MANAGEMENT OF PERSONNEL AND COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH CENTRES OF SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES FOR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKING

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Abstract

This study investigated management of personnel and collaboration in research centres of South-South Nigerian Universities for National University ranking. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population comprised 435 staff (63 director/acting directors and 372 administrative staff). The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 50 directors/acting directors and 348 administrative staff representing 80% of the population. A self-designed instrument known as Management of Personnel and Collaboration Questionnaire (MPCQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validities were ensured by experts. The Cronbach alpha was used to compute the reliability coefficient of 0.87 for MPCQ. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The result of the study revealed that personnel and collaboration were properly managed by administrators and directors in research centres for national university ranking. On this premise; it was recommended that there should be proper staff incentives and opportunities for staff development programmes for the staff of these centres for capacity enhancement. Moreso, the authorities of the Nigerian universities and Universities Commission should constantly insist that researcher centres use web outlet to publish research outputs in order to ensure collaboration.
Keywords: Management, Personnel and Collaboration.

Introduction

Management is the principle of initiating, organizing, coordinating and directing of work and work related activities in an organization. Eleazu (2008) is of the view that management is the planning and controlling of an organization, whether it is a business, a not-for-profit organization, or government body or an educational institution. Prabbal(2006) defines man*agement* as an art that involves identifying the mission, objective, procedures, rules and manipulation of the human capital of an enterprise to

contribute to the success of the enterprise. Arising from his definition, it implies that management is not the manipulation of a mechanism (machine or automated program), not the herding of animals, and can occur either in a legal or in an illegal enterprise or environment. From an individual's perspective, management does not need to be seen solely from an enterprise point of view, because management is an essential function to improve one's life and relationships. Management is therefore everywhere and it has a wider range of application.

Whatever angle educational management is viewed, it is mainly the process of individuals coming together as a group with a leader to articulate and co-ordinate activities which in the end achieve results that would have been impossible by an individual working alone. It is in this regard that Sergiovanni (2000) perceived management as a process of working with people and through them organizational goals are achieved. In the same vain, Drucker (2003) reported that management refers to the functions of planning, organizing, directing and controlling. In furtherance, he maintained that planning encompasses selecting responsibilities that must be performed to attain organizational goals, outlining how the tasks must be performed, and indicating when they should be performed. This suggested that planning activity focuses on goals attainment; hence managers outline exactly what organizations should do to be successful as planning is concerned with the success of the organization in the short term as well as in the long term.

Also, organizing can be assumed as assigning the tasks developed in the planning stages, to various individuals or groups within the organization' that is a way of creating a mechanism or system for plans to be put in action. Following this therefore, research centres within the university undertake responsibilities that contribute to the University's goals. Given a relations that runs in chain reaction, responsibilities are organized so that the output (goal attainment) of each individual contributes to the success of departments, which, in turn, contributes to the success of divisions, which ultimately contributes to the success of the organization. Lastly, it is worthy to note that entails controlling of information and resources (fund, personal and facilities) in order to achieve the goals and aspirations of the organization.

There are key elements that actually define the viability and strength of a research centres, there elements are recourses, funding, budgeting, personnel, research finding and collaboration (linkages). These

elements are christened research environment. The conduciveness of a research environment goes a long way to define the visibility of the centre through the host University. Such visibility is construed in terms of being prominently ranked among other Universities, nationally and globally.

Statement of the Problem

The viability of any institution founded upon research activities. The research centers are co-opted to manage and direct research activities for total quality management in the universities with the notion national and global ranking. Western worlds are having institutional and societal advancement because of unprecedented interest and investment in researches. The poor function of research centres may amount to lowering of university reputation in the comity of the world with an attendant low ranks. This study therefore raises concerns whether the objectives of the research centres are being met. This present study seeks to provide empirical answers to these issues by probing into the opinions of Directors and Administrative Staff in research centres in South-South Nigerian universities on the management of research centres for university ranking; with particular emphasis on personnel and collaboration

management. This is the motivation that prompted the study

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided this study. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine techniques for personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking;
2. investigate strategies for managing collaboration in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for global university ranking?
2. What are the strategies of managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for national university ranking.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the strategies of managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for national university ranking.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised all the four hundred and thirty - five (435) staff of the research centres in South-South universities in Nigeria (sixty-three (63) Directors / Assistant Directors and three hundred and seventy-two (372) administrative staff) in the 63 functional research centres in South-South Nigerian universities. The sample size of this study was 348(50 director/acting directors and 298 administrative staff) staff of the research centres in South-South Nigerian universities. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size which represents 80% of the population of Directors/Acting Directors and administrative staff respectively. The 80% of 63 directors/acting directors gave 50 of directors/acting directors while 80% of 372 administrative staff gave 298 administrative staff respectively. A self-designed instrument known as Management of Personnel and Collaboration Questionnaire (MPCQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validities were ensured by experts. Face and content validities were ensured by experts. The internal consistency method with the help of Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the reliability coefficient of 0.87 for MPCQ. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking?

The third research question of the study is addressed by fifteen questionnaire items as contained in the table below.

Table 1: weighted mean and standard deviation scores on the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking

S/N	Items on personnel management	Administrative staff n=298				Directors n=50			
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank Order	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank Order	Decision
1	Retention of key employees leads to effective talent management.	2.21	1.08	14th	Disagreed	1.21	1.29	15th	Disagreed
2	Lack of employee engagement creates a talent flight risk that can negatively affect research for global ranking.	2.05	1.03	15th	Disagreed	2.12	1.32	14th	Disagreed
3	A deliberate process for identifying high potential staff for research helps in the process of global ranking.	2.69	1.11	1st	Agreed	2.54	1.21	10th	Agreed
4	Conducting recruitment of right employees for researches, in terms of research studentship.	2.67	1.11	3rd	Agreed	2.73	1.01	1st	Agreed
5	Conducting periodic training and refresher programs for research students and fellows will enhance their capacities for conducting researches.	2.67	1.12	3rd	Agreed	2.66	1.32	5th	Agreed
6	Introduction of staff welfare is a good management strategy that encourages staff and students to engage in research endeavours.	2.65	1.11	7th	Agreed	2.71	1.21	3rd	Agreed
7	Keeping up-to-date on new regulations relating to engagement researchers helps to improve the research status of the university.	2.64	1.14	8th	Agreed	2.55	1.18	9th	Agreed
8	Regular implementation of an appraisal system in the research centre helps to encourage the personnel to conduct researches.	2.61	1.19	11th	Agreed	2.72	1.69	2nd	Agreed
9	Strategic auditing of the human resource role in research and development will help to check research activities.	2.69	1.11	1st	Agreed	2.68	1.09	4th	Agreed

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Decision	Mean	SD	Rank	Decision
10.	Introduction of performance rate pay system for result achieving staff and students of research centres enhances creativity.	2.66	1.26	6th	Agreed	2.53	1.41	11th	Agreed
11	Provision of leadership development programmes for staff and students of research centres helps in stimulating researches.	2.61	1.13	11th	Agreed	2.61	1.23	7th	Agreed
12	Provision of adequately qualified staffing does not add to the process of conducting researches.	2.24	1.10	13th	Disagreed	2.15	1.22	13th	Disagreed
13	Assignment of research supervisors and topics based on area of specialty is an inroad towards conducting good researches.	2.63	1.13	9th	Agreed	2.51	1.23	12th	Agreed
14	Proper motivation of research supervisors and students leads to carrying out good researches.	2.67	1.11	3rd	Agreed	2.56	1.33	8th	Agreed
15	Creation of enabling environment for competition among research supervisors and staff will lead to conducting good researches.	2.62	1.15	10th	Agreed	2.65	1.13	6th	Agreed
	Aggregate mean	**2.55**				**2.46**			

Table 1 revealed that the mean on items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 whose values are above criterion mean of 2.5 points are adjudged positive and are accepted in favour of the research question.The average mean value of 2.55 is an indication that the accepted items are more that the rejected items. However, items 11, 12 and 12 were rejected in relation to the research question.

On the basis of this, the aggregate mean scores of 2.55 and 2.46 (for Administrative staff and Directors respectively), enables the researcher to confirm that the different approaches of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigeria for national ranking are moderately used.

Research Question Two: Strategies for managing collaboration in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

Table 2: Weighted mean and standard deviation on strategies for managing collaboration in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

S/N	Items on strategies for managing collaboration in research centres	Administrative Staff n=298				Directors n=50			
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank Order	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Rank Order	Decision
16	Granting of incentives to undertake collaboration of research centres.	2.69	1.13	4th	Agreed	2.78	1.21	2nd	Agreed
17	Having research partnership with external partners serves as a way to attain global ranking of your university.	2.66	1.09	6th	Agreed	2.59	1.12	11th	Agreed
18	Prompt provision of research results that serves societal needs creates room for collaboration.	2.64	1.10	8th	Agreed	2.70	1.12	6th	Agreed
19	Improved communication system between a university and other research professional bodies.	2.71	1.02	2nd	Agreed	2.56	1.13	12th	Agreed
20	Creation of collaborative strategic plan to guide the activities of the research partnership.	2.63	1.13	12th	Agreed	2.66	1.13	9th	Agreed
21	Creation of link between different research units and other affiliated institutions.	2.66	1.10	6th	Agreed	2.54	1.12	13th	Agreed
22	Balancing of existing capability with external potential opportunities for research endeavours.	2.79	1.02	1st	Agreed	2.65	1.12	10th	Agreed
23	Alignment of institutional competencies with external environment and global aspirations are collaborative means of preparation universities for global ranking.	2.70	1.12	3rd	Agreed	2.73	1.14	3rd	Agreed
24	Optimal use of scarce resources is a good way to collaborate.	2.66	1.12	6th	Agreed	2.71	1.13	5th	Agreed
25	Encouragement of staff to use their professional competence in research collaboration.	2.60	1.11	14th	Agreed	2.81	1.01	1st	Agreed
26	Cloud collaboration leads to global ranking of university.	2.11	1.11	15th	Disagreed	2.43	1.19	15th	Disagreed
27	Review of research strategic context as part of research selection process encourages the involvement of other bodies thereby leading to global ranking of the university.	2.64	1.10	8th	Agreed	2.50	1.15	14th	Agreed
28	Development of action media for social groups is a collaborative	2.68	1.12	5th	Agreed	2.72	1.11	4th	Agreed

	way of improving the image of a university for global ranking.								
29	Systematic quality assessment of research and development unit of a university helps in the growth process of global ranking of your university.	2.64	1.13	8th	Agreed	2.69	1.15	7th	Agreed
30	The use of linked computers leads to global ranking of the university.	2.62	1.11	13th	Agreed	2.68	1.16	8th	Agreed
	Aggregate	**2.63**				**2.65**			

Table 2 revealed that items 16 – 25; and 27 – 30 are adjudged positive and agreed in favour of the research question, whereas item 26 is adjudged negative and disagreed in relation to the research question. From the aggregate mean scores of 2.63 and 2.65 (for Administrative staff and Directors respectively), the researcher confirmed that there are strategies for managing collaboration of research centres for national ranking in universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the opinion of Directors and Administrative Staff on the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

Table 3: Result output of the Difference in the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

Respondent	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	z-cal	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
Directors	50	35.15	10.77					Retain H_o
						0.670		
Administrative Staff	298	35.90	10.31	346	0.426	0.712		

Table 3 shows that at 346 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-test value of 0.426 was deemed not significant at 0.712 when

subjected to 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since this 2-tailed significant value is higher than 0.05 at which the hypothesis is tested, we consider that the difference is not significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected. We therefore, uphold the null hypothesis that

there is no significant difference between the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the techniques for managing personnel in the research centres in South-South Nigerian universities for university ranking.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the strategies of managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

Table 4: Result output of the Difference in the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the strategies of managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking

Respondent	N	$\bar{\bar{x}}$	SD	Df	z-cal.	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
Directors	50	37.93	11.72					Retain H_o
Administrative Staff	298	36.84	34.82	346	0.198	0.990	*0.05*	

Table 4 shows that at 346 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, the calculated z-test value of 0.198 was deemed not significant at 0.07 when subjected to 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since this 2-tailed significant value is higher than 0.05 at which the hypothesis is tested, we consider that the difference is not significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis is not rejected. We therefore, uphold the null hypothesis that

there is no significant difference between the mean scores of Directors and Administrative Staff on the strategies of managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed as shown below:

Techniques for Personnel Management in Research Centres for National University Ranking

The study reported that the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking consist of: developing a deliberate process for identifying high potential staff for research; conducting recruitment of right employees for researches; conducting periodic training and refresher programmes for research students and fellows; introduction of staff welfare; keeping up-to-date on new regulations relating to researchers; regular implementation of an appraisal system; strategic auditing of the human resource role in research and development; introduction of performance rate pay system for result achieving staff and students. The result also showed no significant difference between the perceptions of Directors and Administrative Staff on the techniques of personnel management in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

This study agreed with Akpotu, Onoyase and Onoyase (2008) who reported that strategizing on the techniques to retain the best staff requires the determination of training needs and development, implementation of training programs, keeping up to date on new regulations relating to employment, health care, and other issues, mobility of staff and

flexibility of staff. Furthermore, Nabi, Tareq, and Rahman (2017) and Timothy (2005) reported that regular implementation of an appraisal system; strategic auditing of the human resource role in research and development are key indicators to effective utilization of personnel for the achievement of set goals for an organization.

Strategies for Managing Collaboration in Research Centres for Global University Ranking

On the analysis of the strategies of managing collaboration, the study revealed that strategies for managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking consist of: granting of incentives to undertake collaboration of research centres; research partnership with external partners; prompt provision of research results; improved communication system; creation of collaborative strategic plan; creation of link between different research units and other affiliated institutions; balancing of existing capability with external potential opportunities for research endeavours and alignment of institutional competencies with external environment and aspirations. Further, the study reported that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of Directors and

Administrative Staff on the strategies of managing collaborations in research centres in South-South Nigerian Federal Universities for university ranking.

In support to this study, Toke (2009) reported that part of the strategies that may project universities outside the world include openness towards the differential premises, recruitment of personnel, rewarding good performance, systematic quality assessment and development, encouragement of staff to use their professional competence, granting of incentives to undertake collaboration, creation and maintenance of good working conditions.

It is worthy to note that the strategies for effective management of collaboration include best application available resources (financial, human and physical). Qi and Wang (2009) reported that industry collaborative innovation is an open industry innovation system, which has three dimensions including industrial chain collaboration innovation, inter-industry collaboration innovation and industry-university-research collaboration innovation. Also, Friend and Cook (2000) reported that as part of the strategies for managing collaboration include University administrators at any level may establish teams of lecturers to problem solve about students experiencing difficulty, to

establish and discuss academic standards, and to create positive working relationships with institutions outside their domain.

Many studies have reported positive outcomes of collaboration for research centres, including improved efficacy (Shachar & Shmuelevitz, 2007), more positive attitudes toward teaching (Brownell, 2009), and higher levels of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). According to Hausman and Goldring (2001), research centres must be central to any meaningful change in schools. This is because the more research centres collaborate, the more they are able to converse knowledgably about theories, methods, and processes of teaching and learning, and thus improve their findings that could lead to global visibility of their universities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the directors and administrative staff were aware of different techniques of personnel and collaboration management in research centres in South-South Universities in Nigeria for national ranking

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be proper staff incentives and opportunities for staff development programmes for the staff of these centres for capacity enhancement.

2. The authorities of the Nigerian universities and Universities Commission should constantly insist that researcher centres use web outlet to publish research outputs in order to ensure collaboration.

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