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Regular Staff Training and Innovative Academic Thesis Supervision Skills among University Lecturers in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Staff training and retraining remains a central part of employees' performance discussions either at the academic or policy level. This is largely because just as materials and methods continue to witness constant change, the human side of organization also requires capacity upgrade to improve on skills and by extension the performance of the organization. This study examines the link between regularity of staff training and how this affects project supervision among teaching staff of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State, Nigeria. To achieve this aim, three objectives were formulated to guide the study. 228 respondents were sampled using the Taro Yamane formula and the stratified and simple random sampling techniques were adopted to select the participants for the study. A self-designed questionnaire was deployed for data collection and the information gathered were analyzed using percentages for the research questions and the Chi-square statistical technique for the hypotheses. Based on the analysis, the study found that even though respondents agree that there is a relationship between the regularity of staff training and the capacity of academic staff with regard to training, the reality is that the University hardly designs trainings that are targeted at addressing supervision skills. This has strong adverse implications for the quality of supervision that most lecturers offer o the students especially entry level academics. Therefore, the study recommends that the University should ensure that internal workshop on a train the trainer basis is conceived and implemented to ease cost.

Keywords: Staff training, Capacity, Academics, Supervision skills, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of staff is very critical to the performance of the employees on the one hand and to the organization on the other hand. Hence, the basic aim of training in any sector, including the education sector, is to ensure that employees are up-to-date in terms of the skills that they require in order to stay resourceful when it comes to performing their tasks effectively. This scenario of progressive updating the skills of employees is particularly important in an era where rapid technological innovations now define the world of work. This reality of ensuring that manpower keeps pace with innovative technologies in any organization is also necessary for the education sector especially because teachers represent the frontend deliverers of these innovative technologies.

In other words, teachers are more likely the ones to introduce innovative technologies to students all over the world. This is why Lassa (2017) shared the opinion that in education, teachers

are the foundation of quality; they hold trust for the implemented curriculum of formal education and therefore, are at the heart of any growth potential in society. While there is the saying that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Fagade, 2014), it is our opinion that no society can rise above the quality of its education sector. This is perhaps why most first world societies as is the case with the United Kingdom, United States of America, China among others, have significant budgetary allocations to research and development which is domiciled in the various higher education institutions as well as research centres.

To sustain a healthy regime of research and development activities that is relevant enough to feed into a society's growth and aspirations, there is need to ensure that staff of every higher education institution are largely acquainted with the dominant technological innovations of the time. Consequently, in this age of information technology, the need for staff training and retraining on a regular basis is particularly very important if the education system is to stay apace the progress in other sectors of society. Interestingly, this is very critical for countries in Africa that are mostly recipients and or consumers of modern innovative technologies from the west. Raja, Furqan and Khan (2019) contend that training has become the most important factor in the business world today, because training increases the efficiency and the effectiveness of both employees and organizations.

This is because training provides a strong platform for the systematic restructuring of employees' behaviour, attitude and skills through learning, education, instruction and planned experience. Training is designed to change or improve the behaviour of employees in the work place so as to stimulate efficiency.

The need for regular staff training and retraining Staff training is no longer an issue of debate among scholars of human resource management and it is now an accepted phenomenon in organizations. Moreover, its relevance in the education sector is considered to be very critical when compared to other sectors of society (Fritz, 2022). Hence, in the tertiary education institutions, lecturers' development programmes are considered very critical if they are to deliver effectively when it comes to pedagogical activities. The need for lecturers to improve their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours while on the job is even more critical now for developing nations like Nigeria than ever before mostly because of the lag-factor in catalyzing a country-specific industrial revolution which has made the country an ape-society or a dependent one when it comes to technology. This backbench approach to technological development that has placed Nigeria and other developing societies in Africa at the bottom of the technology food-chain further imposes huge constraints in terms of institutionalized deployment and use of modern technology even in the education sector. This has created a scenario where teachers are left to independently improve on their skills in order to catch up with the progress of technology. Interestingly, this is often difficult to achieve at the individual level due mostly to the paltry salaries of the lecturers who have other contending or even more pressing demands like the publish or perish burden on their salaries. This notwithstanding, it is important to point out that apart from the small salary that lecturers receive, there are those amongst the academic staff that are largely averse to technological knowledge and this also imposes problems for innovative pedagogy in the higher institutions of learning (Johnson, 2016).

The relevance of improved skills in terms of the use of modern technologies in the education sector became very obvious during the peak of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), where almost all schools were shut down by the government as part of the measures to contain the spread of the virus (Raimi, 2020). Since then, technologies that aid remote learning and supervision of students have gradually become part of the learning interface of teachers and students. In fact, there are schools that now operate hybrid systems of teaching and learning in most parts of the world

(Nolte, 2022). Interestingly, most lecturers in Nigeria still find it hard to integrate the use of electronic modes of learning especially those that allow for remote project, thesis or dissertation supervision. This is particularly worrisome given that electronic based platforms for editorials and supervision of thesis and dissertations provide enabling conditions that not only reduces cost, but also makes supervisor and supervisee interface a lot easier.

However, while a good number of existing literature on staff training and retraining in the tertiary education institution have all focused on the general issue of performance (Fagade, 2014; Johnson, 2016), nothing has been done to understand how institutionalized trainings can improve the quality of academic supervisions in Nigerian universities. This clearly reveals a gap in existing knowledge on the link between staff training and performance in the education sector. As a result, this study is undertaken to fill this gap in knowledge by examining the issue of regular staff training and innovative academic supervision skills among university lecturers in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State, Nigeria. Essentially, the study will provide answers to the following questions; how regular are teaching staff of ESUT trained on the use of modern education-related technologies? What is the level of knowledge and use of modern electronic platforms to supervise students' projects, thesis or dissertations by academic staff in ESUT? What challenges tend to limit the knowledge level, access and use of electronic platforms of academic supervision by lecturers in ESUT?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

i. Determine the regularity of training in the use of modern education-related technologies that teaching staff of ESUT undergo
ii. Find out the level of knowledge and use of modern electronic platforms to supervise students' projects, thesis or dissertations by academic staff in ESUT
iii. examine the challenges that tend to limit the knowledge level, access and use of electronic platforms of academic supervision by lecturers in ESUT

Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is likely to be a significant positive difference in students' project, thesis and dissertation supervision if lecturers in ESUT undergo regular capacity building on the use of modern education technologies.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

From the broad review of the literature on human capital development, it is observable that there is a consensus on the fact that education is the key to human capital development (Johnson, 2016). Much as this is case several approaches have been used to get teachers in the education sector to grow in in order for them to perform their jobs more effectively. These approaches such as seminars, conferences and other related knowledge-based workshops (Fatoyi, 2018) have gained momentum as tools and avenues for training and building the capacity of academic staff. In this sense, work-related seminars and conferences have become a part of staff training strategy especially in terms of building capacity of workers in subject or discipline specific areas (Bentley, 2019).

The literature refers to conferences and seminars that are aimed at building human capital in specific discipline or subject area as professional development training (Ogujuiba & Adeniyi, 2014; Faruk, 2018). According to Faruk, modern organizations use conferences, workshops and seminars to target specific areas that their employees require support in order for them to be more productive in

their various roles in the company. In this case, it then becomes a full management strategy to carryout employee needs assessment or what has been referred to as training needs of workers to determine the areas where employees are lacking in skills and by extension provide adequate interventions through seminars, workshops and conferences or other mediums.

Raja, Furqan and Khan (2019), contend that teachers' training through workshops, conferences and seminars has become the most important factor in the education world today, because these mediums serve to increase the efficiency and the effectiveness of both teachers and the education system. They provide a basis for a systematic restructuring of behaviour, attitude and skills through learning, education, instruction and planned experience. Seminars and conferences are designed to change or improve the behaviour and skills of employees in the work place so as to stimulate efficiency. The cardinal purpose is to assist the organization to achieve its short and long term objectives by adding value to its human capital. Seminars and conferences as part of teachers' training processes are not undertaken for no reason, but rather they are structured and designed to achieve some targeted needs of specific category of teachers. Therefore, seminars and workshops are training standards that are based on needs in the sense that they are undertaken to fill some knowledge gap in human capacity within the school setting and other organizations.

Sponsoring seminars and workshops as a method of staff training has become an accepted phenomenon in organizations (Olajide, 2016). In the education sector for instance, capacity building programmes for teachers are considered very critical. They are planned activities which focus on increasing and enlarging the capabilities, improving the technical and conceptual skills of teachers so that they can possess the necessary abilities to handle complex pedagogical activities and better perform their jobs. Through these activities, government ensures that their public school teachers avoid becoming rustic and underproductive.

In the light of the above, teachers in higher education of learning need to keep abreast of the time and the trends of knowledge development in their discipline so as not to become obsolete and made redundant. The ultimate goal of sponsoring teachers to attend seminars, conferences and workshops howbeit local or international is for the enhancement of job satisfaction and the optimization of new skills, talent and task accomplishment (Jones, 2018). In addition, Jones stressed that training of teachers in the education sector should be geared towards acquiring or sharpening the capabilities of the teachers required in performing various obligations, tasks, and functions associated with or related to their present or future expected roles in the school. Similarly, Peretomode and Peretomode (2001) have identified the benefits of seminars and conferences to include increase in knowledge, skills and the development of positive attitude to work, increased personal and organizational productivity, and quality services. It can bring about improvement in morale, inculcate sense of belongingness, reduce absenteeism and turnover rate among teachers, and importantly lead to better coordination of both human and material resources within the school organization.

Apart from seminars and conferences, online training is gaining ground as a contemporary platform for building capacities of individuals in organizations. The best organizations are those that are dynamic enough to adapt to the changes in its environment. As a result, the progress in technology especially the information and communications technology (ICT) has provided a platform where organizations can benefit significantly in terms of training needs without necessarily having to move their staff miles around the world. According to Olajide (2016) in the changing phase of the market, all organizations have a number of opportunities to grab and number of challenges to meet. Due to such environment, the dynamic organizations are smoothly surviving in the present competition. In other words, dynamic organizations see training as a tool that can help in gaining competitive advantage. As Fatoyi (2018) has observed, training proves to be a parameter for enhancing the ability of the workforce for achieving the organizational objectives.

The above notwithstanding, training options for organizations especially the education sector are becoming more and more encapsulated within the philosophy of globalization especially with the notion of small village. Based on this, organizations especially schools tend to take full advantage of the ICT platform for online courses that are relevant to the immediate and long term benefit of teachers. Therefore, schools use e-learning platforms to sponsor their teachers to undertake courses that are most times certified as a way of building the capacity of the teachers. Johnson (2016) is of the opinion that advancement in ICT has provided an avenue where all teaching staff can have access to a list of university affiliated professional courses either under sponsorship from the school or on an individual basis. This he says provides the enabling conditions for human capital development in the education sector. Nevertheless, Fatoyi (2018) though acknowledging the usefulness of e-learning or online courses for human capital development, highlighted some barriers to the process. According to him, barriers to online courses as a platform for human capital development for teachers include the distance and substance involved in delivering such training needs. This is why Fatoyi found 'blended' models of online course in human capital development to be the most successful, combining the convenience of online platforms with the advantages that come from learning in groups with ready, interactive access to mentors, tutors, and other learning support services, on either a face-to-face basis or through videoconferencing technologies.

It is important to note that comprehensive induction and orientation to technology, and on-going technological guidance are fundamental to successful innovative trainings of teachers. Technologies now enable the modification of e-learning templates to include local issues, business or situation specific scenarios, locally relevant examples, problems and questions, as well as material to be customized for diverse target population. The most successful programmes see information and computer technologists come together with experienced teachers or industry trainers to talk through the specific needs of teaching staff through an online course programme. The best programmes are custom built for the target learner group, and actively address issues around access and equity. While innovative technology training for teachers is critical, there are several limitations that continue to undermine progress especially in the university system in Nigeria. This notwithstanding, there is every need for the Nigerian lecturers or academics to flow with the tide of progress in innovation and technology. This is why a study of this nature is necessary to unearth the level of capacity of lecturers when it comes to using innovative electronic platforms for academic supervision.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the Human Capital Theory as proposed by Schultz (1961) and developed extensively by Becker (1994). Becker has explained in his publication titled "*Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis"* made a special reference to education. According to him, the theory was developed due to the realization that the growth of physical capital has only small role of growth in the growth of income. Relatively, the emergence of education and skills training in military technology has also played an important part in the discovery of this theory. Human capital theory has its roots in labour economics which is a branch of economics focused on the study of workforce in general and more specifically on cost-benefit analysis of training and education. Becker (1994) developed the human capital theory based on Schutlz's research on return-on-investment. Becker also introduced the concept of general-purpose human capital and firm-specific human capital that is widely used by human resource development practitioners worldwide. Today, the theory has crept into many mainstream academic disciplines especially due to internal proliferation of such disciplines especially in the social and management sciences. Sociology for instance, benefited from the knowledge of human capital theory with the emergence of sociology of work organizations or industry and economic sociology.

The basic assumption of the human capital theory suggests that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers' future income by increasing their lifetime

earnings (Becker, 1994). In addition, it postulates that expenditure on training and education is costly, and should be considered an investment since it is undertaken with a view to increasing personal incomes. The theory has both micro and macro level assumptions. At the micro level, the theory postulates that an individual bears the costs (direct costs such as fees paid and indirect costs such as opportunity cost on student time) of education because s/he expect that this investment will create a future stream of benefits to him/her (higher productivity and thus higher wages). There's a significant bulk of literature and research to underscore this fact: For instance, Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2004) study *"Human capital and rates of return"* conclude that educational quality, (measured by cognitive skills) has a strong impact on individual earnings, moreover educational quality has a strong and robust influence on economic growth with "significant causal relationships". Other studies have also concluded that skills have an increasing impact on the distribution of income and that the income distribution becomes more dispersed in reflection of growing rewards to individual skills (Levy & Murnane, 2015).

At the macro level, Robert (2001) developed a human capital model which shows that education and the creation of human capital is responsible for both the differences in labour productivity and the differences in overall levels of technology that we observe in the world today. This, according to him, explains the spectacular growth in East Asia that has given education and human capital their current popularity in the field of economic growth and development. Countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan have achieved unprecedented rates of economic growth while making large investments in education. In other words, education was an important determinant of economic growth. Levy and Murnane (2015) found that the increase in schooling of the average worker explained about one fourth of the rise in per capita income in the United States. Even in African countries such as Kenya, education contributed more to economic development, particularly in the phase up to the mid-1970s during which the economy grew at a comparable rate to the economies of East Asia and when agricultural improvements benefited from educational advance (Bentley, 2019).

The underlying assumption of human capital theory that continuous skills training and education for employees whether at the micro or macro level of the organization aligns significantly to the principles of teachers training. This is because, as teachers engage in human capacity building, they improve on their skills and knowledge to deliver effectively. This progress in the ability to deliver, promotes the individual teachers especially by positioning them for progressive increase on-the-job. In addition to individual growth, human capacity building for teachers also facilitates increase in performance of teachers and this contributes to high productivity for the learning institution involved. In light of this, the human capital theory represents the most valuable theory for this study.

Methods

This study adopts the survey research design. The area of study is Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) located in Enugu State in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. The population of the teaching staff is 532. The sample size for this study is 228 derived using the Taro Yamane formula thus. The study adopts the stratified and simple random sampling techniques. First, the teachings staff were stratified according to job position or cadre such as professors' cadre (including associate professors), senior lecturer, lecturer I, Lecturer II, and Assistant Lecturers. On the other hand, the simple random technique adopting the ballot method was deployed to select the respondents. The modified four-point Likert Scale questionnaire instrument was used to collect data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed using percentages and frequencies for the research questions and Chi-Square statistical technique for the hypothesis.

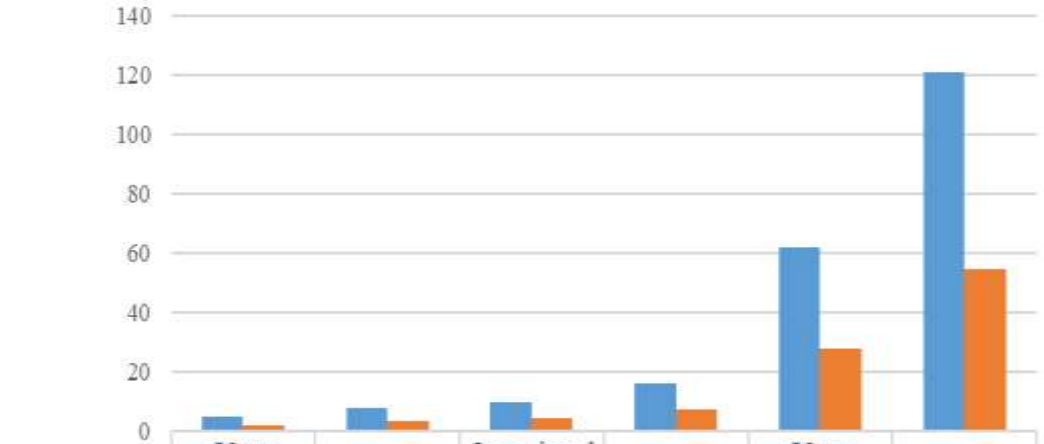
Results

The data presentation and analysis of findings was done focusing solely on the substantive information and leaving out the socio-demographic aspect of the data. Hence, the first section deals with presentation and analysis of the research questions.

Evaluation of Research Questions

Research Question 1: How regular are teaching staff of ESUT trained on the use of modern education-related ICT?

Fig. 1: The regularity of training for academic staff in the use of modern education-related ICTs platfoms

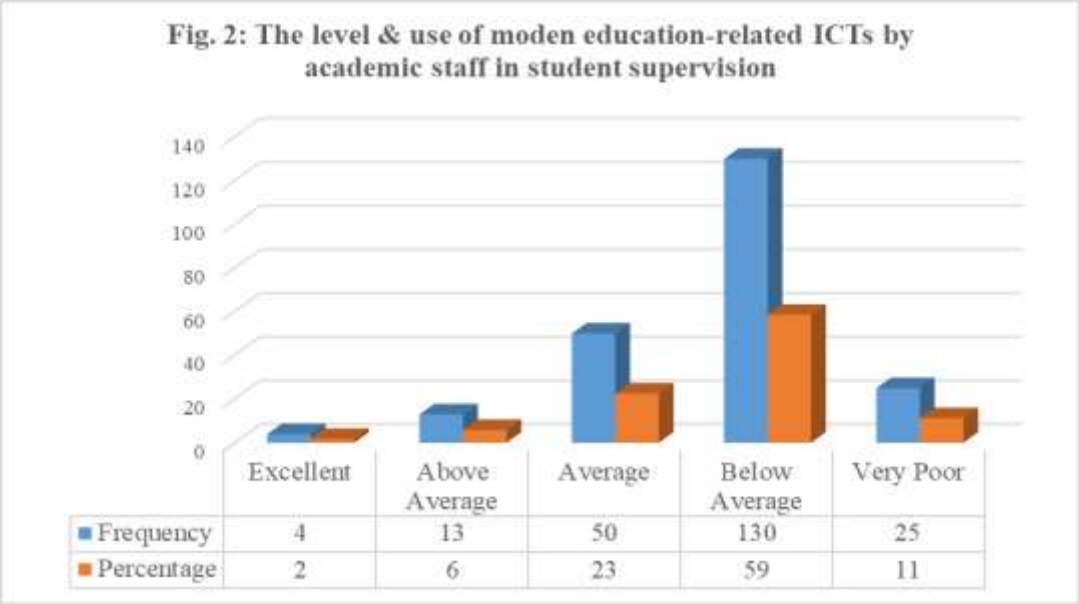


	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Very Rarely	Never
Frequency	5	8	10	16	62	121
Percentage	2	4	5	7	28	55

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2022

Fig. 1 above present information on the frequency or regularity of training for academic staff in ESUT concerning the use of modern education-related Information Communications Technology platforms. The data in the chart revealed that 5(2%) of the respondents believed that such trainings are very frequent. Others (8/4%) noted that trainings on ICT use are frequently done, 10(5%) of the respondents said occasionally, 16(7%) of them said rarely, 62(28%) of them said such trainings are very rare, while over 50% of the respondents (precisely 121/55%) said ICT related trainings have ever been done in ESUT. While those that said that such trainings have never been done presents a represents a staggering figure, it may just mean that most of them a new staff who have never been part of such trainings before. Yet, this clearly suggest that the trainings are not regular at all.

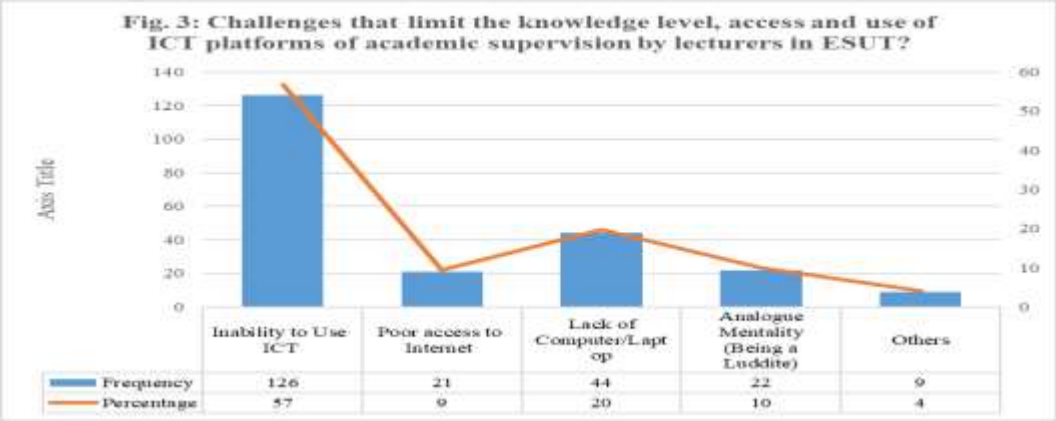
Research Question 2: What is the level of knowledge and use of modern ICT platforms to supervise students' projects, thesis or dissertations by academic staff in ESUT?



Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2022

Fig. 2 on the other hand shows data relating to the level and use of modern education-related ICT platforms to supervise students' project, thesis and or dissertations by academic staff in ESUT. Note that this may be determined not just by ESUT enabled trainings, but also personal attempts at scaling up capacity by the staff. Based on the data gathered and presented in the chart above, it is easy to see that 4(2%) out of the total respondents said the use of ICT enabled education platforms by lecturers to supervise their students' excellent, 13(6%) of them said it is above average, 50(23%) of them said it is average, 130(59%) of them said it is below average, 25(11%) of the respondents believe that the level and use of such platforms for academic supervision of students' works is very poor. This clearly show that teachers or academic staff in ESUT rarely use education related ICT platforms to supervise the academic works of their students.

Research Question 3: What challenges tend to limit the knowledge level, access and use of ICT platforms of academic supervision by lecturers in ESUT?



Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2022

Fig. 3 above provides insight into the data gathered on the challenges that tend to limit the knowledge level, access and use of ICT platforms of academic supervision by lecturers in ESUT.

Drawing from the data presented in the Figure, it is easy to see that 126(57%) of the respondents believe that their inability to use ICT related platforms for their jobs is a huge limitation, 21(9%) of them said the challenge is poor access to Internet facilities, 44(20%) of the respondents point to lack of computer and or laptop as their limitation, 22(10%) of them said the problem is the relative analogue mentality of lecturers, while 9(4%) of the respondents said their may be other challenges.

Test of Hypothesis

This section deals with the test of research hypotheses that were formulated in this study. The various hypotheses are tested below using the Chi-Square statistical technique.

Ho_1: There is likely to be a significant positive difference in students' project, thesis and dissertation supervision if lecturers in ESUT undergo regular capacity building on the use of modern education technologies.

Table 1.1: Regularly training academic staff on how to use modern education technologies may improve on the supervision skills in ESUT

	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Male	83	43	11	2	139
Female	41	19	12	11	83
Total	124	62	23	13	222

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2022

Table 1.1 above provides data on whether regular academic staff training especially in the use of modern education technologies could lead to improvements in their supervision skills. The data from the table reveals 124 of the respondents strongly agreed, 62 of them agree, 23 of them disagree, while 13 of the strongly disagree. This data is further subjected to a Chi-Square statistical test in Table 1.2 below.

Category of Respondents	O	E	O-E	(O-E)2	(o-e/e)2
Male	83	77.64	5.36	28.73	0.37
	43	38.82	4.18	17.47	0.45
	11	14.40	-3.40	11.57	0.80
	2	8.14	-6.14	37.70	4.63
Female	41	46.36	-5.36	28.73	0.62
	19	23.18	-4.18	17.47	0.75
	12	8.60	3.40	11.57	1.35
	11	4.86	6.14	37.70	7.76
Chi-Square	$\chi 2$=				16.73

**Degree of freedom =3; Chi-Square Table value =7.81.; Chi-Square Calculated Value=16.73*

Decision rule: Accept null hypothesis if calculated value is less than table value and reject alternate hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value.

Interpretation*:* Since the calculated value for $\chi 2$ is 16.73 and table value is 7.81, revealing that the former is higher than the latter, the hypothesis which states that "There is likely to be a significant

positive difference in students' project, thesis and dissertation supervision if lecturers in ESUT undergo regular capacity building on the use of modern education technologies" is hereby accepted and upheld. Hence, since the margin between the computed $\chi 2$ value is significantly higher than the table value, it is safe to make the submission that academic staff in ESUT are likely to do better and make significant improvements in their supervision of students' project, thesis and dissertations if regular trainings on the use of modern education-related ICT platforms are held for them.

FINDINGS

The first finding of this study relates to research question 1 which is how regular are teaching staff of ESUT trained on the use of modern education-related technologies? and objective 1 which is to determine the regularity of training in the use of modern education-related technologies that teaching staff of ESUT undergo. The data in this regard were presented and analyzed using Fig. 1 above and the results that followed revealed that a significant number of the respondents amounting to 55% believed that staff trainings on the use of modern education-related ICT platforms have never held. Now while this is a strong proof of the absence of such trainings in the study area, it nevertheless could mean that most of the staff who provided this response may have been new staff. Despite this observation, this also clearly means that academic staff trainings for staff are very rarely embarked upon. This finding corroborates that of Fagade (2014) who also found that most tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria seldom carry out on-the-job capacity building for their staff apart from the intermittent TETFund conferences and trainings that are not equally spread to meet staff training needs.

The second finding relates to research question 2 which is what is the level of knowledge and use of modern electronic platforms to supervise students' projects, thesis or dissertations by academic staff in ESUT? and the objective related to this is to find out the level of knowledge and use of modern electronic platforms to supervise students' projects, thesis or dissertations by academic staff in ESUT. Again, following the data collection, presentation and analysis as reflected in Fig. 2 above, the results led to the finding that indicates the level and use of modern ICT platforms by lecturers in ESUTH to be relatively below average as suggested by 59% of the respondents. It should be restated here that this is not just a measure of the effect of the near absence of institutionally enabled capacity building programmes, but also based on personal quest to scale up capacity by the lecturers. The finding also corroborates that of Fagade (2014) who revealed in his own study that over 69% of staff in tertiary institutions rarely use ICT platforms that are computer, smartphone and internet enabled. This according to him limits the performance of such staff and the institutions in general. This finding is a clear justification of the assumption of the human capital theory as espoused by Becker (1994) which hold that education and continuous training for staff promotes high productivity rate in any organization. This also supports that outcome of the hypothesis test that led to the submission that academic staff in ESUT will perform better and make huge improvements in supervision of students' projects, thesis and dissertations if regular training on the use of modern education-related ICT platforms is instituted.

Finally, the last finding deals with the research question which relates to the challenges that tend to limit the knowledge level, access and use of electronic platforms of academic supervision by lecturers in ESUT. Based on the data presented and analyzed in Fig. 3 above, the finding exposed several challenges that undermine the ability of academic staff to use education-related ICT platforms in the course of the supervision of their students. However, the most pressing challenges according to frequency of response are staff inability to use ICT platforms effectively and the lack of access to computer and or laptops for staff. Again, this clearly supports the findings of Fagade (2014) and Lasssa (2017) who in their findings both noted that a good number of staff in higher institutions

of learning barely have modern technologies and where they do, they still fall short of the requisite skills to use them effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study examined the link between regular staff training and innovative academic thesis supervision skills among University Lecturers in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, it is safe to conclude that academic staff in ESUT are rarely exposed to trainings that are aimed at building their capacity to effectively use modern Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to meet the current way of work in terms of supervising academic projects, thesis and dissertations of their students. Those who know how to use these platforms had to learn how to use them on their own or may have been part of one training or too in the distant past organized by the University. This clearly presents some huge challenges for academics in the University especially in an era where physical interface is proving to be less fashionable given the experience that we had with the COVID-19 global pandemic that is just easing off in a relative sense.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings of this study, the following three suggestions have been proffered to improve on the capacity of academic staff with regard to knowledge and use of ICTs for academic supervisions.

i. *Train the Trainer Approach ESUT Management*: Given the fact that there is a clear indication of huge paucity of funds in most public universities in the country with ESUT not likely to be an exception, the management of the University can adopt a train the trainer approach where a cluster of young and intellectually sound academics can be the front-end beneficiaries of a well-organized institution-based training. Then these beneficiaries can be deployed and given minimal funding to train their colleagues on a departmental basis and this can be done in any of the regular departmental meetings to avoid crashing into lecture times.

ii. *Partnerships & Collaboration*: In addition, ESUT management can broker partnerships and enter into collaborations with ICT related private corporations to facilitate access to computers and internet facilities for their staff in a subsidized manner that reduces cost. This will go a long way to address the challenge of not having computers and or laptops as expressed by respondents.

iii. *Personal Growth Drive*: While the modern institutions pride themselves in ensuring institutional-enabled support for state of the art training for their staff, it is sadly not the case especially for public tertiary education institutions in Nigeria. This is why staff on their part should endeavour to look beyond the institution and pursue opportunities for personal capacity development. Using modern ICT platforms for academic supervision has strong benefits for both the lecturers and students alike.

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