



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Corporate brand ambassadorship and motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined corporate brand ambassadorship and motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State, Nigeria. It specifically focused on the influence of corporate brand ambassadorship on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities as well as the gender variation in the academic staff response. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised the 2,986 (two thousand nine hundred and eighty six) academic staff of the four public universities in Imo State. From the population of the study, 353 (three hundred and fifty three) academic staff were sampled for the study. The sample size was determined with Taro Yamane formulae of sample size determination. Data was collected from the sampled respondents with the means of a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was administered through physical contact with the respondents. Data collected was analyzed with mean and z-test. Analysis of the data collected revealed that corporate brand ambassadorship influences intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State. It further revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female academic staff of the universities. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that, corporate organizations should extend the appointment of brand ambassadors to hard working lecturers in higher institutions of learning; government should make a policy that will make corporate organizations to always consider lecturers for the appointment of the position of brand ambassadors.

Keywords: Corporate Brand Ambassadorship; Motivation; Academic Staff; Intrinsic Motivation; and Extrinsic Motivation

1. Introduction

Marketing of products is one of the major functions of any business organization, as it involves the process of notifying the users of the existence of the products as well as persuading them to buy the products. In the course of performing this function, business organizations employed different short-term and long-term sales promotion strategies. One of the contemporary long-term sales promotion strategies adopted by most business organizations is 'corporate brand ambassadorship'. Corporate brand ambassadorship is the process of appointing a person to represents and advertises a company, supports its offers and acts as the embodiment of the company's corporate identity through words and actions. Ambroise et al (2014) see corporate brand ambassador as someone who is passionate about an organization or its brand, and engages in activities, often on social media, that provide brand meaning for consumers. It is a term used in marketing that refers to the practice of promoting a brand through a celebrity spokesperson or other influential individual. The idea is to create a connection between the brand and the target audience, which can lead to increased sales and positive word-of-mouth marketing.

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Corporate brand ambassadorship has two ways benefits as it increases the product sales of an organization as well as the popularity of the ambassador. According to Indeed Editorial Team (2023), people choose to become corporate brand ambassadors to: improve a brand's marketing efforts; gain training and professional feedback; learn new things; build network; grow personal brand; improve technology and marketing skill; be independent and creative; develop transferable soft skills; enhance resume; diversify skill set; develop public speaking skills; have a flexible work schedule; receive free products and incentives; and above all, to earn money. These benefits are motivational tools to the ambassadors as they serve as driving forces for their actions.

Motivation is a physiological and psychological process that controls human behavior based on their needs and desires which also energize behavior. It is a condition within the organism, which is capable of moving the organism towards a goal. Taghipour and Dejban (2013) define motivation as a strategic way of improving an organizations efficiency and productivity by employees gaining a conducive work environment which suits their individual needs. Motivation is generally linked to the factors or elements that drives or pushes human action or behaviour over a period, given in relation to conditions or an achievement. It is a totality of dynamic factors that determine the behavior of the individual, having the role of general activator and performing the role of a force capable of training the entire psychic development. The attitude that the individual manifests towards previously known objects and phenomena is manifested, on the other hand, by affectivity, while the ability to optimally concentrate consciousness on a single object represents the process of attention. Complementary to these processes, the will is the one that regulates actions and conduct in order to achieve a certain goal.

In Nigeria, individuals that have distinguished themselves in their various professions particularly those in entertainment and sports industries have been rewarded positively by corporate organizations as brand ambassadors of their products. Such corporate organizations include telecommunication firms, carbonated drink firms, beer manufacturing firms, to mention but a few. This reward in turn has increased the value of the individuals in terms of popularity and their personal income. For instance, Business Day (2023) reported David Adeleke popularly known as Davido and Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun popularly known as Wizkid as the first and second highest paid Pepsi ambassadors in Nigeria with \$100 million dollars and \$12.9 million dollars deals respectively. These whopping sums of money in no doubt boost the financial status and the popularity of the aforementioned professionals. In general, such handsome reward is one of the driving forces or motivating factors of them striving to come up with new songs year in year out.

Like those professionals in the entertainment and sports industries, many academic staff of Nigerian universities had distinguished themselves in teaching and research. For instance, Kunle (2024) reported that Olutayo Adesina, professor of history at the University of Ibadan, and Abubakar Sani, former head of department at the archaeology and heritage studies at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, were selected for the 2023 British academy global professorship. Both lecturers were among the eight professors selected to undertake research on a range of issues, including food system models to resolve climate issues and exploration of West African communities' history through museum collections. These distinguished scholars and many others in education industry can as well play the roles of corporate brand ambassadors like their counterparts in entertainment and sports industries. Unfortunately, it has been observed by the researchers that majority of the distinguished academic scholars in Nigeria are not used as corporate brand ambassadors. Hence, the need to examine corporate brand ambassadorship and motivation of academic staff of Universities in Imo State, Nigeria.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

In any business activity, the seller and the buyer stand to receive values, as both parties need each other to survive. Corporate brand ambassadorship is beneficial to both the organization and the individuals they used as ambassadors for the promotion of their products. The corporate brand ambassadors enjoy financial and material benefits as rewards of their roles to the organizations. These benefits are sources of motivation to the individuals appointed by organizations as corporate brand ambassadors. The appointment of brand ambassadors in Nigeria seems to be one sided, as a review of the majority of the corporate brand ambassadors appointed in Nigeria revealed that individuals who have distinguished themselves in entertainments and sports industries are more favoured, compare to their counterparts in education industry. It is against this backdrop the study seeks to examine 'corporate brand ambassadorship and motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State, Nigeria'.

1.2. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine corporate brand ambassadorship and motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State. Specifically, the study is aimed at achieving the following objectives.

- To ascertain the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.
- To ascertain the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.
- To ascertain if the mean ratings of male and female academic staff differ significantly on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.
- To ascertain if the mean ratings of male and female academic staff differ significantly on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

1.3. Research Questions

The study was guided by the following question.

- To what extent does corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State?
- To what extent does corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

- H01: Male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.
- H02: Male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was divided into three, which were content scope, geographical scope, and the unit scope. The content scope was limited to the specific objectives of the study, the geographical scope was limited to public universities in Imo State, and the unit scope which is microscopic in nature was limited to the academic staff of the universities.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The design adopted in the study was a descriptive survey research design. According to Nassaji (2015), descriptive survey research design is a method of research that aims at gathering information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation.

2.2. Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised the 2,986 (six thousand nine hundred and eighty six) academic staff of the four public universities in Imo State. Namely: Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri; Federal University of Technology Owerri; Imo State University Owerri; and University of Agriculture and Environmental Studies Umagwo, Imo State.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

From the population of the study, 353 (three hundred and fifty three) academic staff was sampled. The sample size was determined with Taro Yamane formulae of sample size determination. The sample size was taken with stratified random sampling technique. It was performed by dividing the sample size in line with the population of each University. Thereafter, a simple random sample of the sample size was taken to ensure equal representation of the population.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected with a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument which was divided into two sections (sections A and B) contained a cover letter which was used to appeal for maximum cooperation of the respondents. Section 'A' of the instrument contained personal data of the respondents, while section 'B' contained the

questionnaire items which were drawn in line with the specific objectives of the study, with response options of four rating scales of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE).

2.5. Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation of Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri, Imo State. Their corrections and comments were considered in the final draft of the instrument to ensure its face, construct and content validity.

2.6. Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined with test retest. It was performed by administering 20 (twenty) copies of the instrument to 20 (twenty) respondents. Two weeks later same instrument was re-administered to same respondents. The results of the two tests were compared using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. A coefficient of 0.89 was obtained which make the instrument to be highly reliable for the study.

2.7. Method of Data Collection

Data was collected for the study through physical contact with the respondents.

3. Method of Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed with Mean and Z-test. Mean was used to analyze the research questions while z-test was used to test the hypotheses. Decision of the analysis of the research questions was taken by comparing the calculated mean score with the criteria mean score of 2.50. Calculated mean score above the criterion mean were upheld while calculated mean score below criterion mean were retracted. However, the decision of the analysis of the hypotheses formulated was taken by comparing z-calculated score with z- critical score of 1.960. Null hypothesis tested which the z-calculated score is greater than z-critical score of 1.960 was rejected. All things being equal, null hypothesis tested which the z-calculated score is less than the z-critical score of 1.960 was accepted.

3.1. Data Analysis

3.1.1. Analysis of Research Questions

Research question one

To what extent does corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State?

In response to the above question, the respondents' responses to items 1 to 15 of the questionnaire administered were subjected to mean analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1 Mean Analysis of Respondents on the Extent Corporate Brand Ambassadorship Influence Intrinsic Motivation of Academic Staff of Universities in Imo State

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	Lecturers will have the freedom to make decisions about how they accomplish their tasks if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.8	Accepted
2.	Lecturers will be encouraged to bring their unique perspective and ideas to their role if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	3.0	Accepted
3.	Lecturers will feel their individual working style is respected and valued if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors	2.9	Accepted
4.	Lecturers will be able to influence decisions that directly affect their work if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.6	Accepted
5.	Lecturers will have sufficient control over the way they carry out their tasks if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.6	Accepted

6.	Lecturers will have the opportunities to learn new skills and develop their abilities if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.8	Accepted
7.	Lecturers will receive regular feedback that will help them improve their performance if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.7	Accepted
8.	Lecturers' job will challenge them to grow and step out of their comfort zone if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.6	Accepted
9.	Lecturers will feel confident about their ability to perform their job well if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	3.0	Accepted
10.	Lecturers will be recognized and rewarded if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	3.0	Accepted
11.	Lecturers will believe their works significantly contribute to the overall success of their institutions if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.8	Accepted
12.	Lecturers will believe the works they do agree with their personal values and beliefs if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.6	Accepted
13.	Lecturers will feel a strong sense of purpose and meaningfulness in their role if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.8	Accepted
14.	Lecturers will believe the tasks they perform in their job create positive impacts on others if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.9	Accepted
15.	Lecturers' mission and values of their institutions will resonate with them if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.6	Accepted
Total Mean Score		2.78	Accepted

Source: Field work, 2024

The above table revealed specific and collective calculated mean scores that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Since the collective or total calculated mean score is greater than the criterion mean score ($2.78 > 2.50$), it is concluded that corporate brand ambassadorship to a very high extent influence the intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

Research question two

To what extent does corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State?

In response to the above question, the respondents' responses to items 16 to 22 of the questionnaire administered were subjected to mean analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2 below.

The table 2 revealed specific and collective calculated mean scores that are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Since the collective or total calculated mean score is greater than the criterion mean score ($2.73 > 2.50$), it is concluded that corporate brand ambassadorship to a very high extent influence the extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

Table 2 Mean Analysis of Respondents on the Extent Corporate Brand Ambassadorship Influence Extrinsic Motivation of Academic Staff of Universities in Imo State

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	Lecturers will be financially and materially compensated if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	3.0	Accepted
2.	Lecturers' job will be highly secured if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.6	Accepted
3.	Lecturers' working condition will change for better if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.8	Accepted
4.	Lecturers' workplace policies will be friendly to them if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.5	Accepted
5.	Lecturers' status will greatly improve if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.8	Accepted
6.	Lecturers' interpersonal relationship with people will increase if appointed as corporate brand ambassadors.	2.7	Accepted
Total Mean Score		2.73	Accepted

Source: Field work, 2024

3.1.2. Testing of Hypotheses

Test of hypothesis one

H01: Male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

In response to the above hypothesis the researchers used respondents' response to 1 to 15 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents of the study. Table 3 below has the comprehensive results of the tested hypothesis.

Table 3 Contingency Table for Testing Hypothesis one

Variables	N	df	Z-calculated	Z-critical	Result
Male Lecturers					
Female Lecturers	353	351	1.380	1.960	No Significant

Source: Field Work (2024)

The above contingency table with 353 respondents and 351 degree of freedom revealed a calculated z-score of 1.380. Since the calculated z-score is less than the z-critical score ($1.380 < 1.960$), it is concluded that Male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence intrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

Test of hypothesis two

H02: Male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

In response to the above hypothesis the researchers used 16 to 22 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents of the study. Table 4 below has the comprehensive results of the tested hypothesis.

Table 4 Contingency Table for Testing Hypothesis two

Variables	N	df	Z-calculated	Z-critical	Result
Male Lecturers					
Female Lecturers	353	351	1.470	1.960	No Significant

Source: Field Work (2024)

The above contingency table with 353 respondents and 351 degree of freedom revealed a calculated z-score of 1.470. Since the calculated z-score is less than the z-critical score ($1.470 < 1.960$), it is concluded that Male and female academic staff do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent corporate brand ambassadorship influence extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State.

4. Conclusion

The study examines corporate brand ambassadorship and motivation of academic staff of Universities in Imo State, Nigeria. The study specifically aimed at the influence of corporate brand ambassadorship on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State as well as gender variation in their responses. Analysis of the data collected revealed that corporate brand ambassadorship influence both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of academic staff of universities in Imo State. It further revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female academic staff of the universities. Hence, it is concluded that academic staff of Nigerian Universities, like their counterparts in sports and entertainment industries will be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated if their hard works are rewarded with the roles of corporate brand ambassadorship irrespective of their gender.

Recommendations

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

- Corporate organizations should extend the appointment brand ambassadors to hard working lecturers in higher institutions of learning.
- Government should make a policy that will make corporate organizations to always consider lecturers for the appointment of the position of brand ambassadors.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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