



Differential Influence of Creative Involvement on Life Satisfaction among Junior and Senior Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

*Achieving life satisfaction is perhaps the most important concern of academic staff in universities. Life satisfaction impacts the performance of employees and the quality of education provided. It is therefore relevant to examine factors that could impact life satisfaction among university academic staff. Hence, this paper examined the creative involvement and life satisfaction of junior and senior academic staff in Nigerian Universities. Three hundred and eighty two academic staff 382 staff selected through the stratified random sampling technique constituted the sample. Demographic Data Inventory (DDI), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and Creative Involvement Scale (CIS) were used for data collection. Three hypotheses were analyzed using regression and Pearson's *r*. tests were carried out at the .05 alpha level. Findings showed significant differential impact of creative involvement on life satisfaction ($\beta = .228, t = 10.105, p < .05$), significant contribution of creative involvement to life satisfaction for both junior ($\beta = .192; t = 7.529; p < .05$) and senior ($\beta = .207; t = 7.982; p < .05$) academic staff in Nigerian universities, and significant direct correlations between creative involvement and life satisfaction.*

Keywords: *Creative Involvement, Life Satisfaction, Academic Staff.*

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Introduction

All human activities from the cradle to the grave seem to be directed towards enhancing their life satisfaction as everyone is concerned with how to get the best out of life irrespective of their statuses or positions. Universities as institutions of learning designed to produce high level manpower for various sectors of the economy often depend largely on the quality of their staff especially the academic staff members who are expected to carry out various academic functions. Universities play a significant role in the training and development of human resources required for national and international development (Kyreaa, 2014).

Specifically, universities are expected to provide a training ground for individuals in different professions. For centuries universities have proven to be a reservoir of knowledge and skills for developing the human resources of the nation and helping people to achieve their intellectual objectives for the overall good of humanity and the society. The goals and objectives of the university cannot be realized without the active contribution of the academic staff members who determine the number, quality and effectiveness of university education in countries all over the world (Ifinedo, 2003). However, without adequate satisfaction with life, university staff may not perform their duties effectively.

Thus, both junior and senior academic staff members in Nigerian universities make efforts to increase their life satisfaction. The importance of life satisfaction can therefore not be overemphasized. Life satisfaction can arise when the individual is happy with what he or she does, enjoys his or her daily work activities and environment, receives adequate compensations for the work done, affords most of the basic necessities of life and above all enjoys the love and support of the members of one's immediate family.

Life satisfaction is a relative term encompassing individuals' ability to earn decent living, maximize their potentials and reach highest possible positions in their choosing fields leading to attainment of a sense of self-fulfillment and personal accomplishment equivalent to Maslow's self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1970). The relevance of life satisfaction of academia to the growth of educational institutions cannot be over-emphasized because life satisfaction among academic staff would contribute to their performance at work and the development of the educational system. In Nigeria, it is common knowledge that dissatisfaction among academic staff has almost always led to strained relationship with the government in power, frequent strike actions by the academic staff and consequent disruption of the academic calendar and lowering of the quality of education provided. Life satisfaction refers to the extent to which individuals achieve self-fulfillment and feel satisfied about their achievements, standard of living, and accomplishments in life. One of the prominent determinants of life satisfaction is the nature and quality of daily experiences individuals derive at work (Wood & De Menezes, 2008). Since life satisfaction of staff is crucial to the success of an organization, an examination of some factors that could influence life satisfaction among different cadres of academic staff is of great significance. Hence, this researcher investigates the influence of creative involvement on life satisfaction among academic staff of Nigerian universities and how this differs between junior and senior staff.

An individual who experiences life satisfaction is likely to be creatively involved at work. One wonders whether being creatively involved in the workplace could also impact life satisfaction. This is a major focus of this study. Creative involvement refers to an individual's ingenuity, creativity and the perceived freedom to use such creativity in carrying out one's assignments. According to Cohen (2014), individuals have some levels of creativity which, if allowed to manifest, have the potency to turn things around and create a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. Academic staff members of universities in particular are not expected to just possess and transmit knowledge but to also have the capacity to create knowledge through the use of individuals' creative ability and personal ingenuity (Potter, 2013). However, this can only be possible where individuals enjoy some level of creative involvement and they are not just tied to a module which might have become outdated and irrelevant in solving contemporary challenges. Hence, creative involvement is considered a variable that may be influential in life satisfaction of academia. Besides, creative involvement has not been associated with life satisfaction in previous research efforts, and neither has the influence of cadre on both creative involvement and life satisfaction been investigated by researchers. This provides a justification for the present study which examines the differential influence of creative involvement on life satisfaction among junior and senior academic staff members of public universities in Nigeria.

Hypotheses

- i) Creative involvement will not significantly impact life satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian universities.
- ii) The impact of creative involvement on life satisfaction will not significantly differ between junior and senior academic staff in Nigerian universities.
- iii) The relationships among creative involvement, cadre, and life satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian universities are not significant.

Methods

Design and Participants

This paper adopts the descriptive survey research design. The population comprises 8,538 academic staff of public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The Taro Yamane's formula was used to compute the sample size, as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the error margin (alpha value).

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{8,538}{1 + 8,538(0.05)^2} \\ &= 382 \end{aligned}$$

Three hundred and eighty-two academic staff made up the sample selected using the stratified random sampling procedure. The target population was divided into six strata, namely, Ekiti State, Lagos State, Ogun State, Ondo State, Osun State, and Oyo State. Proportional and simple random sampling was then utilized to select Universities and academic staff from the strata.

Instruments

Demographic Data Inventory (DDI), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), and Creative Involvement Scale (CIS) were used to collect data from the participants. Details on these instruments are provided below.

Demographic Data Inventory (DDI)

The Demographic Data Inventory (DDI) was used to obtain bio-data of the respondents.

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Pavot and Diener (2008) cited in Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) was adopted to measure life satisfaction. The SWLS is a brief instrument containing five items intended to measure subjective satisfaction one has with life. The five items are given in a 7-point Likert-type format having responses ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. Sample items on the scale include “*In most ways, my life is close to my ideal*” and “*If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing*”.

A Cronbach’s alpha of .87 and a test-retest stability coefficient with a two-month interval of .82 were reported for the scale to evidence internal consistency and stability of the instrument respectively. The SWLS has shown strong internal reliability and moderate temporal stability. Diener *et al.* (1985) reported The SWLS has construct validity because it is positively correlated with extraversion, and inversely correlated with neuroticism. No correlation was found to do with gender or age (Diener *et al.*, 1985). An investigation was carried out to determine the applicability of the instrument in the Nigerian local setting. Using the test-retest reliability assessment method, the instrument was administered twice with two weeks’ interval on a normative sample of 20 academic staff selected from the Kwara State University. The two sets of scores generated were correlated using Pearson product-moment correlation which yielded 0.81 coefficient of reliability.

Creative Involvement Scale (CIS)

The Creative Involvement Scale (CIS) is an adapted version by this researcher of the Potter (2013) Perception of Creativity Scale (PCS). Just like the original scale, this instrument has three sub-sections. Section A requests for demographic data from respondents; section B is a 12-item scale assessing creativity among academia in higher educational institutions using four-point Likert-type format having responses 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree; section C contains only two free-response items.

Sample items on the scale include “*Creativity is a crucial component of living successfully*” and “*I am creative in my presentation of course content*”.

The CIS was subjected to a pilot study by the researcher involving a normative sample, that is, university academic staff in a university which was drawn from the Kwara State University and not part of the original sample for the study. Using the test-retest reliability assessment approach, the CIS was also administered twice within an interval of three weeks on the normative sample and the two sets of scores generated were correlated using the Pearson’s product moment correlation which yielded 0.79 coefficient of stability. Moreover, the data were subjected to Principal Component Analysis and they yielded .85 index of internal consistency. The CIS was also co-administered with the Potter’s (2013) PCS to test for concurrent validity. The data generated were correlated and found to be .91 indicating high concurrent validity of the CIS.

Method of Data Analysis

The first and second hypotheses were tested by means of simple linear regression analysis, while the third hypothesis was analyzed by means of Pearson’s *r*. All the hypotheses were tested for significance at .05 alpha level.

Results

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: Creative involvement will not significantly impact life satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian universities.

Table 1: Regression Analysis for the Impact of Creative Involvement on Life Satisfaction

	B	Std Error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.528	9.046		20.693	.000
Creative involvement	.069	.037	.228	10.105	.000

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction

Results in Table 1 were significant ($\beta = .228$, $t = 10.105$, $p < .05$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. hence, creative involvement will significantly impact life satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian universities. The results further showed that the regression equation predicting life satisfaction from creative involvement is as follows:

$$\text{Life Satisfaction} = 0.069 \times \text{Creative Involvement} + 6.528.$$

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: The impact of creative involvement on life satisfaction will not significantly differ between junior and senior academic staff in Nigerian universities.

Table 2a: Regression Analysis for the Impact of Creative Involvement on Life Satisfaction
(Junior Academic Staff)

	B	Std Error	B	t	Sig.
(Constant)	7.842	4.288		12.603	.000
Creative Involvement	.094	.039	.192	7.529	.000

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction

Table 2b: Regression Analysis for the Impact of Creative Involvement on Life Satisfaction
(Senior Academic Staff)

	B	Std Error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	10.052	5.840		9.525	.000
Creative Involvement	.128	.131	.207	7.982	.000

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction

Tables 2a and 2b revealed significant results. Creative involvement significantly influenced life satisfaction among junior academic staff ($\beta = .192$; $t = 7.529$; $p < .05$). Creative involvement also significantly influenced life satisfaction among senior academic staff ($\beta = .207$; $t = 7.982$; $p < .05$). However, the impact of creative involvement on life satisfaction is more potent for senior than for junior academic staff members.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: The relationships among creative involvement, cadre, and life satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian universities are not significant.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Bivariate Relationships between Creative Involvement, Cadre, and Life Satisfaction

	Creative Involvement	Cadre	Life Satisfaction
Creative Involvement	1.000	.153*	.276*
Cadre		1.000	.204*
Life Satisfaction			1.000

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Results in Table 3 were significant. Specifically, there were significant positive relationships between creative involvement and life satisfaction ($r = .276$, $p < .05$), cadre and life satisfaction ($r = .204$, $p < .05$), and creative involvement and cadre ($r = .153$, $p < .05$). The implications of these results are that an increase in creative involvement is associated with an increase in life satisfaction; the higher the cadre the greater the life satisfaction; and the higher the cadre the greater the creative involvement.

Conclusion

The investigation of the differential influence of creative involvement on life satisfaction among junior and senior academic staff in Nigerian universities was carried out in order to better understand the distribution of and enhance life satisfaction and ultimately job performance and other positive organizational outcomes in Nigerian universities, particularly those in the South-West and understand the role played by cadre in this relationship. This study established significant influence of creative involvement on life satisfaction among academic staff in Nigerian universities, significant difference between junior and senior academic staff in the influence of creative involvement on life satisfaction, and significant bivariate interrelationships between creative involvement, life satisfaction, and cadre.

Recommendations made included the following:

- (i) Universities should always strive to create conducive working environment which can help to ensure adequate and rewarding creative involvement in the university system. This can go a long way in improving life satisfaction among academic staff, thereby boosting job performance.
- (ii) Universities should organize periodic seminars and workshops for academic staff on how to ensure creative involvement with a view to enhancing their life satisfaction.
- (iii) Government and other proprietors of universities should assist their academic staff to be creatively involved in their job with the aim of improving their life satisfaction through regular payment of entitlements so that they could be able to fulfill their individual or personal responsibilities.
- (iv) University personnel and staff welfare departments should sustain regular training for academic staff on how to achieve creative involvement in order to improve life satisfaction.
- (v) University visitors and proprietors should make adequate budgetary provisions for fostering creative involvement among academic staff in the Nigerian university system
- (vi) More effort should be deployed towards enhancing both creative involvement and life satisfaction among junior academic staff, while sustaining and possibly improving creative involvement and life satisfaction among senior academic staff in Nigerian universities.
- (vii) Parallel studies should be carried out using samples of academic staff from universities in other geo-political zones of Nigeria in order to determine the extent to which the results can be generalized.

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