

***Career Development Demands Related Stress and Academic Employees' Effectiveness
in two Nigerian Federal Universities***

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Abstract

This research work examined career development demands stress and job effectiveness of federal university lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States. The study adopted the Cross-Sectional research design. A stratified random sample size of 584 lecturers, determined using Taro Yamane formula, was used for the study. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Career Development Stress and Job Effectiveness Questionnaires was administered. One-Way Analysis of Variance was adopted in testing the sole hypothesis. The findings revealed that stress from career development demands do not influence job effectiveness. The study recommended, among other measures, that university administrators should provide facilities and funds for the most important criterion for career development of lecturers, namely research.

Keywords: career, development, stress, job, effectiveness

Introduction

The human resource component has over the years been crucial for organizational performance regardless of advancement in technology. Every sector, private and public, depends on workers to execute the tasks that make up the nucleus of their mission. Human resource remains the best competitive edge, as the controller of every other production input. The thrust of human capital development is to empower employees to perform

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present tasks effectively and efficiently as well as build for future knowledge needs. Human capital development can be categorized into training and development, career development, talent management, performance management, knowledge management, succession plans and human resource planning (Al-Riyami & Banu, 2019; Cross, 2019). Career development underscores the fact that by investing in employees, they become of use to themselves and have the conviction that the organization cares about their growth (Utrilla et al. 2015).

Private and public entities alike have the mandate to groom their employees by identifying and managing their employees' performance capabilities. Universities must continuously possess the right mix of skills and competences to deliver quality service. Many believe that these institutions are a safe and comfortable haven for career advancement and will not venture elsewhere despite the comparatively low economic rewards available there. The assuredness of career development in the universities seems to be getting tainted with stressors that seems to be turning it to a myth. This might leave these institutions with employees who become disengaged but are untapped potentials for higher positions.

The primary goal of every worker often is to grow on the job. Career development is significant to individuals because careers represent their entire life in the workplace. It is equally important to organizations for employees' retention and development. The career development process can be complex and overwhelming for a starter and when desiring an uplift. The job of academics requires the ability to impart knowledge, carry out research and the ability to impact on society. Out of these three terms of employment however, promotion is heavily publication dependent. Furthermore, publications which are usually the outcome of research, are a major criterion for ranking visibility of universities. The career development process therefore places some demands on academics thereby generating stress. Job stress in any form can bring on negative effects on productivity when it is high.

Career development related stress can emanate from challenges associated with its processes, namely: opportunity limit, inadequate support, lack of clear direction, work-life balance, and dynamism of the industry. Research can be an expensive venture and the required resources may not be readily available. Employers may not give needed support such as time off or funds. Identification of career goals, strategies to reach them, and the drive to achieve them may pose as challenges. Career development can be time-consuming as well as demanding. Omoniyi (2013) listed career stressors for academics in Nigeria to include lack of instructional facilities, lack of facilities for research, lack of holiday/annual

leave, time pressure and deadlines, multiple role demand, preparation of examination results, poor research/conference incentives, promotion criteria, delays in release of promotion and promotion entitlement, to mention but a few.

Presently, Nigerian public universities appear overwhelmed by the forces of occupational stress. The National Universities Commission (NUC) programme evaluation form (2005:20) states that university lecturers should have well-ventilated fairly furnished offices in a clean environment. Additionally, there should be adequate research laboratories, internet services, and libraries. The reality on ground however, is that lecturers share offices or do not have at all, libraries are stocked with old books, e-libraries have expired subscriptions or epileptic internet services; there are also issues of undependable electricity supply, and poorly equipped laboratories. Despite these realities academics mandatorily must publish or stagnate in terms of career development.

The knowledge sector to which the universities belong is dynamic and always evolving. The Nigerian economy is a youthful one, providing a high demand for education. There is therefore a high proliferation of universities both public and private to meet this demand, thus heightening competition among these institutions. In order to meet standards for ranking universities, career development demands for academics are reviewed upwards periodically, thus potentially increasing job stress with its attendant effects on job effectiveness. In addition, the spiraling high cost of living plus the failure of government to implement collective agreements as bargained, including the resultant incessant downing of tools by academics, have resulted in disrupted academic calendars and led to pressure to streamline each university's current academic calendar to align with October to July. This situation has dispossessed academics of long vacations which hitherto could be dedicated to research for career growth. All these can generate career development demands stress which can affect their job effectiveness. This is the object of query, the lacuna this study seeks to examine.

The major aspiration of a lecturer is to develop knowledge and climb the ladder career wise. NUC, the Nigerian universities' regulatory body, expects universities to encapsulate this goal in their staff development programmes through mentoring, publication, seminars and conferences attendance, higher degrees acquisition, scholarships and exchange programmes. The reality over the years, evidenced by the constant ASUU struggles, is that often academics have to prepare themselves for their career development by funding their staff development programmes by themselves either partially or completely, while the stakes or requirements for promotion is hiked higher and higher constantly, thus

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predisposing academics to stress that potentially could affect their job effectiveness. According to Idaka and Joshua (2009), a popular slogan among Nigerian lecturers is "Publish or Perish," which refers to publication as the most crucial appraisal criteria for climbing the ladder of promotion irrespective of proficiency in the other two terms of employment, namely, teaching and community service. Nelson and Quick (2003) also emphasized employee appraisal for career development as a source of stress as well as a measure of employee performance.

Generally, it is perceived that the level of job stress is high among lecturers in universities, Nigerian universities inclusive (Ofoegbu & Nwadiani, 2006; Anyaduba, 2004; Masuku & Muchemwa, 2015; Mkumbo, 2014; Kabito et al., 2020). These studies were concerned with intensity, causes and management of stress. The level of stress within the system, particularly at appraisal times, is often almost palpable. This appears to be making many academics to experience burnout syndrome (extreme stress), becoming disengaged, dissatisfied and low in morale. However, the effect of career development stress on job effectiveness has not been extensively studied. This study is an attempt to fill that gap in knowledge for federal university lecturers in Cross River and Akwa Ibom states.

Gyansah and Guantai (2018) were of the view that career traditionally can be associated with paid employment in a single occupation but contemporarily is perceived as a not ending process of learning and development which is expected to aid acquiring values that lead to employee development. Furthermore, they stated that while a job is carried out just to be paid, is short termed and has insignificant influence on future work life, a career is several linked employment opportunities that endow the employee with experience and learning for an entire life. Pillay et al. (2015) noted career development as the process through which an individual's moves and experiences through the organization are seen to be rising to higher levels or otherwise, and how he/she interprets those experiences.

Middlemist et al. (2023) defined career development as a process that plans successive jobs a worker can do in one organization over time and the growth strategies put in place for the provision of essential job skills as opportunities come up. Career development is a continuous progressive process in which workers move from level to level, each featured by quite unique bundle of issues, themes and tasks. It consists of career planning and career management. While career planning concerns with the assessment of the skills and potentials of workers for the establishment of an attainable career trajectory, career management focuses on individual and organizational activities that aid the development and execution of career plans.

Sun and Wang (2012) defined career development from the perspective of individuals and the organization. They posit that for the individual, career development involves factors of education, psychology, sociology, economic and physical nature that affect the career path of a worker and spans the life of the worker. Sun and Wang (2012) adduce that to organizations, it is a process that aligns individual's career plans with the organization's career management processes for the optimal alignment of the needs of individuals and that of the organization. Career development is a proactive, work life-long process for charting a meaningful career to achieve long term goals by taking advantage of development opportunities and fresh work experience gained.

Alternative synonyms for job stress are work stress, workplace stress or occupational stress. Usoro and Udongwo (2018) posit that job stress is a phenomenon that is subjective, multi-faceted and that occurs when workers' physical, emotional and attitudinal capabilities do not match job demands, constraints and/or opportunities. Kabito et al. (2020) described workplace stress as a physiological and psychological response to the elements of workplace that can harm, stating that presently work in the education sector is highly prone to stress. World Health Organisation (2020) classified job stress into stress from work content and from work context. Work content could emanate from job content (such as monotony), workload, work pace, hours worked and access to participation and control. Work context stress can come from career development, status and pay, roles, interpersonal relationships, organizational culture and work life balance. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (2014) opined that conditions of work, which includes career development, could be a major stressor with attendant adverse effect on employee performance.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (2018) opined that job stress are the adverse physical and emotional responses that can take place when there is a mismatch between job demands and employee job control to meet these demands. The two major types of stress are eustress (good stress/challenge stress) and distress (bad stress). Eustress is moderate or low stress which is known to increase positive work life, while distress is high stress level that decreases quality of work life (Soomro et al., 2019; Usoro et al., 2015). Job stress can originate from one factor/source or from several factors/sources.

Table 1: Job related stressors and their sources

Categories of Job Stressors	Examples of Sources of Stress
Task Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workload (overload and underload) • pace/variety/meaningfulness of work • adequate time to complete a task • autonomy (the ability to make one's own decisions about one's own job or about specific tasks) • shiftwork/hours of work • skills/abilities do not match job demands • lack of training and/or preparation (technical and social) • lack of appreciation • isolation at the workplace (emotional or working alone)
Role in the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role conflict (conflicting job demands, too many roles, multiple supervisors/managers) • uncertain job expectations/role ambiguity (lack of clarity about responsibilities, expectations, among others)
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level of responsibility • under/over-promotion • job security/insecurity (fear of redundancy either from economy, or a lack of tasks or work to do) • lack of career development opportunities, growth, or advancement
Relationships at work (Interpersonal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overall job satisfaction • supervisors (conflicts or lack of support) • coworkers (conflicts or lack of support) • threat of violence, harassment (threats to personal safety) • lack of trust • lack of systems in workplace available to report and deal with unacceptable behaviour • prejudice or discrimination

Organizational structure/climate/management style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• participation (or non-participation) in decision-making• communication patterns (poor communication/information flow)• little recognition for good job performance• lack of systems in workplace available to respond to concerns• not engaging employees when undergoing organizational change• lack of perceived fairness (who gets what, when, and the processes through which decisions are made). Feelings of unfairness magnify the effects of perceived stress on health• lack of support (such as family-friendly policies, employee assistance programmes, and others.)
Work-Life Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• role/responsibility conflicts• family exposed to work-related hazards
Workplace Conditions/ Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exposure to unpleasant conditions (like crowding, smells, among others)• exposure to hazards (such as ergonomics, chemical, noise, air quality, temperature, and others)

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association (2018)

Stress by nature is cumulative over time. This study posits that the features of stress though ubiquitous differ from person to person. Usoro and Udongwo (2018) posited that stress is universal, inevitable and transferable. It differs in presentation and intensity from person to person. Stress could also be passed on from person to person. According to Ajake (2017), stress has cognitive, physiological and behavioural components and can stem from both positive and negative events in life.

Modebelu and Kalu-Uche (2013) stated that a very effective lecturer may be a researcher, a receiver, creator and a distributor of knowledge. According to Udoh-Uwah and Etim (2018), professional development are the activities that target acquiring novel knowledge and skills for job effectiveness. They listed these activities to be: re-training programmes, mentorship, seminars, research publications, conferences, symposiums, inaugural lectures, communication and technology gadget utilization in the university setting. Obinna-

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Akakuru et al. (2022), Usoro et al. (2015), and Mushemeza (2016) affirmed that lecturers' performance is assessed based on proficiency in research, quality of teaching and community service.

Chen et al. (2022) studied work stress, mental health and employee performance in China. They administered 450 copies of questionnaire through email and were able to receive back 196 valid questionnaires. The 32-item questionnaire adopted a seven-point Likert scale. The hypotheses were tested using a hierarchical linear regression method. The results of their study revealed that employees of the SMEs they studied as a result of COVID-19 pandemic experienced work stress which led to mental health problems and poor employee performance. They therefore recommended that SMEs should seriously foster servant leadership and a conducive organizational culture.

Soomro et al. (2019) worked on impact of stress on employees' performance in public sector universities of Sindh. The entire staff of six public universities in Sindh made up the target population. Primary data was gathered using a forty-five item, five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Three hundred and ten (310) respondents constituted the sample size. SPSS was used to run the ANOVA to test the hypotheses. The study findings showed that stress is directly related to employees' performance. Furthermore, their research results revealed that the working environment and reward structure are stress factors and these have a positive and significant effect on employees' performance. They recommended that the reward structure should be upwardly reviewed and administrative support should be provided for conducive working environment, so as to improve the performance of these public universities.

Ogbuanya and Yekinni (2022) researched on the predictive influence of career growth on work stress of electrical/electronic trade teachers. The researchers utilized the correlation research design, and adopted a structured questionnaire as data collection instrument. All the one hundred and eighty five (185) electrical/electronic trade teachers of technical colleges in three states of Nigeria made up the sample size. The hypotheses were tested using hierarchical and standard multiple linear regression model. The study revealed that career growth and its sub-variables - career goal progress, professional ability development, promotion speed, and remuneration growth - positively predicted job stress of electrical/electronic trade teachers. The study disclosed that the interaction effects of age and gender, experience and gender, type of teacher and age, and type of teacher and experience on career growth, and job stress were not statistically significant among electrical/electronic trade teachers.

Ojukwu and Nwankwo (2021) examined effect of job-related stress on lecturers' performance in Nigerian federal universities in South East region. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The statistical tool of analysis was Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient using SPSS version 22. The sample size of the five South-Eastern federal universities was determined with Taro Yamane formula and was 364. The study discovered that management support and lecturer-student relations have a significant positive relationship; work-home interface affects lecturers' organizing skill; and course knowledge is not affected by work overload. The recommendations were: creating periodic interactive forum with academics; carrying out constant task audit on every academic staff to determine the workload weight of each academic.

The focus of Bassey and Otu's (2021) work was to determine how duty-related stress influence work productivity among university lecturers in Cross River State. The single hypothesis research adopted ex-post facto research design using a simple randomly selected sample of nine hundred and fifty-two lecturers. A well-validated questionnaire, with a split-half reliability estimates of 0.84, was the primary source for data collection. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was adopted to test the hypothesis at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that duty content and workload significantly relate to work productivity among university lecturers.

Interactional theories of stress are concerned with structural features of the worker's interaction with their work environment and are relevant to this study. This study was guided by Maslach and Leiter's Job-person fit theory of stress. Maslach and Leiter (1997) used the concept of the job - person fit model in broader perspectives to explain the extreme form of occupational stress - burnout. Person here has to do with how emotions, motivations, job expectations and values match the job, while the job most generally encompasses organisational environment. Maslach and Leiter (1997) identified six mismatches briefly described thus:

- i. When job demands are more than limits, there is work overload.
- ii. There is lack of control when workers have little control of their duties/tasks, maybe due to stringent policies or close supervision, or as a result of complete disorder at work.
- iii. Inadequate rewards mean absence of commensurate compensation for workers.
- iv. Community breakdown is when workers no longer work cordially with colleagues as a result of conflict.

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v. Fairness is absent, arising when injustice and lack of fairness permeates the system such that there is no respect for one another at work.

vi. There is value conflict when job demands conflict with workers' personal behaviour rules.

The mismatches identified in the Job-Person Fit theory can be used to explain the job stressors experienced by lecturers in federal universities, especially as career growth requirements represent both workload and a measure for reward. Hence, the choice of the theory as the theoretical framework for this study.

There is job mismatch when an employee does not have the skill required on a job which leads to job incompetence and subsequently stress. Globalisation is generating drastic work changes and producing job pressures and stress (Friedman, 2000). Research and publications are required to be as visible as possible to be acceptable for promotion purposes. Thus, lecturers may need further education, training, and skills. Indeed, actually meant to ease work life, the paradoxical effect of information technology is that if one is not adept at its usage, it may be a stress-inducer rather than being a stress-reliever. These stressors represent mismatches related to career progress requirements which may affect job effectiveness.

Research question

The study, as its objective, assessed how career development demands related stress affects the job effectiveness of university academics. The research question was therefore:

i. To what extent does career development demands related stress affect the job effectiveness of university academics?

Hypothesis

In consonance with the research question, the following hypothesis was tested in this study:

H₀₁: Stress emanating from career development demands does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of university academics.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross-sectional research design. This descriptive survey design allows for the examination of independent variables in terms of dependent variables (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021; Zangirolami-Raimundo et al., 2018). University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State and University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom state were studied. Cross River state lies within latitude 5° 32' and 4° 27' North of the Equator, and

longitude 7° 50" and 9° 28" East of the Greenwich meridian; it is one of the coastal Nigerian states. It was carved out of the former Eastern Region of Nigeria by General Yakubu Gowon's government on 27th May 1967. The state is divided into eighteen local government areas. Akwa Ibom state is also a coastal state in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria with a land mass of 7,081 square kilometers. It came into existence on September 23, 1987, begotten from the then Cross River State. It is an oil producing state. It has thirty-one Local Government Areas.

The total population of lecturers in the two institutions studied was two thousand, one hundred and sixty-eight (2,168). This figure was derived from the population of lecturers on the payroll of these universities as at the time of the survey. In order to obtain a sample that properly represents the population, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select the lecturers involved. Faculties of each institution were regarded as the strata. The sample from each stratum was drawn randomly. As the population of academics differed from one institution to another, the samples drawn from these institutions also differed in size. In drawing the sample, every faculty was represented. University of Uyo had twelve faculties while University of Calabar had ten faculties. Given that the population under study is finite, the Taro Yamane formula was used in determining the sample size. The sample size for University of Calabar is two hundred and eighty six lecturers while University of Uyo's sample size used for the study is two hundred and ninety eight lecturers. The total sample for the study was five hundred and eighty-four lecturers drawn using stratified random sampling technique.

This study utilized, as research instrument, the Career Development Stress and Job Effectiveness Questionnaires (CDSJEQ), constructed for the study. The Career Development Stress and Job Effectiveness Questionnaire had three sections, A to C. Section A was concerned with demographics of the lecturers. Section B elicited information to assess stress intensity experienced by lecturers in tertiary institutions. Each of the 12 items in section B had four response options: Very Stressful, Stressful, Mildly stressful and Not Stressful. Section C was a 12 item, four-point Likert type scale designed to measure the job effectiveness of lecturers with response options: Always, Often, Sometimes and Never. The split-half reliability method was adopted in carrying out the reliability analysis, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analytical procedure was used in establishing reliability coefficients (r_{xy}) which ranged from 0.58 to 0.71. Using the Spearman Brown prophecy formula, these coefficients were converted to estimates of reliability (r_{tt}) ranging from 0.70 to 0.94. These high values were considered sufficient for

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research work in social and behavioural sciences. Hence, the instruments were accepted for usage for this study.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in analysing the hypothesis. ANOVA, according to Dewberry (2004), is used when there are two or more groups of respondents, a random sample, a continuous dependent variable and parametric data. The data for this study satisfied these conditions, hence the choice of ANOVA. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The dependent variable in this hypothesis is job effectiveness categorized into publication, community service and teaching effectiveness while the independent variable is stress arising from career development demands. Stress arising from career development demands was classified into low, average and high, according to the lecturers mean response score. Based on this, lecturers with scores below the mean as their response score were classified as low, lecturers with scores within the mean range were classified as average and lecturers with scores above the mean range were classified as being highly stressed from career progress requirements. The influence of stress arising from career development demands on job effectiveness in terms of publication, community service and teaching effectiveness was computed using the one-way Analysis of Variance.

Presentation of results

Ho1: Stress emanating from career development demands does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of university academics.

The result in table 2 showed that there is no significant influence of stress from career development demands on job effectiveness in terms of publication ($F=2.42$, $P>.05$), community service ($F=2.59$, $P>.05$), and teaching effectiveness ($F=2.11$, $P>.05$). The null hypothesis was retained and the alternate hypothesis rejected as the calculated F-ratios of 2.42, 2.59 and 2.11 were smaller than the critical F-ratio of 3.14 at .05 alpha level and two and 556 degrees of freedom.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and one way ANOVA of influence of career development demands stress on job effectiveness in terms of publication, community service and teaching effectiveness

Job effectiveness	Stress	N	Mean	SD
Publication	Low	133	17.87	2.21
	Average	162	16.13	2.28
	High	264	17.42	2.11
	Total	559	17.14	2.25
Community service	Low	133	16.21	2.38
	Average	162	15.71	3.29
	High	264	16.21	2.19
	Total	559	16.04	2.62
Teaching effectiveness	Low	133	16.34	2.18
	Average	162	17.18	2.11
	High	264	17.28	2.02
	Total	559	16.93	2.10

Job effectiveness	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Publication	Between Groups	122.86	2	61.43		.132
	Within Groups	14107.27	556	25.37	2.42	
	Total	14230.13	558			
	Community service	Between Groups	147.32	2	73.66	
Teaching effectiveness	Within Groups	15828.28	556	28.47	2.59	
	Total	15975.6	558			
	Between Groups	120.64	2	60.32		.257
	Within Groups	15932.31	556	28.66	2.11	
Total	16052.95	558				

*Significant at .05 Level (critical $F_{2,556}=3.14$)

Discussion of the findings

The hypothesis stated that stress arising from career development demands does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of lecturers. The result of research analysis shows that stress from career development demands does not significantly affect the job effectiveness of lecturers in terms of publication, community service and teaching effectiveness. This finding means that lecturers perceive stress arising from career development demands as having no significant effect on their job effectiveness in terms of publication, community service and teaching effectiveness.

This finding is the converse of Ojukwu and Nwankwo (2021), Soomro et al. (2019), and Kabito et al. (2020) whose findings indicated that work related stress affects employees' performance. This study's finding also contradicts the view of National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (2014) that the interaction of workers and the conditions of work of which career development is major, results in job stress. Employees' appraisal is the key measure of effectiveness of job performance for any employee. Idaka and Joshua (2009) and Nelson and Quick (2003) alluded to this fact in their studies. It is relevant to note that the staff appraisal form of universities is at present lopsided in favour of publication. The tendency therefore is for lecturers to be more effective in publication, to the detriment of teaching, if such lecturers are very much promotion conscious. From the study, it is obvious that many lecturers do not pay attention to community service. In the appraisal form, it is interesting to note that the criteria for promotion is silent on community service despite the fact that community service is one of the tripartite terms of employment. It is therefore not surprising that hardly is any attention given to community service by lecturers.

The implication of this finding may be that lecturers concern themselves with publishing and teaching. It further reveals that most lecturers have adapted to the work demands despite seemingly unfavourable work environment and condition of service.

Conclusion

Following the outcome of the study based on data obtained and the result of the data analysis, it was concluded that career development demands do not affect the job effectiveness of university lecturers significantly. The new trend towards collaborative research should be encouraged. This will encourage team work, mentoring and shared research burden as well as enriched research output. If lecturers learn to monitor their stress symptoms effectively, this may aid the adoption of combative behaviours at the early stage

of the stress cycle and reduce incessant deaths and stress related illnesses like stroke that often occurs among lecturers.

Recommendations

Arising from this conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. University proprietors should provide adequate facilities and funds to improve the teaching/learning process and research. Facilities such as offices, laboratories, equipment and materials that provide a conducive atmosphere for research should be provided to ensure that lecturers have the tools and technology to work at their true potential at relative ease. This will yield huge dividends in terms of reduced stress related costs (health costs, loss of staff) and enhanced job effectiveness.
2. Government should create funds in order to encourage ground breaking research that can affect both the nation's economy and its developmental drive.
3. Administration of universities should endeavour to device means of assessing the community service component of the universities mandate.

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