but also guide, motivate, mentor and are responsible for creating a positive learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Chiemeka-Unogu, 2018). The concept of lecturers' task performance refers to how effectively and efficiently lecturers carry out their responsibilities and duties in the classroom and beyond. These tasks may include planning and delivering lessons, assessing students' learning, managing classroom behavior, communicating with parents and colleagues, and participating in professional development (Wang & Zhang, 2019). Suleiman & Albattat (2018) defined lecturers' task performance as the degree to which lecturers fulfill their core teaching responsibilities, including the preparation and delivery of course content, assessment of student performance, and engagement in academic advising and mentoring. Lectures' task performance implies the effectiveness with which lecturers perform their prescribed duties, encompassing instructional activities, research contributions, and administrative responsibilities within the academic institution. Duruji et al. (2020) viewed lecturers' task performance as the extent to which lecturers achieve their assigned academic duties, including teaching, research, and community service, in alignment with institutional goals and student expectations. Hence, the task performance of university lecturers involves the execution of academic and professional duties, including curriculum delivery, research output, and contribution to the governance of the institution, with a focus on achieving educational quality and innovation. Effective task performance by lecturers is critical for

student success, as teachers are responsible for creating a positive and engaging learning environment and ensuring that students are meeting their academic and social-emotional goals. Effective lecturers are able to create a supportive and challenging learning environment, tailor instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, provide timely feedback, and collaborate with colleagues to improve their practice.

The university administrators are primary leader with a responsibility of supervising the activities of the university education for the achievement of the laudable objectives of this level of education as stipulated by the formulated policy on education. Thus, the university administrators tasked with the responsibility of developing the visions that guide the operation of their schools. It is the statement of vision and values defined by the administrators that inspire quality-oriented practices to support constant innovations, changes and developmental programmes that improves lecturers' task performance in schools (Duruji et al., 2020). In different reports, university administrators are accused by stakeholders for inefficiency and failure to utilize available innovative staff development programmes such as staff mentoring and job rotation for improving lecturers' task performance in schools; which in turn has resulted to poor quality inputs and outputs. Duruji et al., (2020) alleged that there is an outcry on lecturers' quality, because university administrators' authority as managerial, technical, and pedagogical heads of universities has become a matter of serious concern. Suleiman & Albattat (2018) also reported that stakeholders attributed the poor quality of university lecturers to inefficiency of the administrators in managing the schools. Joseph et al., (2023) concluded that one major problem which the entire Nigerian educational system has continued to struggle with is that of poor organization and lack of effective management which have continued to serve as a hindrance to educational development (Mustafa & Nurunnabi (2022). From the foregoing explanation, it is imperative to note that lecturers' task performance is more than just teaching in the classroom, It also comprised other activities the lecturers engage outside formal school activities such as helping students

solve their emotional problems; monitoring students out of class activities; involving in extra-curricular activities; among others. These roles lecturers play make their task performance crucial. It is in the light of this, Mustafa & Nurunnabi (2022) stated that lecturers' interactions, views, duties, and behavior play vital role in ensuring achievement in educational institution. The scholars further revealed that lecturers' task performance is the ability of lecturers to execute their primary assignment which includes grooming students into useful living by teaching, training and behavior modification. Also, mentoring is the process of providing guidance, advice, and support to someone who is less experienced or knowledgeable in a particular field. In the academic setting, mentoring refers to a dynamic process wherein senior academic staff provides ongoing professional and personal guidance to less experienced staff, helping them navigate academic responsibilities, career progression, and research development (Sutherland, 2018).

The study by Blandford (2019) described staff mentoring as a professional relationship where an experienced faculty member offers support, knowledge, and advice to a less experienced colleague, with the aim of fostering career development and academic success. Hence, a mentor must be typically an experienced individual who shares their expertise, skills, and knowledge with a mentee, with the goal of helping them develop personally and professionally. Hervie & Winful (2018) defined staff mentoring as a process where an experienced and knowledgeable person (mentor) shares their skills, expertise, and knowledge with a less experienced staff (mentee) to help them grow and develop in a particular area. Mentors may offer support and guidance in areas such as career development, leadership, entrepreneurship, personal growth, and academic success. Staff mentoring in universities involves a structured and supportive relationship where more experienced faculty members' guide, counsel, and support less experienced or junior colleagues to enhance their professional and personal development (Huwe & Johnson, 2020). In the essence, staff mentoring in universities refers to a formal or informal partnership where a senior staff member aids in the career, research, and teaching

development of a junior or less experienced academic, thereby promoting a culture of continuous learning and collaboration. Effective mentoring relationships involve clear communication, trust, respect, and mutual understanding of expectations and goals. Mentors provide feedback, encouragement, and constructive criticism to help their mentees learn and grow, while mentees are expected to be open to learning, receptive to feedback, and willing to take action to achieve their goals. Mentoring is a valuable tool for personal and professional growth and can benefit both the mentor and the mentee. It can lead to increased job satisfaction, career advancement, and improved performance (Oladejo & Oladejo, 2016). The last staff development programme discussed in this study is job rotation.

Job rotation refers to the practice of moving employees between different roles or positions within an organization, usually for a set period of time. It is a human resources strategy in which employees periodically move from one job to another within an organization. This can be a formal program or an informal process, depending on the organization. According to Amiri (2021), job rotation is the movement of employees on different job role which enriches their skills, ability to work on different roles and experience. It a useful human resource management strategy for creating awareness among employees about all types of job performed in their organization. Job rotation is a management technique which is used to shift employee from one job to another in order to make them familiar with all the verticals of an organization (Agbe et al., 2019). The objective of job rotation is to enhance the work experience of the employees, to cross-train them and improve their job satisfaction and preformation. The role of employee job rotation policy is to convey the employees about the job rotation technique used by the organization, rules and regulation associated to the job rotation and frequency of job rotation. The job rotation policies help to reduce the demoralization of employees. As a systematic program which acts as an effective tool to settle employees at right place where they can provide best performance, it also plays an important role to make the organizational outcomes more efficient and

improve the productivity of the employees (Okeleke et al., 2017). Job rotation in educational management and planning is conceptualized as the systematic movement of staff across various roles and departments within a university to enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies (Okechukwu & Nwosu, 2023). This approach enhances skills diversity, fosters cross-functional knowledge, and mitigates job monotony, leading to increased job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness (Ahmad & Shah, 2019). In universities, job rotation also aids in developing leadership competencies and ensures a better understanding of institutional operations (Smith, 2020; Johnson & Williams, 2022). Through engaging staff to different aspects of university operations, job rotation enhances overall institutional effectiveness and innovation (Johnson & Thomas, 2021).

Recent studies highlighted the relationship between staff mentoring, job rotation and employees' engagement. According to Malik & Javed (2019) found that mentoring in Universities significantly enhances job satisfaction among academic staff, fostering a supportive work environment. According to Adeoye & Adanri (2021), staff mentoring programmes in Nigerian Universities led to improved teaching effectiveness, with mentees adopting innovative pedagogical practices. Research by Banjo & Olaleye (2020) revealed that job rotation in Universities promotes skill diversification, allowing staff to acquire competencies in multiple areas of educational management. A study by Mensah & Osei (2022) showed that universities with robust mentoring programmes have higher staff retention rates, as mentoring strengthens organizational commitment. Obi & Ekene (2019) research on job rotation found that job rotation fosters collaboration among departments, as staff gain insights into different functional areas. Similarly, Ekanem & Johnson (2022) reported that universities practicing job rotation demonstrate greater organizational flexibility, as staff are better equipped to handle diverse tasks. Research by Adeyemi & Adeola (2023) indicated that job rotation helps in reducing staff burnout by offering a break from routine tasks and refreshing their work perspective. A study conducted by Yusuf & Abubakar (2024) concluded that job rotation contributes to career development, as staff gain broader

experience and are better prepared for higher roles. Adebayo & Falola (2021) also found that job rotation has a positive impact on job satisfaction by reducing monotony and providing new challenges to staff members. On the contrary, inadequate or lack of opportunities for mentoring and job rotation for members of staff is as good as compromising quality and denying the schools the opportunities for continuous improvement. As a matter of fact, poor mentoring programmes in school organizations signals big challenges to retaining quality lecturers in the educational system such that the institutions stand the risk of gradually becoming brain drained (Uwah & Olusegun; 2021; Johnson & Smith, 2020; Nwosu and Eze, 2023). It is against the foregoing background that this study aimed to investigate staff mentoring and job rotation as correlates of lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate staff mentoring and job rotation as correlates of lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study sought to:

- Determine the correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria;
- Ascertain the correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria; and
- Determine the joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria?
- What is the correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria?
- What is the joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.
- There is no significant correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.
- There is no significant joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Method

Study Design

The study adopted correlational research design. The correlational research design according to Ifeakor (2018) indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between or among the variables of the study rather than explore causal relationship among them. The study was conducted in South-East, Nigeria using federal universities.

Study Population

The population of the study comprised all the 4,240 teaching staff (2,778 in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; UNIZIK and 1,462 in Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo; AE-FUNAI). The sample size for the study was 424 teaching staff (10% of the entire population) drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Teaching staff in each of the university form a stratum from where 10% was drawn. Structured instrument were used for data collection.

Study Instrumentation

The first instrument Lecturers' Mentoring Rating Scale (LMRS) was developed by the researchers and contains two sections, A and B. Section A sought background data of the respondents (teaching staff) on their school. Section B contains 10 items formulated to elicit data on lecturers' mentoring. The second instrument was Job Rotation Rating Scale (JRRS) also developed by the researchers. The instrument also contains 10 items designed to evaluate and elicit data on job rotation in educational contexts. The third instrument was Lecturers' Task Performance Rating Scale (LTPRS) developed by Mbakwe (2022) and was adapted by the researchers. The instrument contained 20 items originally, and was reduced to 15 items after validation. The instrument was designed to elicit data on lecturers' task performance. All the instruments were structured on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 point respectively.

Study Validation Reliability

The instruments were face validated by three experts in Faculty of Education; two lecturers in Educational Management and Policy and one lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Internal consistencies co-

efficient of 0.88, 0.79, and 0.91 were obtained for LMRS, JRRS, and LTPRS respectively using Cronbach Alpha statistical method. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents with the help of six research assistants. Out of the 424 copies of the instruments administered, 408 copies (96.22%) were retrieved duly completed, and used for data analysis. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) statistics and multiple linear regressions were used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The multiple linear regressions were used to determine the joint correlation among the independent variables and the dependent variable of the study. The *p*-value was used to determine the significance of the correlation for all hypotheses. The decision rule was: a null hypothesis was not upheld where the calculated *p*-value was less than the stipulated level of significance (*p*-value <.05). The reverse was the case where the calculated *p*-value was greater than the stipulated level of significance (*p*-value >.05). All analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 25.

Results

Table 1: Pearson correlation analysis on the correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria

Variables	N	Staff mentoring	lecturers' task performance	Remarks
Staff mentoring	408		.806**	Very strong positive correlation
Lecturers' task performance	408	.806**	1.00	

The results in Table 1 show the correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The computed Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value is 0.806, indicating a very strong positive correlation. This means that there is a

very strong positive correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson correlation analysis on the correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria

Variables	N	Staff job rotation	Lecturers' task performance	Remarks
Staff job rotation	408	1.00	.786**	Very strong positive correlation
Lecturers' task performance	408	.786**	1.00	

The summary of data analysis on the correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria presented in Table 2 reveals that the computed Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value is 0.786, implying a very strong positive correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 3: Multiple linear regressions analysis on the joint correlation among staff mentoring, staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria

Variables	N	Lecturers' task performance	Staff mentoring	Staff job rotation	R	Remarks
Staff mentoring	408	.806**	.806**	1		
Staff job rotation	408	.786**	1	.806**		
Lecturers' task performance	408	1	.786**	.786**		
Joint Correlation					**.796***	Very strong positive correlation

The responses of lecturers on the joint correlation among staff mentoring, staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria in Table 3 show that lecturers admitted that correlation exists among the variables listed. The multiple linear

regressions (R) value of .796 implies that the respondents accepted that very high positive relationship exists among the three variables. The results however, indicate that there is very high positive joint correlation existing among staff mentoring; staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 4: Test of significance of Pearson correlation (r) analysis on the correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria

Source of Variation	N	r	r-Cal	t-Crit.	*P-value*	Remark
Staff mentoring	408	.806				
Lecturers' task performance			25.68	1.96	.001	*S

*Significant

Analysis in Table 4 shows that there is a significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The calculated r (0.806) had r-cal value of 25.68 and *p*-value (0.001) which is less than 0.05 level of significance. However, the 1st null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria was not upheld; therefore, the alternative hypothesis was upheld. This signifies that there is significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 5: Test of significance of Pearson correlation (r) analysis on the correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria

Source of Variation	N	r	r-Cal	r-Crit.	*P-value*	Remark
Staff job rotation	258	.786				
Lecturers' task performance			21.79	1.96	.000	*S

*Significant

Analysis in Table 5 shows that there is a significant correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. The calculated r (0.786) had r-cal value of 21.79 and *p*-value (0.000) which is less than 0.05 level of significance. The 2nd null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria was therefore not upheld; consequently, the alternative hypothesis was upheld. This signifies that there is significant correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Table 6: Multiple linear regressions summary analysis on the joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria

Variables	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate	F-value	P-value	A	Remarks
Staff mentoring	.806[a]	.683	.682	6.142				
Job rotation	.786[a]	.618	.617	5.888				
Joint result	**.796[a]**	**.649**	**.648**	**5.704**	**19.575**	**.001[b]**	**.05**	*S

*Significant

The results of the test of hypothesis three reveal that joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria has *p*-value (0.001) which was less than 0.05 level of significance. As a result of these, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria was not upheld while the alternative hypothesis was upheld. However, this indicates that there is significant joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria. More so, the joint R-square value was 0.649, also implies that staff mentoring, job rotation significantly predict 64.9% of lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Discussions of Results

Findings on the correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria displayed in Table 1 revealed that there is a very strong positive correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria with Pearson (r) value of 0.806. Analysis in Table 4 showed that there is significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria; *p*-value of (0.001). That is, the study found a very strong and statistically significant positive correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in Universities in South-East Nigeria, with a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.806 and a *p*-value of 0.001. This high r-value indicates that as the quality or frequency of staff mentoring increases, lecturers' task performance also tends to improve significantly. The *p*-value being less than 0.05 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant, meaning it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. These findings suggest that effective mentoring programmes could be a crucial strategy for enhancing lecturers' performance, leading to potential improvements in teaching quality, research output, and overall educational outcomes in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Consequently, university administrators and policymakers might consider prioritizing staff mentoring initiatives to foster academic excellence and productivity.

The findings above are in agreement with the findings of an earlier study by Ogechi & Okeke (2021) which found a strong positive correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance. The authors argued that effective mentoring enhances lecturers' skills and productivity by providing guidance, support, and feedback, which directly improves their performance. Similar results were equally found in related studies by Nwafor & Eze (2023) which reported a significant positive relationship between mentoring and task performance among lecturers. The study emphasized that

mentoring programmes contribute to professional development and increased motivation, leading to better performance outcomes. Conversely, the findings of this study did not agree with Ijeoma & Chukwu (2022) which found no significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance. The authors suggested that the lack of impact might be due to inadequate implementation of mentoring programmes, inconsistencies in mentorship quality, or a mismatch between mentoring styles and individual lecturers' needs. The disagreement in findings might stem from variations in the implementation and quality of mentoring programmes across different institutions. Inconsistent or poorly executed mentoring practices might fail to produce the desired performance improvements, which could explain the lack of correlation observed in Ijeoma & Chukwu's (2022) study. Besides, the effectiveness of mentoring can be influenced by individual differences among lecturers and their responsiveness to different mentoring approaches.

Consequently, the findings in Table 2 showed that there is a very strong positive correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria with Pearson (r) value of 0.806. In Table 5, the findings also revealed that there is significant correlation between staff mentoring and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria; *p*-value of (0.000). The study findings indicated a very strong and significant positive correlation between staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in universities in South-East, Nigeria, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.786 and a *p*-value of 0.000. This Pearson value of 0.786 suggests that as job rotation increases, there is a strong tendency for lecturers' task performance to improve, implying that the exposure to different roles and responsibilities may enhance their skills, adaptability, and overall effectiveness. The *p*-value of 0.000 indicates that this result is statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance, reinforcing the reliability of the finding. The implications of this study suggest that universities

might consider implementing or expanding job rotation programs as a strategic approach to improve lecturers' performance, which could, in turn, enhance the overall quality of education and institutional effectiveness.

The findings above correspond with the study of Oluwaseun &Adeyemi (2021) whose study found a significant positive correlation between job rotation and lecturers' task performance. The researchers concluded that job rotation enhanced lecturers' skills and knowledge, thereby improving their overall performance. The findings are also in line with the eairliar findings of Chukwu & Nwankwo (2023) who found reported a strong positive relationship between job rotation and the performance of lecturers. The researchers attributed the improvement in performance to increased job satisfaction and reduced monotony. In contrast, the findings were not supported by Adamu & Eze (2022) whose study did not find a significant correlation between job rotation and lecturers' task performance. The authors suggested that while job rotation can be beneficial, it may not always translate into improved performance due to the varying adaptability of lecturers to new roles and responsibilities. The disagreement between the studies might have been that Adamu & Eze (2022) study was conducted in different settings or universities, where the impact of job rotation on performance might vary. It could also be as a result of differences in research design, sample size, and measurement instruments which could also lead to divergent results.

The results as shown in Table 3 indicated that there is very high positive joint correlation existing among staff mentoring; staff job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria with Regressions value (R = 0.836). Table 6 showed that there is significant joint correlation among staff mentoring, job rotation and lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in universities in South-East, Nigeria with R-square value of 0.649 (64.9%) ;and *p*-value of 0.001. The empirical study findings reveal a very strong and significant joint correlation

among staff mentoring, staff job rotation, and lecturers' task performance in universities in South-East, Nigeria, with a Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.796, an R-square (R^2) value of 0.648, and a *p*-value of 0.001. This means that 64.8% of the variability in lecturers' task performance can be explained by the combined effects of staff mentoring and job rotation, indicating a robust predictive relationship. The *p*-value of 0.001 further confirms the statistical significance of this correlation, suggesting that the observed relationship is not due to random chance, meaning there is a very low probability (0.1%) that this observed correlation is due to chance. The implications of these findings are profound, emphasizing the importance of structured mentoring programs and job rotation schemes in enhancing lecturers' performance, which can lead to improved educational outcomes and institutional effectiveness in the region.

Additionally, in consistent with the findings of this study, Akinmoladun & Ojo (2020) found a strong positive correlation between staff mentoring, job rotation, and performance, attributing improved task performance to the effective implementation of these practices. And the study by Chukwu & Nwankwo (2021) opined that staff mentoring and job rotation significantly enhance lecturers' performance through increased job satisfaction and skill diversity. Incidentally, the findings of this study disagrees with the results obtained from previous study conducted on the same subject matter. For example, Eze & Obi (2019) found that there was no significant joint correlation among job rotation, mentoring and job performance; suggesting that while job rotation and mentoring individually impact productivity, and their combined effect is not as strong as previously suggested. The disagreement in findings might be due to differences in the sample size, study design, or contextual factors such as institutional culture and resource availability. Variations in the implementation and effectiveness of mentoring and job rotation programmes could also contribute to differing results.

Conclusion

The study findings revealed a very strong and significant positive correlation among staff mentoring, staff job rotation, and lecturers' task performance in Universities in South-East Nigeria. This suggests that effective mentoring and strategic job rotation practices significantly enhance lecturers' performance, contributing to overall academic excellence. The implications are fundamental, highlighting the need for Universities to prioritize these practices as part of their faculty development programmes. Fostering an environment where mentorship and job rotation are integral could enhance universities lecturers' skills, job satisfaction, and productivity. These findings underscore the importance of institutional policies that support continuous professional development; hence, leading to improved educational outcomes. Thus, the study concluded that staff mentoring and job rotation are significant variables that strengthens lecturers' task performance in an era of digitalization in Universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

- School management should implement structured mentoring programs that pair experienced lecturers with newer staff to enhance skill development, job satisfaction and task performance.
- Lecturers should engage actively in mentoring relationships and job rotation opportunities to diversify teaching methods and improve performance.
- Policy Makers should develop and enforce policies that support regular job rotation and mentoring initiatives, ensuring they are integrated into the institutional framework.
- Students should provide feedback on mentoring and teaching methods to help institutions assess the effectiveness of these programmes in improving lecturer performance.

- Community members should support and participate in university-community partnerships that foster mentoring and professional development opportunities for lecturers.

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