

Strategies for the Management of Higher Education in Nigeria for Enhanced Productivity

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Abstract

This study examined and extensively examined strategies for the management of higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity. It adopted two research questions and two hypotheses respectively. The design is descriptive. Population comprised all public tertiary institutions in Rivers States. Sample for the study comprised 400 respondents drawn from the four tertiary institutions. Simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting 400 respondents from the selected institutions at 100 respondent per institution. Structured questionnaire titled, Strategies for the Management of Higher Education for Enhanced Productivity (SMHEEPQ) was used for data collection. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined through a test re-test method, with reliability index of 0.78, obtained through Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) formula. The researcher and 2 research assistants administered the instrument to the respondents used for the study. Out of 400 copies of the instrument administered, 350 were retrieved and used for the analysis. Research questions were answered through mean and standard deviations. The two hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Results show that Human Resources Planning (HRP) as a management strategy in higher education influences employees' productivity, satisfaction, and motivation.

Keywords: Higher, Education, productivity, strategies, management.

Introduction

Education is a critical tool through which citizens of any country acquire the right knowledge, skills, values, attributes and attitudes for peaceful living within the society. With properly managed education, people's attitudes and behaviours towards other nonproductive things can be redirected to the development of skills that support economic regeneration and sustainable livelihood. Education is an area of public service that is encountering increasing scrutiny and criticism for its low quality and productivity. Educators are being called on to function in an effective and efficient manner. In addition, they are expected to adapt policies and strategies that will enhance even greater productivity.

Tertiary institutions as an essential level of educational institution, contribute towards the production of higher-level manpower in relevant skills and competencies, which if properly harnessed could enhance productivity for national development. Tertiary education refers to the level of education acquired after secondary education in higher institutions of learning, such as, universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other institutions of higher learning offering correspondence courses, diplomas and certificates (Famade et al., 2015).

The roles or functions of educational administration include; planning, financing, staff development, curriculum development, student administration, school-community relationship, plant management and security among others. Etuk (2007) outlined the following under listed functions of school administration as staff personnel administration, student personnel administration, finance and physical resources, and school community relationship management.

Productivity itself refers to the amount of output produced per work hour. It measures the relationship between the quantity and quality of goods and services produced and the quantity of resources needed to produce them (i.e., factor inputs such as, labour, capital and technology) (Simbeye, 1992; Okojie 1995; Roberts & Tybout, 1997). Productivity is viewed as the instrument for continuous progress, and of constant improvement of activities. It is often seen as output per unit of input. Hence, higher productivity connotes achieving the same volume of output with less factor inputs or more volume of output with the same amount of factor inputs. . It is about reaching the highest level of performance with least expenditure of resources. The International Labour Office (ILO, 2005) opined that productivity rises when an increase in output occurs with a less than proportionate increase in inputs, or when the same output is produced with fewer inputs. Productivity improvement in higher institutions is a promising strategy for containing costs in the effort to make tertiary education as affordable as possible. Without technology-driven and improvements in the delivery of service, the price of a university degree might be beyond the reach of a growing proportion of potential students.

Concept of Human Resource - Human resources may be conceptualised as the skills, knowledge and experiences of a population, which could be used in producing goods and services. In other words, it includes the members of a population, who are endowed with varied skills, knowledge and experiences that are crucial for the socio-political and economic development of their nations. These indispensable values for national development may have been acquired from training in educational institutions and/or from working in private and public establishment (Ololube, 2019). Barney (1995) in Amanyie (2015) opined that human resources include all the experience, skills, judgment, abilities, knowledge, contacts, risk taking and wisdom of individual and associates within an organization. He further noted that human resources easily recognized as the most important of the resources required for the production of goods and services are the key to rapid socio-economic development and efficient services delivery. He also recognized human resources as the basic resources that are indispensable in the process of converting other resources to the benefits of man. Armstrong (2009) further maintained that the role of the human resource function is to take initiatives and provide guidance, support and services on all matters relating to the organizations' employees. Essentially, the human resources function is in the delivery business, providing the advice that enable organization to get things done through people.

Human Resource Planning Strategies - The pivotal role of manpower in an organisation informed the importance that its development cannot be optional but something that must be done irrespective of the personnel previous training or experience. Manpower development is “an indispensable component of strategic human resource management as well as a means of

reducing inefficiency among organisational key asset- its human resources, and it is vital for workers' productivity and organisational performance" (Wabara et al., 2017:3).

The human resources in question, are the humans in the organization, without them, there cannot be production. They provide the labour power which is the muscle of production. Labour power is the physical, psychic, emotional and intellectual capability of man (the worker). Hence, there is need for human resource planning to enhance productivity of any organization, private or public alike. Human resource planning is an integrated approach to performing the personnel function in order to have a sufficient supply of adequately developed and expected people to perform the duties and tasks required to meet organization objectives and satisfy the individual needs, goals of organizational members (Megginson, 2015). It is the process for ensuring that the human resources requirements of an organization are identified and plans are made for satisfying these requirements.

Effective human resource planning is mainly concerned with matching organizational needs with employee needs; remuneration and incentive plans; recruitment, selection, career planning; promotion and transfer; employees' safety, welfare and working environment; motivational activities, and maintenance.

Ubeku (1983), having observed its importance and significance of the linkage identified activities that enhance managerial effectiveness that engenders employee productivity as hereunder:

Acquisition of Best Human Resources: human resource planning determines future human resource requirements in an organization. The main objective of human resource planning is to manage right person at right place at right time. Beyond this, it is concerned with job analysis, recruitment, selection, and socialization. Therefore, human resource planning is essential for enhanced employee productivity.

Focusing on Corporate Goal: human resource planning is goal directed. It gives focus on corporate goal. Human resource goals are linked to overall strategic goal of organization. Such linkage helps to promote better co-ordination, easy implementation, and effective control. Therefore, human resource planning is essential for enhanced productivity.

Optimal Utilization of Human Resources: human resource planning help in proper utilization of human resource in an organization. It facilitates motivation, performance appraisal, and compensation management. It also identifies surplus or unutilized human resource. So, human resource planning is essential for enhanced productivity.

Human Resources development: human resource planning determines the numbers and the qualification of employees, recruitment, selection, placement, and socialization. It also provides adequate time and place for seminar, workshop, training and development and other career development programs to the development of human resource for enhanced productivity.

Effective reduction of uncertainty: environmental factors like economic, political, legal, social-cultural, and technological can create uncertainty. Human resource planning reduces such uncertainty by forecasting future human resource. It matches demand and supply of human resource. It also develops recruitment, selection, placement, and socialization basis after studying and analyzing such environmental factors. This is very essential for enhanced productivity

Reduction of labour cost: human resource planning reduces labour cost, which minimizes cost of production and product price. Labour cost can be reduced by utilizing available labour force effectively. Reduction in labour cost promotes competition ability of organization for enhanced productivity.

Regularity of production: human resource planning ensures regularity in production. It determines right person at right job. It also facilitates to provide motivational incentives and development opportunities. This creates regular working environment. Therefore, human resource planning is essential for enhanced productivity.

Maintenance of excellent industrial relation: human resource planning maintains good labour relations. It is very important to achieve overall corporate objectives. It provides qualified, competent, and motivated personnel to promote labour or industrial relations in an organization. Thus, human resource planning is very essential for enhanced productivity.

It has been observed by scholars that there is interface and interlink between strategic planning, human resource planning and employee productivity in public organisation. Strategic planning is the process by which top management determines overall organizational purposes and objectives and how they are to be achieved.

Motivation- The ultimate goal of every educational institution is to enhance productivity. Employees are the main driving force of any organization. Therefore, for improved productivity, growth and efficiency, every organization must as a matter of necessity motivate and take good care of their workers. Employees' motivation is an essential ingredient in the success of every institution. Therefore, understanding the factors that motivate employees for better performance is a sure way to enhance productivity.

Motivation is an incitement or inducement to act or move. It is the process of inducing the employees of an organization to act in a predetermined desired manner so as to achieve organizational goals. At the core of this concept, lies three important sub-concepts. Motivation is a term subjected to multidimensional definitions. According to Ejiogu in Koko (2005), motivation is the process by which management enables employees to direct their energies towards maximum attainment of the goals and objectives of the organization.

The three 'Ms' of motivation, which include: motive, motivation and motivator.

Motive: this refers to the inner state of mind that initiates and controls behaviour towards business goals. They directly ally to the needs of individuals.

Motivation: this is the process of stimulating action by understanding the needs of employees and utilizing their motives.

Motivator: is the techniques used for motivation, such as, pay bonus, promotion among others.

The effectiveness and efficiency of organizations is usually dependent on employee motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and skills (Stephen, 2014). Motivated employees are expected to deliver higher productivity and also influence others to work harder. There is always a positive relationship/link between motivation and productivity. A motivated employee derives satisfaction from his job because his needs are met and thereby increases the level of his productivity in the organization. Motivation is therefore, the driving force to

pursue and satisfy one's needs while job satisfaction is an employee's emotional response to current job condition. Invariably, motivation and job satisfaction create confidence, loyalty and ultimately enhance employee and organizational productivity.

Motivational Strategies- To attain a sustainable performance at its highest level by employees is the concern of every organisation. This demands adequate concentration to how people can best be motivated, which includes, incentives, rewards, leadership, etc. and the organisational context within which they carry out the work (Armstrong, 2006). In general, it can be described as the direction and persistence of action. It is concerned with why people choose a particular course of action in preference to others, and why they continue with chosen action, often over a long period, and in the face of difficulties and problems (Mullins, 2005).

Motivational strategies are the plans that can help achieve success through ensuring the good working life of employees within an organisation. According to Accel-Team (2008), posited seven motivational strategies are as follows: Positive reinforcement / high expectations, effective discipline and punishment, treating people fairly, satisfying employees' needs, setting workrelated goals, restructuring jobs and Base rewards on job performance.

Statement of the Problem

Productivity in any education system lies in the motivational level of the staff of such educational system. These staff should equally be the right personnel. Since the health and productivity of any organization depend on its internal motivation and quality of staff, it is imperative that the human resources department ensures the right personnel are engaged and well-motivated, if productivity level of organization (higher education) is to be enhanced.

It is no longer news that the country's higher educational system has been bedeviled by myriad of problems, such as- lack of best practices, ill motivational level, lack of or ill equipped manpower, etc. Studies have infact been carried out with the views of finding lasting solutions for them, but these problems still unabatingly persist. Hence, this investigation is deemed necessary.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study was to determine the strategies for management of higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity. Specifically, the objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the extent to which human resources planning strategies are applied by higher education administrators in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.
2. To examine the extent motivational strategies are applied by higher educational administrators in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are human resources planning applied as management strategies in higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity?
2. To what extent are staff motivational strategies applied as management strategies in higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested at 0.05 significant level:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on the human resources planning strategies applied by higher education administrators in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnic and College of Education on the staff motivational strategies for managing higher education by administrators in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.

Human Relations Theory

The theory that underpinned this work is Elton Mayo's Human Relations Theory. This theory was propounded (1933) as cited in (Sarachek, 2017). The theory stated that in addition to finding the best technological strategies to improve output, it was beneficial for administration to consider the human elements in the organization.

The theory was concerned with the human problems encountered in organizations, such as welfare, motivation, retirement benefits among others and therefore concluded that such problems can only be minimized when there is co-operation among workers. Based on this, she developed four organizational principles, all of which centered on co-ordination; co-ordination by direct contact with the people, concern the reciprocal relation of all the factors in a situation and coordination as a continuing process.

The human relations theory has its central idea that the human factor is very important in the achievement of organizational goals. The proponent of this theory holds the view that workers will achieve better if their personal welfare was taken into consideration.

Human relations theory is related to the present study because it buttresses the fact that the administrative aim of any organization especially the school should consider the welfare of the employees as utmost importance. Therefore, for effective secondary school administration in Rivers State to be actualized, the interest of teachers and other employees should be a priority.

Methodology

The study design is descriptive. Its population comprised all public tertiary institutions in Rivers States. The sample for the study comprised 300 respondents drawn from Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnics and Federal College of Education, Omoku in Rivers States of Nigeria. Structured questionnaire titled, Strategies for the Management of Higher Education for Enhanced Productivity (SMHEEPQ) was used for data collection. The face and content validity of the instrument was validated by a Doctor and a Professor of educational administration. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined through a test re-test method. The researcher and 2 research assistants administered the instrument to the respondents in the four tertiary institutions used for the study. Out of 400 copies of the instrument administered, 350 were returned and used for analysis. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviations, while the two hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Result and Discussion

Table 1

Socio-Demographic Data

S/N	Item	Option	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Male	139	47.1
		Female	156	52.9
		Total	295	100
2	Age	18-27	108	36.6
		28-37	132	44.7
		38-47	53	18
		48-57	2	0.7
		58 years plus	-	-
		Total	295	100
3	Marital Status	Married	153	51.9
		Single	88	29.8
		Divorced	44	14.9
		Widowed	10	3.4
		Total	295	100
4	Education	Primary	44	14.9
		Secondary	77	26.1
		Tertiary	174	59
		Total	295	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2023

The table above presented the bio-data of the respondents. The analysis revealed that the male was 47.1% while the female was 52.9%. the implication is that the female was more than the male in the study. The analysis of the age distribution of the respondents revealed that most of the respondents 44.7% were 28-37 years, followed by 36.6% of the respondents who were 18-27 years, while the remaining 55 respondents were 38-47 years and 48-57 years. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that most of the respondents 51.9% were married, followed by 29.8% who were singles, 14.9% who were divorcees while 3.4% were widowed. Also, the analysis revealed that 14.9% had primary education, 26.1% had secondary education, while 59% had tertiary education. The implication is that majority of the respondents were found to have tertiary education ranging from ordinary national diploma, national certificate in education, higher national diploma, first degree, masters and doctor of philosophy.

Research Question 1: To what extent does staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria influence enhanced productivity?

Table 2

The extent staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria influence enhanced productivity

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Std.	Decision
5	Motivation leads to improved morale and commitment among employees	73	127	71	24	2.84	0.88	High Extent
6	Motivated employees are more likely to come up with innovative ideas and solutions	94	135	51	15	3.04	0.83	High Extent
7	Motivated employees are more likely to stay focused on tasks and pay attention to details	63	110	81	41	2.66	0.96	High Extent
8	Motivated employees are more likely to collaborate and communicate effectively with their co-workers	64	115	80	36	2.70	0.94	High Extent
9	Higher motivation leads to increased satisfaction among employees, resulting in better performance and greater productivity.	65	108	82	40	2.67	0.96	High Extent
10	Motivated employees are more likely to perform better on the job, leading to higher productivity	72	123	76	24	2.82	0.89	High Extent
11	Motivated employees are less likely to take unnecessary leave and are more likely to stay with the organization,	66	139	55	35	2.80	0.92	High Extent
12	Motivated employees are more likely to provide better customer service, leading to increased productivity	93	136	49	17	3.03	0.84	High Extent
Grand Mean						2.82	0.90	High Extent

Source: Fieldwork Survey, 2023

The Table 2 above was used to present the analysis of the extent staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria influences enhanced productivity. The analysis revealed that staff motivation to improved morale and commitment among employees, improved innovative ideas and solutions, encourage the employees to be focused on tasks and pay attention to details amongst others. The grand mean of 2.82 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.90 indicated that there is high extent of staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria influencing enhanced productivity in the higher institutions. The implications is that, the more staff motivation is promoted in the higher institutions, the more the tendency for enhanced productivity in the institutions.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference among the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnic and College of Education on human resources planning as a strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.

Table 3

Analysis of variance on the significant difference among the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnic and College of Education on human resources planning as a strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivation leads to improved morale and commitment among employees	Between Groups	4.194	2	2.097	2.774	.064
	Within Groups	220.721	292	.756		
	Total	224.915	294			

The results of the analysis of variance showed a significant difference among the mean perception scores of respondents from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education on human resources planning as a strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity. The mean perception score of respondents from universities was the highest ($M = 3.00$), followed by polytechnics ($M = 2.93$) and colleges of education ($M = 2.74$). This suggests that respondents from universities had a higher level of perception about the effectiveness of human resources planning in managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity. The difference between the mean perception scores of respondents from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education was statistically significant ($F(2.097) = 0.64, p > .05$). In conclusion, the results of the analysis of variance suggest that the perception of respondents from universities on human resources planning as a strategy for

managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity was significantly higher than that of respondents from polytechnics and colleges of education.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference among the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on staff motivation as a strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.

Table 4

Analysis of variance on the significant difference among the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on staff motivation as a strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivation leads to improved morale and commitment among employees	Between Groups	1.853	2	.927	1.172	.0311
	Within Groups	230.974	292	.791		
	Total	232.827	294			

The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the significant difference among the mean perception scores of respondents from Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education on staff motivation as a strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean perception scores of the respondents since the P-value is 0.311 and is higher than the level of significance of 0.05. The results showed that the mean perception score of the respondents from universities was significantly higher than the mean perception score of the respondents from Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. This indicates that respondents from universities were more likely to agree that staff motivation is an effective strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity than respondents from Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. These results suggest that Universities should prioritize staff motivation as a key strategy for managing higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity.

Discussion of Findings

The Extent Human Resource Planning Enhances Productivity in Higher Education in Nigeria

The grand mean ratio of 2.90 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.86 further indicated that there is high extent of human resource planning as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria is applied for enhanced productivity in the higher institutions in Nigeria. The findings on the extent to which human resource planning as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria is applied for enhanced productivity is generally positive. Studies

have found that when higher education institutions in Nigeria adopt a human resource planning system, the results are improved employee productivity, satisfaction, and motivation.

Overall, the evidence suggests that human resource planning as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria does indeed influence enhanced productivity. By introducing a human resource planning system, universities can expect to see improved employee satisfaction, motivation, and performance. This, in turn, can lead to improved organizational outcomes, such as better student outcomes and improved efficiency.

Studies by (Adebisi & Adebisi, 2018; Aliyu, 2018; Salawu et al., 2017) have shown that human resource planning (HRP) can be an effective management strategy to increase productivity in higher education in Nigeria. Adebisi and Adebisi (2018) found that HRP is essential in the higher education system in Nigeria, as it helps to align the resources available with the objectives of the organization. Aliyu (2018) also found that HRP can aid in improving productivity in the higher education sector by helping to ensure that the right people are employed for the right positions. Similarly, Salawu et al. (2017) found that HRP is an effective strategy for achieving improved performance in the higher education sector in Nigeria, as it can facilitate the development of the necessary human capital. This is similar to the result of this study, which shows a high significant percentage of respondents agreeing that human resources planning as an effective management strategy enhances productivity in higher education in Nigeria.

The Extent Staff Motivation Enhanced Productivity in Higher Education in Nigeria

The grand mean of 2.82 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.90 indicated that there is high extent of staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria for enhanced productivity in the higher institutions. The implications is that, the more staff motivation is promoted in the higher institutions, the more the tendency for enhanced productivity in the institutions. The findings indicate that staff motivation is an important factor in improving productivity in higher education in Nigeria. Motivated staff have been found to be more productive, efficient, and committed to their work and have greater job satisfaction. Additionally, staff motivation can increase employee loyalty and lead to an improved organizational culture.

Motivated staff have been found to be more productive, as they are more likely to be innovative, creative, proactive, and have higher job satisfaction. Also, motivated staff are more likely to stay with the organization, thus reducing turnover and the associated costs. Furthermore, motivated staff are more likely to contribute to the organization's success, through innovation, better customer service, and improved efficiency. The findings also suggest that there is a need for university managers to effectively implement staff motivation strategies in order to ensure improved productivity. This can be achieved through providing recognition, rewards, and incentives for good performance, as well as providing a positive and supportive working environment.

Studies by (Adeyinka, 2015; Olorunfemi & Oyekan, 2017) have found that staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria is an effective tool for enhancing productivity. For example, Adeyinka (2015) found that staff motivation positively influenced the productivity of staff in Nigerian universities; specifically, motivation increased job

satisfaction and performance, reduced staff turnover and absenteeism, and improved organizational and job commitment. Similarly, Olorunfemi and Oyekan (2017) found that staff motivation led to improved performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to organizational goals. In addition, the authors found that staff motivation also improved the quality of research output and teaching in Nigerian universities, leading to increased productivity. Thus, empirical evidence supports the conclusion that staff motivation is an effective strategy for enhancing productivity in Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

Human resource planning is a vital management strategy in higher education in Nigeria that can significantly influence enhanced productivity in higher institutions. Human resource planning helps universities to better manage their human resources and improve organizational performance. It helps to identify staff needs and develop skills and capabilities, which in turn leads to increased efficiency, improved quality of services and increased productivity.

Staff motivation as a management strategy in higher education in Nigeria has been proven to be effective in enhancing productivity. Additionally, by building a culture of trust and respect between the staff and management, it facilitates an environment where employees are more likely to be engaged and productive. Therefore, staff motivation is an essential management strategy that can effectively enhance productivity in higher education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made:

- i) **Invest in training and development:** Investing in the training and development of employees is essential for the success of human resource planning in higher education institutions in Nigeria.
- ii) **Offer rewards and incentives:** Rewards and incentives can be a powerful motivator and help to keep staff motivated and productive.

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