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Self-Regulation as a Factor Affecting Lecturers Job Performance in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions: Perspective Analysis

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Abstract

The paper examined self-regulation as a factor affecting job performance among lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions. A thematic-content review was adapted in identifying, highlighting and discussing related concepts. Self-regulation, types of self-regulation, self-regulation skills, structure of self-regulated system, effects of self-regulation were discussed extensively and ways of improving self-regulation skills among lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions were suggested to increase their job performance. From the review, the paper discovered that self-regulation skills have positive impact on job performance among lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions, and self-regulation skills help lecturers to manage their emotions, set goals, manage their time, and focus on specific task. The paper concludes that self-regulated lecturers performance is higher compared to others. The paper suggested that, tertiary institutions management should fast-track adoption and deployment of all motivation mechanisms that can improve self-regulation skills among lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions for higher productivity.

Keywords: Job performance, lecturer, Nigeria, Self-regulation, Tertiary institution

Introduction

Job performance among lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions has started receiving attention from scholars these days. This could be due to the nature of the lecturer's job, resources availability and utilization, dynamics of higher education and expected level of knowledge, skills and attitudes from the graduates. Job performance refer to an individual's or team's ability to achieve certain objectives, meet expected standards, or complete task efficiently and effectively (ChatGPT, 2023). In relation to lecturers in tertiary institutions, job performance refers to level of accomplishment and attainment of

objectives in the areas of teaching, research and community services (Onoyase, 2017). This involves a combination of various factors, including skills and knowledge, motivation, personality, and work attitudes. Psychologists such as Rivera, McKissick, & Adams, (2020) believe that job performance is not solely determined by skills and knowledge, but also by the individual's ability to manage their emotions, take initiative, adapt to changes, and work well with others.

Additionally, factors such as job satisfaction, motivation, self-regulation, stress levels, and work-life balance can also impact job performance (Rahardja, Lutfiani, Rafika, and Harahap, 2020).

Thus, from a psychological perspective, it is crucial for tertiary institutions to not only focus on hiring lecturers with the right skills, but also to create a work environment that fosters motivation, engagement, and well-being of the personnel that will enhance their performance on the job. Lecturer's job performance are often assessed through evaluation and feedback, and can be improved through training, practice, and implementing strategies for improvement. However, lecturers' job performance is generally evaluated based on factors such as their knowledge and expertise in their field of study, effectiveness in delivering lectures and engaging students, ability to communicate information clearly, responsiveness to student questions and concerns, and commitment to providing quality education (Kakulu, 2016). Additionally, factors such as attendance records, feedback from students and colleagues, self-regulation, motivation and institutional guidelines may also play a role in evaluating a lecturer's job performance (Innocent and Ele-Ojo, 2021).

Self-regulation is one of the factors that behavioral psychologist posits having great influence on job performance in any organization, especially tertiary institutions that lecturers deal with young adults from different background, orientation and social status (Thompson, 2022). Self-regulation refers to set of strategies used to regulate and manage one's behavior in the workplace. It is an important aspect of any successful organization, as it helps to create an environment that is conducive to productivity and success (Gocke, 2020). In other words, self-regulation is the

process of controlling one's thoughts, feelings, and actions to achieve a desired outcome. It involves the ability to recognize and manage emotions, set goals, delay gratification when necessary, regulate impulsivity and behavior, and stay aware of one's environment (Duckworth and Carlson, 2013). In addition, self-regulation refers to the ability of an individual to control, manage, and regulate their own thoughts, emotions, and behavior toward achieving a desired outcome (Subarto, Solihin, & Qurbani, 2021). On the other hand, it refers to the effectiveness and efficiency with which an individual performs his job duties and responsibilities.

Moreover, self-regulated lecturers in Nigeria's tertiary institutions were found to have developed both soft and hard skills that are key towards student's management, enhancing relationship with other co-workers and enhancing lecturer's capacity towards high level job performance (Sutoro, 2021). Recently, ChatGPT (2023) observed that, the relationship between self-regulation and job performance among lecturers in tertiary institutions is significant. Hence, lecturers who possess high levels of self-regulation are likely to exhibit better job performance due to their ability to manage their time, prioritize tasks, and maintain focus. When lecturers can regulate their emotions, they can better handle stressful situations and remain calm during difficult times. This allows them to maintain a positive attitude, motivate students, and create a favorable learning environment. Furthermore, self-regulation is essential in the academic field, where critical thinking and problem-

solving skills are highly valued and required. Lecturers who are able to regulate their own thinking and decision-making processes are more likely to make sound decisions and provide valuable insights to their students (Monogbe & Mongbe, 2019). They are also more likely to engage in reflective thinking and adopt a growth mindset, which fosters continuous improvement and innovation. In view of the relationship that exist between self-regulation and lecturers job performance as discussed earlier, this paper discusses self-regulation as a factor affecting lecturers job performance in Nigerians tertiary institutions.

Types of Self-regulation in Relation to Lecturers Job Performance

Lecturers in tertiary institutions needs to acquire requisite skills that will help them manage whatever situation they find themselves. They also need several other important skills to enable them manage their emotions, behaviors, thinking process, and social interactions in a healthy and productive manner. ChatGPT (2023) identified 4 major types of self-regulation that are related to lecturer's job performance as follows:

- **Emotional Self-regulation:** This involves managing and controlling one's emotions, such as anger, stress, anxiety, and sadness. Emotional control was reported to have contributed immensely in the area of boosting lecturer's productivity in teaching, research and community service.
- **Behavioral Self-regulation:** This involves controlling one's action and behaviors in various situations such as

staying focused on a task, resisting temptations, and following rules. Behavioral modification and attitudinal change help lecturers in tertiary institutions adapt to different situations and also ensure compliance with guidelines, and meeting datelines of task at hand.

- **Cognitive Self-regulation:** This involves regulating lecturer's thinking processes and cognitive abilities, such as attention, memory, and problem-solving skills. Although, lecturers are perceived as stores of knowledge, controlling themselves to be masters in a specific chosen area makes them become experts, and will help them in producing more experts in the area.
- **Social Self-regulation:** This involves regulating the lecturer's social behavior and interaction with others, such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. This type of self-regulation allows lecturers in tertiary institutions to draw boundaries within acceptable societal values and cultures. This can help in rendering the community service component of their primary assignment worthwhile and more acceptable.

Scholars such as Baumeister., Roy., Vohs., Kathleen., Tice & Dianne, (2007) argued that self-regulation is not restricted to only 4 types highlighted above, rather they posit other components of self-regulation strategies to complement and make the concepts holistic. Self-regulation strategies such as self-monitoring (self-assessment or self-recording), self-instruction (also called self-talk), goal setting and self-reinforcement.

Theoretical Framework and Structure of Self-regulation Systems

Self-regulation theory is mainly traced back to Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT, 1977). Social Learning Theory is a philosophy that people can learn from each other through observation, imitation and modeling (Fitzgibbons, 1999). However, the theoretical postulations are more pronounced in providing insights on 4 ideologies to show how the ideal conditions for positive social learning take place. These 4 ideologies are attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. In addition, these 4 conditions help both educators and learners to act in a particular way. In relation to lecturers as employees of tertiary institutions, social cognitive theory is related to lecturers' behavior which is extensively motivated and regulated by self-influence in their ongoing exercises within the context of teaching, research, and community services. Although, the major self-regulative mechanism operates through 3 principal sub-functions which include self-monitoring of one's behavior, its determinants, and its effects; judgment of one's behavior in relation to personal standards and environmental circumstances; and affective self-reaction, in lecturing job, self-regulation also encompasses the self-efficacy mechanism, which plays a central role in the exercise of personal agency by its strong impact on thought, affect, motivation, and action (Bandura, 1991).

Moreover, the same self-regulative system is involved in moral conduct although compared to the

achievement domain, in the moral domain the evaluative standards are more stable, the judgmental factors more varied and complex, and the affective self-reactions more intense (Baumeister, Schmeichel, & Vohs, 2014). In the interactionist perspective of social cognitive theory, social factors affect the operation of the self-regulative system (Baumeister, et al., 2007). Some scholars expanded the theoretical postulations on self-regulation to give it a wider perspective. For example, Budi, Widyastut, & Lusy, (2019) observed that self-regulatory systems lie at the very heart of causal processes and they not only mediate the effects of most external influences but provide the very basis for purposeful action. Most human behavior, being purposive, is regulated by forethought. The future-time perspective manifests itself in many different ways. They also noted that people form beliefs about what they can do, anticipate the likely consequences of prospective actions, set goals for themselves, and otherwise plan courses of action that are likely to produce desired outcomes. Through the exercise of forethought, people motivate themselves and guide their actions in an anticipatory proactive way.

Moreover, Idawati and Mahadun (2021) opine that the capability for intentional and purposive action is rooted in symbolic activity, and future events cannot be causes of present motivation and action. They continued, however, by being represented cognitively in the present, conceived future events are converted into current motivators and regulators of behavior. In anticipatory control, behavior is directed by cognized

goals not pulled by an unrealized future state. The causal agency resides in forethought and the self-regulatory mechanisms by which it is translated into incentives and guides for purposive action. If human behavior were regulated solely by external outcomes, people would behave like weather vanes, constantly shifting direction to conform to whatever momentary social influence happened to impinge upon them. In actuality, people possess self-reflective and self-reactive capabilities that enable them to exercise some control over their thoughts, feelings, motivation, and actions Cervone, et al., (1990). In the exercise of self-directedness, people adopt certain standards of behavior that serve as a guide and motivators to them and regulate their

actions anticipatorily through self-reactive influence, which is also regulated by an interplay of self-generated and external sources of influence (Amin, 2022).

Structure of Self-Regulatory Systems

Self-regulation operates through a set of psychological sub-functions that must be developed and mobilized for self-directed change (Bandura, 1986). Neither intention nor desire alone has much effect if people lack the capability for exercising influence over their own motivation and behavior (Bandura & Simon, 1977). The constituent sub-functions in the exercise of self-regulation through self-reactive influence are summarized as depicted in Fig. 1.

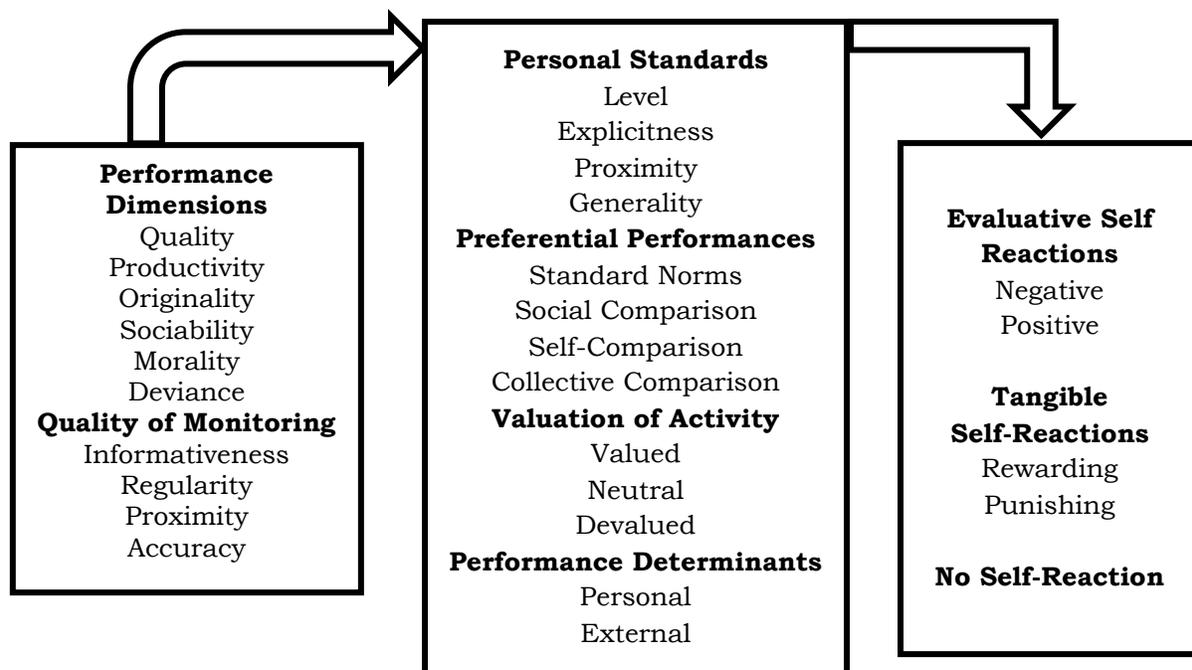


Figure 1: Showing constituent of sub-functions in the exercise of self-regulation through the self-reactive influence

Effect of Self-Regulation on Lecturer’s Job Performance in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Self-regulation is an important factor in job performance of lecturers in

tertiary institutions, as it directly affects your ability to stay focused and productive. When self-regulation skills are weak, it can be difficult to manage emotions, focus on tasks, and resist distractions. This in turn can lead to a decrease in productivity, difficulty meeting deadlines, and increased stress levels. On the other hand, when self-regulation is strong, employees can be more productive and better able to manage the pressures of work. Improving self-regulation can have a positive effect on the job performance of lecturers and help other employees within the institution reach their goals more effectively. Moreover, by improving self-regulation skills in tertiary institutions, lecturers can be better able to stay focused, set goals, delay gratification, and manage emotions. According to Gocke (2020), the following are some tips for improving self-regulation in the workplace:

- **Establish Clear Goals or Goals Setting:** Goals and objectives that are well-defined and measurable will help lecturers stay focused and motivated. Taking the time to set meaningful goals can help lecturers stay on track and achieve results. In addition, lecturers who possess strong self-regulation skills are more likely to set clear and challenging goals for themselves. These goals serve as targets for their teaching, research, and professional development, and help them stay focused and motivated.
- **Time management:** Self-regulation involves effectively managing one's time and resources. Lecturers who can regulate their time well are better equipped to handle their teaching responsibilities, meet

deadlines for research and publication, and engage in other academic activities.

- **Monitoring Thoughts and Emotions:** Learning how to recognize when thoughts or emotions are getting in the way of achieving a goal is important. Being aware of these patterns can help lecturers make better decisions and improve self-regulation.
- **Practice Self-Discipline:** Taking the time to develop self-discipline and practice delaying gratification can help lecturers stay on track and reach their goals more effectively.
- **Self-motivation:** Lecturers with high levels of self-regulation can motivate themselves internally, even in the absence of external rewards or supervision. They have the ability to maintain their enthusiasm for teaching, engage students effectively, and pursue research interests with dedication.
- **Taking Breaks When Needed:** It is important to take regular breaks when needed in order to remain productive, reduce stress, and avoid burnout.
- **Seek Support:** When self-regulation becomes difficult, it is important for lecturers to ask for help from colleagues or supervisors. Seeking support can help lecturers stay on track and manage work-related stressors more effectively.

Concept of Self-regulation skills

Attitude and behaviors of lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions can affect their personal life and professional success. Velychko, Khalatur, Bondarchuk and Bahorka, (2022) asserts that, lecturers that are willing to boost their performance on the job and those ready to achieve other related goals, and

feel control over actions and reactions must build self-regulation skills. Self-regulation can help a lecturer improve resilience when events outside control occur. Self-regulation skills are elements of emotional intelligence that relate to how an individual manages his/her thoughts and actions. Building self-regulation skills among lecturers in tertiary institutions was reported to have increased the level of participation in academic activities, boost students' confidence, reduced wastage, and facilitated behavioral modification towards attitudinal change (Gocke, 2020).

According to Thompson (2022), there are 2 main types of self-regulation, which are behavioral self-regulation and emotional self-regulation. Behavioral self-regulation encompasses how an individual responds to situations and how his/her actions align with long-term goals and deepest values. Emotional self-regulation concerns the control of emotions, such as consciously processing feelings and working to maintain a positive outlook while experiencing various situations. Such control can have positive effects on individual interpersonal relationships because it can allow one to be more reliable, empathetic, and considerate toward others. Lecturers' behavioral and emotional self-regulation skills have a direct significant effect on job performance in tertiary institutions (Heidemeier & Moser, 2019).

Ways of Improving Self-regulation Skills among Lecturers in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

It is very necessary for lecturers in tertiary institutions to improve their level of self-regulation in relation to their job performance for them to achieve both objectives and goals. Self-regulation requires commitment, self-reflection, and practice, and building this skill is an ongoing process. As lecturers monitor their thoughts and actions regularly, align their goals, and make changes where necessary. It's important to practice techniques to help with self-regulation, so that one can thoughtfully choose how to respond during stressful times. Thompson (2022) identified practicing self-awareness, meditating, exercising, aligning goals with values, being kind to oneself, keeping a journal, engaging in positive self-talk, seeking feedback, being accountable, and educating yourself as methods for developing self-regulation abilities in relation to job performance among lecturers in tertiary institutions. However, improving lecturers' self-regulation skills can positively impact their mindset and well-being to prevent burnout in the workplace. It can also improve their productivity and other aspects of their job performance, including:

- **Communication:** When lecturers in Nigerian tertiary institutions practice self-regulation in the workplace, they can easily improve their ability to listen actively and understand what is happening around them. They are also better equipped to think before they speak or act in the context of dynamic human behaviors.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Lecturers can handle conflicts well because they can be able to consider differing opinions and better empathize with coworkers

and others in the workplace. As self-regulated people, lecturers are likely to address the cause of a conflict directly and avoid letting emotions guide their responses. They can also transfer these principles of conflict resolution mechanisms to other co-workers and students under their care.

- **Perspective:** Lecturers' self-regulation enables them to remain calm in challenging situations and respond more effectively. They can be able to better focus on the end goal and the fact that solving conflicts can lead to an improved workplace. Although, opinions differ among both students and co-workers, holding a positive perspective helps in facilitating being optimistic about the future and poster unity among diverse groups of students within and outside the tertiary institutions.
- **Time Management:** When lecturers practice self-regulation, they can improve their time management in the workplace by being accountable for deadlines. They can also be more dependable because they are more likely to arrive at lecture venues and meetings on time, accomplish projects within agreed timeline and ensure objectives attainment as planned, which in the long-run help the lecturer and the team stay highly productive.
- **Stress Management:** Work can become more demanding and cause additional stress in addition to lecturers' regular day-to-day work. Regular self-regulation practices can help lecturers calm themselves to present confidently and manage the extra stress. Lecturers' self-regulation

also facilitate adhering to strict adherence to holidays and undertaking planned recreational activities to reduce both mental and physical stress.

Characteristics of Self-regulated Lecturers in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Self-regulated lecturers in tertiary institutions were found to have exhibited the following traits and skills. Thus:

- **Self-awareness:** As a lecturer who is directly involved in imparting knowledge, skills, and attitudes to young adults, having self-awareness can consciously help in recognizing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are in tandem with values, culture, tradition, and needs of both the content and context of the subject matter. Self-awareness helps with self-control, lecturers can be able to remain calm and rational in most situations and exercise discipline when needed. People with strong self-awareness often can understand and respond to the needs of others.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Lecturers often face stressful situations, such as heavy workloads, administrative pressures, and student-related challenges. Self-regulation helps them manage and regulate their emotions, enabling them to remain calm, composed, and focused in challenging circumstances.
- **Continuous Learning:** Self-regulated lecturers actively engage in life-long learning and professional development. They seek out opportunities for growth, stay updated with new developments in their field,

and take proactive steps to enhance their knowledge and skills.

- **Persistence:** Lecturers in tertiary institutions have stated objectives and goals expected to be achieved or realized over a period of time. Continuing to move forward with these goals and objectives regardless of external or internal issues is a conscious choice. Those lecturers who possess this skill often work as hard as they can to stay aligned with their values and goals. Persistence can also keep them focused on the positive effect within their control while letting go of situations outside of their control.
- **Adaptability:** A tertiary institution is a place that combines people from different backgrounds, cultures, and orientations. Self-regulated individuals are more adaptable to changing circumstances and can adjust their teaching methods, strategies, and content to meet diverse student needs. This flexibility enhances their effectiveness as educators. Lecturers are expected to have the ability to adapt to responses and emotions according to different situations, which means the lecturer can cope with change. This self-regulation skill can also make lecturers more flexible with different views and opinions. It also allows one to consider issues from multiple perspectives. This self-regulation skill also has the tenets of embracing individual differences in the process of instruction and other related concerns.
- **Optimism:** This self-regulation skill is explained in relation to training the

individual mind and emotions to be able to calm self when feeling stressed, anxious, or sad. If a lecturer is a strong self-regulator, s/he likely considers challenges as opportunities to learn and improve future efforts. Constantly looking for positives enables self-regulators to improve their behaviors and actions continuously while remaining focused and motivated. As lecturers, this skill is very important, because it helps in boosting the confidence of the learners and also increases the level of creativity and innovation among students.

Is Self-regulation a Factor Affecting Lecturers Job Performance in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions?

Self-regulation is a critical factor that can significantly impact job performance among lecturers in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. Looking at the definition critically, which refers the concept of self-regulation as an individual's ability to monitor, control, and adjust own thoughts, feelings and behaviours to achieve desired goals. In the context of job performance, self-regulation plays a crucial role in ensuring lecturers effectively carry out their responsibilities and contribute positively to students' learning outcomes. One key aspect of self-regulation that influences job performance among lecturers is time management. Lecturers who effectively regulate their time are more likely to be more productive and meet deadlines. Specifically, they can allocate adequate time lesson preparation, grading assignments, conducting research, and engaging in other professional activities.

This contributes to the quality teaching and overall job performance.

Self-regulation also affects lecturers' motivation and persistence in their work. Lecturers with strong self-regulation skills are more to set challenging goals and work towards achieving them. They can effectively prioritize their tasks, stay focused, and persevere through challenges. This determination and resilience positively impact their job performance by ensuring they consistently deliver high-quality instruction and engage in continuous professional development. Furthermore, self-regulation plays a role in managing lecturers' emotions and interactions with students and colleagues. Lecturers who can regulate their emotions are better able to handle stressful situations, conflicts, and difficult students. They can maintain professionalism, effectively communicate, and build positive relationships with others, ultimately creating a conducive learning environment. This positively impacts job performance as lecturers can effectively impart knowledge, provide support to students, and collaborate with colleagues.

In contrast, lecturers with poor self-regulation skills may struggle with time management, lack motivation and persistence, and have difficulty managing emotions and relationships. This can lead to lower job performance, decreased student satisfaction, and increased faculty turnover. To enhance self-regulation and subsequently improve job performance among lecturers in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, there are several strategies that can be implemented. These include

providing training and professional development opportunities to enhance time management skills, goal setting, stress management, and emotional intelligence. Creating a supportive work environment that encourages collaboration, autonomy, and work-life balance can also contribute to strengthening lecturers' self-regulation abilities. Additionally, mentoring and coaching programs can be established to provide individualized support and guidance to lecturers on self-regulation and job performance enhancement. These submissions justified self-regulation as a factor affecting lecturers' job performance in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. However, there is need for conducting empirical studies to further buttress the claims submitted in this review and other similar conceptual articles.

Conclusion

Self-regulation is a factor that plays a critical role in job performance among lecturers in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. Effective self-regulation skills, such as time management, motivation, persistence, and emotion management, contribute to improved teaching quality, student satisfaction, and overall job performance. Implementing strategies to enhance self-regulation can significantly benefit lecturers and the entire educational system.

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