

## LEADERSHIP TENURE AND GOAL ATTAINMENT IN NIGERIAN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES

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**Abstract:** Goals Attainment (GA) seems to be unattainable in Nigerian Federal Universities (NFUs). The tenure of numerous academic leaders is passing with little or no contribution to effective teaching, quality research and impactful community service. Successors of these leaders appear not to have an antecedence to follow. Over the years, most academic leaders in universities face challenges of time limit to achieve missions and visions statement. The study therefore examined the relationship between leadership tenure and GA in NFUs. The paper adopted correlational survey research design with a study population of 6,034 academic staff. The sample size for this study consisted of 422 academic staff using purposive sampling technique and a proportionate to size sampling technique. Goal Attainment Questionnaire (GAQ) and Leadership Tenure Questionnaire (LTQ) were instruments used for the study. The reliability coefficient of 0.93 and 0.87 were found using Cronbach Alpha method of testing reliability respectively. Research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation while research hypothesis was tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The result showed that level of GA in NFUs was found to be on high side. The finding also revealed that emphasis is placed on two-year term for directors, acting head of departments and deans of faculties while four-year tenure was considered for head of departments and deputy vice-chancellors respectively. The result also considers vice-chancellors to stay in office for five years. The finding equally revealed that there is significant relationship between leadership tenure and GA in federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Effective teaching, quality research and impactful community service should continue to be improved upon by the university management if NFUs are to meet up with international academic standards and best practices. Effort should be put in place by policy makers to ensure that the term used in office or key positions in the university should be in accordance with the university laws if missions and visions of the university are to be attained.

**Keywords:** Leadership tenure, Goal attainment

### Introduction

Goal attainment is the extent to which universities achieve its vision and missions through teaching, research and community service. Attaining set of visions and missions in the university is the main goal that every academic leader strives to achieve in Nigerian universities. Globally, universities have three means of attaining their goals and these are through teaching, research and community service. Nigerian universities seek to vigorously pursue their stated goals through teaching; research and development; knowledge generation, dissemination and international cooperation and dedicated services to the communities through extra-mural and consultancy services (Asiyai, 2013). Concisely put, Nigerian universities, like all its foreign counterparts, are set up to carry out effective teaching, high research productivity and impactful community services to engender technological, dynamic social and economic development (Daramola and Amos, 2016).

The vision of the University of Ibadan for instance, is to be a world-class institution for academic excellence geared toward meeting societal needs. While its missions are: to expand the frontiers of knowledge through provision of excellent conditions for learning and research; to produce graduates who are worthy in character and sound judgment; to contribute to the transformation of society through creativity and innovation and to serve as a dynamic custodian of society's salutary values and thus sustain its integrity. On the other hand, the vision and missions of University of Lagos is to be a top-class institution for the pursuit of excellence in knowledge,

character and service to humanity, and to provide an environment that is conducive for teaching, learning, research and development, where staff and students will interact and compete effectively with their counterparts internationally.

Obafemi Awolowo University mission is to be a top-rated university in Africa, ranked among the best in the world, whose products occupy leadership positions in the public and private sectors of the Nigerian and global economy. Its missions are to be recognized as a university that has harnessed modern technology, social, economic and financial strategies, built strong partnerships and linkages within and outside Nigeria. The vision and missions of the Federal University of Technology, Akure is to be a world-class university of technology and a centre of excellence in training, research and service delivery. To promote technological advancement by providing conducive environment for research, teaching and learning which engenders development of products that are technological oriented, self-reliant and relevant to society.

For the University of Agriculture Abeokuta, its vision is to be a centre of excellence in knowledge generation for global development and the sustenance of an environmentally friendly society while its missions are to build great future leaders and generate knowledge through research and intellectually stimulating environment for teaching, learning and community outreach towards sustainable development. Federal University, Oye-Ekiti has a vision to become an institution of first choice, recognized for providing critical opportunities for student success; to be acknowledged as a primary and engaged regional and global resource for entrepreneurial educational and best practice in mining and farming technology; and valued as a university where there are faculty, students, and professional staff who are active in integrating cutting-edge technology in multidisciplinary and disciplinary research. Thus, the question to ask is; how well are Nigerian federal universities able to attain these goals?

Looking at the visions and missions of some Nigerian federal universities, it will be observed that they have one thing in common which is to be an institution responsible for high level manpower training and development needed for the survival of individual and community as a whole. This is equally affirmed in the National Policy on Education (2014). According to the document, the fundamental goals of university education in Nigeria are:

*“To contribute to national development through high level relevant, manpower training; to develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; to develop the intellectual capacity of individual to understand and appreciate their level and external environment; to acquire both physical and intellectual skills, this enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; to promote and encourage scholarship and community service (FRN, 2014, Section 5:pg. 39)”.*

However, in order to ensure that the goals of universities are attained, there are officers elected or appointed and entrusted with responsibilities. These officers are called academic leaders who are specifically mandated to carry out their scheduled duties and perform their legitimate functions in accordance with the laws and statutes that established their university (Abiodun-Oyebanji and Oyedeji, 2022). Thus, academic leaders in a university system consist of vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, deans of faculties, heads of departments, directors, deans of students’ affair, level coordinators and all other university academic staff who are saddle with academic responsibility. The placement of academic leaders in the position depends on their professions, qualifications, levels and experience, among others (Uche, Anyamele, Nwikina and Meenyinikor, 2016). Collectively, it is when the goals set for these academic leaders are attained that it could be reasonably said that university goals are attained (Meenyinikor and Igocharacha, 2016). If the goals of universities are to be attained, academic leaders must then be globally exposed in the area of teaching, research and community service in order for them to ensure that the university provides effective teaching, high research productivity and impactful community service (Daramola and Amos, 2016). However, the impacts of these academic leaders are very crucial in the university system. It appears that the university goals cannot be attained without leadership tenure.

Leadership tenure in this paper is regarded as the time frame or duration during which an academic staff occupies administrative position. Therefore, it is considered as variable that could influence goal attainment in Nigerian federal universities. Leadership tenure could enhance goal attainment, academic leader’ long experiences on the job and improve effective teaching (Adenuga, 2015). The time frame of a leader in an office plays an important role in attaining university goals. It is believed that academic staff who remain in the university for a longer time tend to obtain more competency on their job, and therefore, perform at higher levels than their counterparts with

less tenure.

University goal attainment hence hinges on the performance of the university's leaders. An important variable that is likely to determine goal attainment is the tenure a leader. This is because leaders generally display higher level of performance as they gain more years (Mcdaniel, Schmidt and Hunter, 2008). In this regard, many Nigerian universities, for instance, professors are appointed as heads of departments and they serve for a term of four years. Readers and senior lecturers are appointed as acting heads of departments and serve for a term of two years. Those on lecturer grade 1 cadre are appointed as coordinators for one year. Where there is no substantive heads of departments, the dean of a faculty will serve as one, hence putting unnecessary additional burden on the very busy deans. Some universities operate a one-year term for such a head of department, renewable for another year. This translates to a maximum of two years for an occupant of the position of HOD. This, however, seems too short a time for the implementation of the lofty vision and mission of such candidates for the positions and it should, therefore, be revisited (Olayinka, 2015). However, Achunine (1998) observed that the length of years an academic leader stays on the job does not necessarily make one perform efficiently.

The tenure of academic leader in public universities has been the issues of debate for many decades. The rationales for short tenure or executive departure are differing and can be unpaid or paid. The benefit of executive can be best explainable by understanding the divergent and opposite sides of it, namely unpaid or paid departures. Unpaid departures include retirement or intentional strategic change for personal gains, such as prestige, pay or power. Involuntary or forced succession may have many reasons, such as low executive discharge, dispute or ethical reasons (Mitchell, 2012).

Mitchell (2012) identified advantages of longevity of leadership tenure as follows; trust of board and members; opportunity to develop tenure which was often related to satisfaction, inflexibility, and inability to change; knowledge of membership; knowledge of organisation's culture. These lists principally reflect on a leader own action. Such demerits could be mitigated by leaders' awareness of these limitations and by avoiding the setbacks of satisfaction. This self-policing outweighs the problems associated with the demerits. Another regularly identified demerit is creating enemies within the membership and board, especially among those with long term memories. This is certainly a challenge inherent in all organisations. The researcher added that most of the tenured leaders confirmed that their personal effectiveness improves as long term increases.

In the work of David (2014) on organisational leader selection: the impact of tenure, job level experience, and being an insider on effectiveness in Asbury University. The study revealed that tenure and being an insider is not contributor to leader effectiveness. Abdulkareem, Sheu and Kayode (2015) also indicated that university goals have been achieved to a high level in Southwestern universities, Nigeria. However, Mamedu and Ahiakwo (2016) observed that there is a state of unfavourable university goal attainment in Nigerian universities.

Olatokunbo (2013) equally worked on research productivity of teaching faculty members in federal universities in Nigeria and discovered that research productivity was high in the area of journal publications, occasional papers, technical reports, conference papers and working papers.

Previous studies that examine how the university management handles leadership tenure in relation to the university goal attainment seem to be rarely studied in the literature. However, researches have been carried out on leadership tenure in developed countries. But, no study of leadership tenure and goal attainment has been conducted in developing nations especially in Nigerian federal universities. In view of this, this present study is expected to fill this gap by examining the relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in Nigerian federal universities.

### Statement of the Problem

Goals attainment seems to be unattainable in Nigerian federal universities. The tenure of numerous leaders is passing with little or no contribution to teaching, research and community service. Successors of these leaders seem to have an antecedence to follow. Federal universities goals attainment in Nigeria is concerned with teaching, research and community service. It is from these goals that various universities come up with their mission and vision statement. Over the years, most academic leaders in universities face challenges of time limit

and passion which affect the attainment of the universities goal.

There is a growing body of research devoted to the study of goal attainment in developed and developing countries with different variables across higher institutions of learning, there is however limited study relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in Nigerian federal universities. With this foregoing, the paper was undertaking to examine the relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in Nigerian federal universities especially in southwestern Nigeria.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in federal universities in southwestern Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the level of goal attainment, to explain the pattern of leadership tenure in term of time frame

### Research Questions

The following research questions were answered;

1. What was the level of goal attainment in federal university in southwestern Nigeria?
2. What was the pattern of leadership tenure in term of time frame in federal university in southwestern Nigeria?

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria

### Methodology

The study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of this study comprised 6,034 academic staff in all federal universities in southwestern Nigeria. The sample size for this study consisted of 422 academic staff. First generation universities (University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife and University of Lagos, Akoka) were selected using purposive sampling technique. A proportionate to size sampling technique was used to select 10% of the academic staff members in various faculties from the selected universities. Research instruments developed for this paper include Goal Attainment Questionnaire (GAQ) and Leadership Tenure Questionnaire (LTQ). The two instruments were filled and responded by academic staff of the federal universities in southwestern Nigeria. The GAQ contained items on Goal Attainment Scale with three sub-scales and the items were rated on 5-point Liker-type scale, rated as VH- Very High (5); H- High (4); M- Moderate (3); L- Low (2); VL-Very Low (1). There were Teaching Scale (TS), Research Scale (RS) and Community Service Scale (CSS) and each scale had four items each. The LTQ was developed based on extensive literature reviewed by the researcher. This instrument elicited information from academic staff in each of the universities selected for the study. This instrument had 7 items. The items on time frame were rated from 2 to 6 years. A pilot test was conducted at Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) on small sample outside the main sample for the study in order to establish the reliability coefficient of the instruments. The reliability coefficient of 0.93 and 0.87 were found. Research question one and two were answered using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation while hypothesis was tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

### Result

**Research Question 1:** What was the level of goal attainment in federal universities in southwestern Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of Goal Attainment in Terms of Teaching, Research and Community Service

S/N	Statements	V H	H	M	L	VL	$\bar{X}$	Std D
<b>Teaching</b>								
1	Simplicity of language	57 (14.5)	155 (39.3)	104 (26.4)	43 (10.9)	19 (4.8)	3.50	1.04
2	Level of confidence	71 (18.0)	148 (37.6)	103 (26.1)	33 (8.4)	19 (4.8)	3.59	1.05
3	Tolerate students	68 (17.3)	140 (35.5)	117 (29.7)	42 (10.7)	9 (2.3)	3.57	0.99
4	Appropriateness of instructional approaches	68 (17.3)	141 (35.8)	107 (27.2)	49 (12.4)	13 (3.3)	3.53	1.04
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>3.55</b>						
<b>Research</b>								
1	Authoring scientific peer-reviewed bulletin	71 (18.0)	183 (46.4)	104 (26.4)	17 (4.3)	8 (2.0)	3.76	.88
2	Writing journal article	116 (29.4)	173 (43.9)	73 (18.5)	13 (3.3)	3 (0.8)	4.02	.84
3	Writing technical report	57 (14.5)	135 (34.3)	99 (25.1)	44 (11.2)	43 (10.9)	3.31	1.10
4	Writing chapter in book	63 (16.0)	148 (37.6)	98 (24.9)	38 (9.6)	26 (6.6)	3.49	1.10
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>3.65</b>						
<b>Community Service</b>								
1	Organising public lectures for the host community	81 (20.6)	125 (31.7)	72 (18.3)	46 (11.7)	47 (11.9)	3.40	1.30
2	Offering training, sensitisation and mobilisation services	54 (13.7)	157 (39.8)	95 (24.1)	43 (10.9)	24 (6.1)	3.47	1.08
3	Making financial contributions to the community	66 (16.8)	110 (27.9)	110 (27.9)	54 (13.7)	40 (10.2)	3.28	1.21
4	Promoting civic duties of the community	57 (14.5)	151 (38.3)	105 (26.6)	50 (12.7)	14 (3.6)	3.50	1.02
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>3.41</b>						

Note: Mean value range from 0-1.4=Very Low, 1.5-2.4= Low, 2.5-3.4= Moderate, 3.5-4.4= High, 4.4-5= Very High. Figures in parenthesis are percentages.

Table 1 presents the result of the level of goal attainment in terms of teaching, research and community service. The four items on teaching had a weighted average score of 3.55 out of maximum obtainable 5.00. The obtained mean values for the items are as follows: simplicity of language (mean=3.50); level of confidence (mean=3.59) and tolerate students (mean=3.57); appropriateness of instructional approaches (mean=3.53). Based on the weighted

average of 3.55 which is above the threshold of 3.0, the result shows that the level of goal attainment in term of teaching was high.

The result also presents 4 items on research with a weighted average score of 3.65 out of maximum obtainable 5.00. The obtained mean values for the four items are as follows: Authoring scientific peer-reviewed bulletin (mean=3.76); writing journal article (mean=4.02); writing technical report (mean=3.31) and writing chapter in book (mean=3.49). Considering these observations, the weighted average of 3.65 is above the threshold of 3.0. This indicated that the level of goal attainment in term of research in federal university was on the high side.

The result equally presents 4 items on community service with a weighted average score of 3.41 out of maximum obtainable 5.00. The mean values for these items are as follows: organising public lectures for the host community (mean= 3.40); offering training, sensitisation and mobilisation services (mean=3.47); making financial contributions to the community (mean=3.28) and promoting civic duties of the community (mean=3.50). The weighted average of 3.41 is above the threshold of 3.0. This indicates that goal attainment in Nigerian federal universities was found to be high. Based on the result of teaching, research and community service, level of goal attainment in Nigerian Federal universities was high. The finding is consistent with that of Abdulkareem, Sheu and Kayode (2015) who found out that university goals have been achieved to a high extent in southwestern universities, Nigeria. The finding of this study is equally in agreement with the result of Olatokunbo (2013) who found out that research productivity of the teaching faculty members in federal universities in Nigeria was high in conference papers, technical reports, journal publications, occasional papers and working papers. This finding, however, negates the result of Mamedu and Ahiakwo (2016) that showed there was a state of unfavourable university goal attainment.

**Research Question 2:** What was the pattern of leadership tenure in term of time frame in federal university in southwestern Nigeria?

**Table 2: Pattern of Leadership Tenure in Terms of Time Frame**

Leadership	Time Frame (Yrs.)					$(\bar{x})$	SD
	2	3	4	5	6		
1 Acting Director	192 (15.0)	56 (4.4)	38 (3.0)	4 (4.0)	2 (0.2)	1.52	.82
2 Director	128 (10.0)	90 (7.0)	61 (4.8)	17 (1.3)	2 (0.2)	1.91	.96
3 Acting Head of Department	187 (14.6)	106 (8.3)	42 (3.3)	3 (0.2)	---- (0)	1.59	.74
4 Head of Department	47 (3.7)	97 (7.6)	160 (12.5)	41 (3.2)	3 (0.2)	2.59	.90
5 Dean	129 (10.1)	77 (6.0)	126 (9.9)	15 (1.2)	----- (0)	2.23	.84
6 Deputy Vice-Chancellor	37 (2.9)	51 (4.0)	146 (11.4)	83 (6.5)	12 (0.9)	2.95	1.02
7 Vice-Chancellor	6 (0.5)	6 (0.5)	102 (8.0)	154 (12.0)	75 (5.9)	3.83	.85

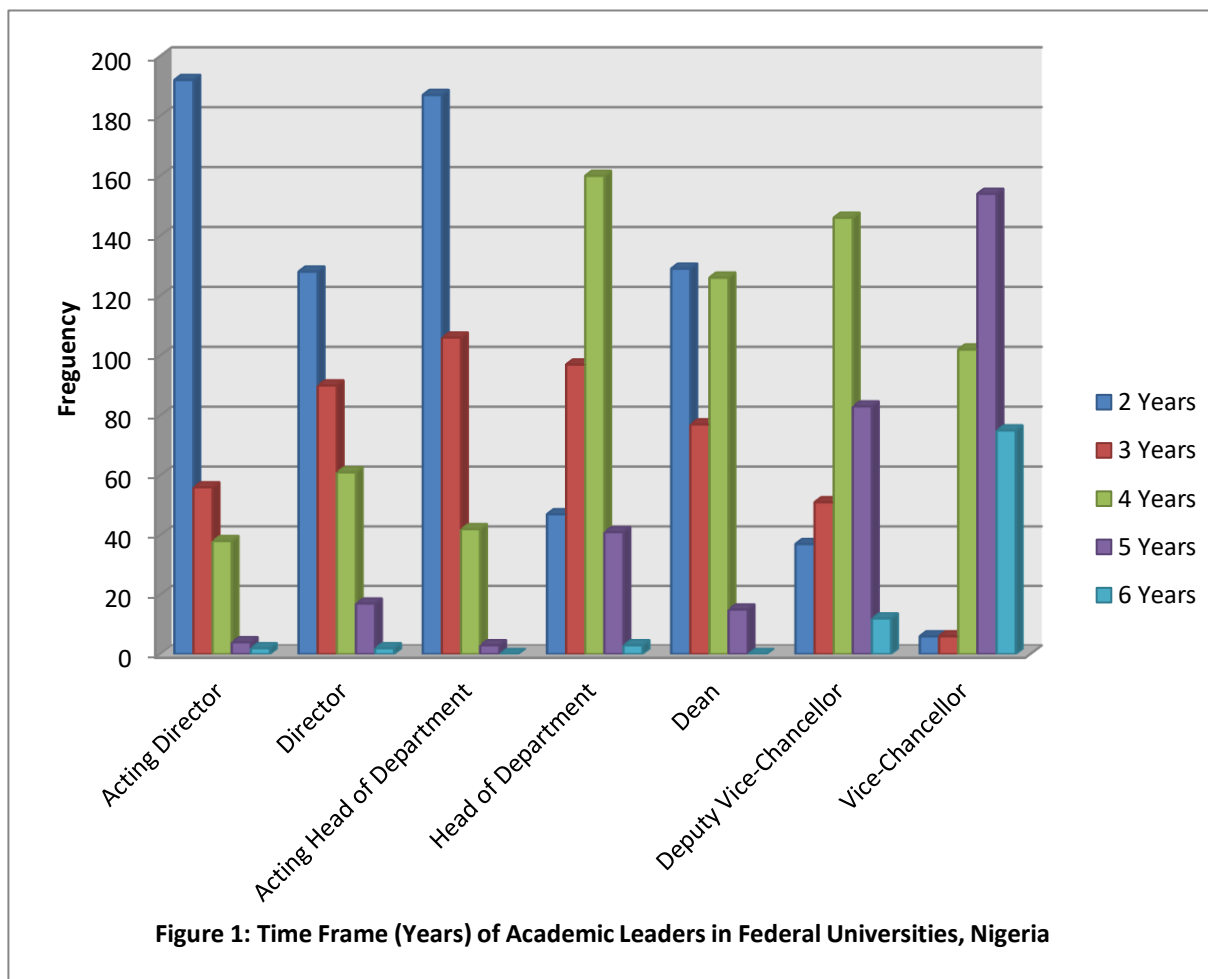


Table 2 and figure 1 show the pattern of leadership tenure in terms of time frame an academic leader spends in an office. For the office of acting director, 15% of the academic staff were of the opinion that acting director spent two-year term in office; 7.4% of the sampled academic staff reported that acting director spent three or four-year term in office while smallest proportion of academic staff viewed that acting director used five or six-year term.

The table also presents the number of years that director can spend in the position of academic leadership. The study found that 10% of the academics reported two-year term in office; 7.0% and 4.8% of the academic staff sampled for this study reported that director spend three and four-year term in office respectively. However, less than 2% of the academic staff stated that director spend maximum of five or six-year term in office.

The result in the table also shows that 14.6% of the academic staff confirmed that acting heads of departments spent two-year term while 11.6 % of the academic staff surveyed for this study reported that acting heads of departments have four or five-year term to spend in office. However, none of the respondents reported the case of six-year term for the position of acting heads of departments.

It is observed from the table that the highest proportion 12.5% of academic staff reported that heads of departments spent four-year term; 11.3% of the participating academic staff stated that heads of departments used two or three-year term in office while 3.4% of academic staff that reported five or six-year term was relatively small.

Observation from the table reveals that 10.1% of the academic staff reported that deans spent two years while 9.9% of the academic staff reported that deans spent four-year term in office. However, 6.0% and 1.2% of the participating academic staff were of the opinion that deans can spend three or five-year term while six-year term is not realistic for any dean in federal universities in Nigeria.

A large proportion 11.4% of the academic staff confirmed that the office of deputy vice-chancellors is four years while 6.5% of the participants in the study reported that deputy vice-chancellors spend five-year term in office. A small proportion of the respondents viewed that deputy vice-chancellors spend six-year term while 2.9% and 4.0% of the academic staff were of the opinion that deputy vice-chancellors can either spend two or three years in the office.

The table equally found out that 12.0% of the academic staff reported that vice-chancellors stay in office for the period of five years while 8.4% of the participants used in this study were of the opinion that vice-chancellors spent four-year term. The vice-chancellors can also spend two or three years in the office as shown and confirmed in table 2.

Based on the result, it can be inferred that emphasis is placed on two-year term for acting directors, directors, acting head of departments and deans of faculty while four-year tenure was considered for head of departments and deputy vice-chancellors respectively. The result equally considers vice-chancellors to stay in office for five years. This implies that for university goal to be attained there is a need for vice-chancellors to spend five-years, two years for acting directors/head of departments, directors and deans of faculty while four-year tenure was considered for head of departments and deputy vice-chancellors.

This finding is in line with Olayinka (2015) that a maximum of two years for an occupant of the position of HOD is too short for the implementation of the lofty visions and missions of universities and it should, therefore, be revisited. The result is also consistent with the submission of Mitchell (2012) who identified advantages of longevity of leadership tenure as follows; trust of board and members; opportunity to develop tenure which was often related to satisfaction, inflexibility, and inability to change; knowledge of membership and knowledge of organisation’s culture. Likewise, the finding agrees with confirmation made by Mcdaniel, Schmidt and Hunter, (2008) that academic leaders generally display higher level of performance as they gain more years in the system. Achunine (1998) however, negates the findings of this study as the researcher observed that the length of years an academic leader stays on the job does not necessarily make one perform efficiently.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria

**Table 3: Leadership Tenure and Goal Attainment**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	r	P	Remarks
<b>Leadership Tenure</b>	394	38.2	60.9	-0.15	0.000	Significant
<b>Goal Attainment</b>	394	67.0	24.3			

(P < .05)

Decisions were based on Evans (1996)’s suggestion for the absolute value r which is 0.00-0.19 “very weak positive”, 0.20-0.39 “weak positive”, 0.40-0.59 “moderate positive”, 0.60-0.79 “strong positive” and 0.80-1.0 “very strong positive” with 0.05 level of significance.

Based on this decision, the results in table 3 indicated Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation showing the relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment. Based on table 3, there was negative and very weak significant relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment,  $r = (-.15)$ , 0.000,  $P < .05$ . Based on this result, hypothesis 1 which states that there is no significant relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment was therefore rejected. This shows that there is significant relationship between leadership tenure and goal attainment in federal universities in Southwestern Nigeria. The finding of this paper contrary the finding of David (2014) who indicated that tenure and being an insider is not contributor to leader effectiveness.



## Conclusions

The paper concluded that goal attainment in the area of teaching, research and community service was found to be high. It was also concluded that none of the academic leaders spent six years in office. It can also be concluded that, leadership tenure have made significant contributions to goal attainment in federal universities in southwestern Nigeria.

## Recommendations

Effective teaching quality research and impactful community service should continue to be improved upon by the university management if Nigerian federal universities are to meet up with international academic standards and best practices.

Effort should be put in place by policy makers to ensure that the term used in office or key positions in the university should be in accordance with the university laws if missions and visions of the university are to be attained. Then, whenever a position is vacant or tenure of academic leader ends, academic experience, past performance and good recommendation should be considered as a selection criterion and ensure that subordinates that is, academic staff, are fully involved in the process of electing/appointing new leader

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