

Participation of Senior Academics in Human Resource Development Activities in South-East Universities, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was designed to assess the level of participation of senior academics in human resource development activities in the South-East Universities in Nigeria. A stratified simple random sampling technique was used to compose a sample size of 430. This represented 30.7

Index terms— Senior academics, human resource development, Nigeria Universities.

1 Introduction

he interests of the university can best be served through the acquisition and development of skilled and highly trained academics who have a clear knowledge of what is required of their jobs, the best method of performing them, and most importantly, the import of their roles in relation to the goals and objectives of the institutional element, department or major activity. Bearing in mind that career development and job skills acquisition of academics after employment is a dual responsibility of the employee and the employing unit, the university is therefore obliged to provide training programme and development which can improve academic effectiveness and productivity by promoting skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies, which go a long way to bring about individual growth success related to work, and personal career development.

The pride of any university does not necessarily depend on the name, but on its ability to carry out or perform its major societal roles. The major roles of the university in any society are to perform the functions of teaching, community service and pursuit of new knowledge through research (Lindsay, 2003). This is because the most valued exercise in the university is teaching and research. To pursue these objectives requires that the senior staff of the rank of senior lecturers to professors participate adequately in human resource development activities and the universities that hire them should encourage their academic development by offering them opportunities of advancing skills and knowledge in their respective disciplines. This is based on the fact that their participation in human resource development activities such as teaching, research, community service and attendance to conferences and workshops etc. constitute the indices for universities advancement and will always remain inevitable parameters in assessing academic productivity.

It is well known that human resource is a fundamental asset in the socio-economic and political development of any nation. (Browne, 1994). The technological breakthrough of these countries is not only dependent on the level of participation of university academics in human resource development activities but also the extent to which such skills, knowledge, and expertise derived from such participation is put into use. It is on this premise that human resource development is not only seen as one of the main functions of the universities towards updating and increasing knowledge, skills and capabilities of the academics, but also one of the main criteria for staff advancement.

Nigeria as a developing nation is not left behind the scene on global competition for development through technological advancement. It is on the basis of this that the participation of universities in human resource development seems to be on the focus compared to other lower levels of education. At present, there are 124 universities in Nigeria and of this number, 37 are owned and run by the Federal government, 37 by states government while 50 are of private sponsorship licensed by the Federal government of Nigeria and established and run by individuals and organizations in the country (www.nuc.edu.ng). With this, Nigeria possesses the largest number of universities in the sub-Saharan Africa. Examining this system and its institutional arrangement, well

over a decade ago, the World Bank concluded that "more than any other country in sub-Saharan Africa, the structures exist in Nigeria that could provide for a rational and effective development of university education (World Bank, 1988). One of the reasons behind the establishment of human resource development agencies is to direct efforts in improving the quality of university education which is constrained by growing shortages of qualified human resource.

The present picture of Nigerian universities indicates that the system has been undergoing a lot of crisis in recent times (Allele -Williams, 1991; Amiche & Emeka 1997; Okeke, 2001;Anosike, 2006). The major aspect of this crisis revolves around inadequate attention to human resource development activities. Today, Nigerian university academics are not adequately availing themselves of enough opportunity for advancement and updating for today's technological and economic challenges. Therefore, the main question that this paper seeks to answer is: how would senior academics in Nigerian universities participate in human resource development activities?II.

2 Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted and this enabled the researchers to obtain credible data. The population of the study was 1,400 academic staff from the rank of senior lecturers to professors in the five states of the South-East geo-political zone of the country. A Sample size of 430 senior academic representing 30.7% of the population was composed using a stratified simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire known as "Level of Academic Staff Participation in Human Resource Development Activities Questionnaire" (ASPHRDAQ) with a reliability co-efficient of 0.82. It addressed demographic profile and the level of participation in human resource development activities. A total of 430 copies of the questionnaire was administered. Respondents were asked to indicate on a four point modified Likert-scale, the level of their participation in human resource development activities in their universities. Data collected were analyzed using means and standard deviation while the hypotheses were analyzed using z-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Research Question 1 : What is the level of participation of senior academic staff in human resource development activities? 1 shows that Professors and Readers participated in human resource development activities, but senior lecturers participated more. Among senior lecturers, their participation was higher in the following eight out of the eleven variables investigated: Encouraging interdisciplinary programmes within the university (3.19) disseminating research information through regular teaching and publications (3.86) participation in seminars, workshop, conferences and public lectures (3.81). Lowest response was obtained on the promotion of staff exchange programmes between university and industry (??? = 2.51, 2.45 and 2.33 for senior lecturers, readers and professors respectively) compared to values obtained from other variables. All the senior academic staff investigated generally participated highly in human resource development activities as indicated by their mean scores, but Senior Lecturers participated more compared to Readers and Professors.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference among senior academics of different ranks in their participation in human resource development activities. The hypothesis was tested to determine if there was significant difference among lecturers of different ranks in their participation in human resource development activities. The result of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was presented in Table 2. Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between male and female senior academics in their participation in human resource development activities. The hypothesis was tested to determine if significant differences existed between male and female senior academics in their participation in human resource development activities using z-test. On participation of lecturers by sex, it was found that male lecturers of the rank of senior lecturers to professor participated more in human resource development activities than their female counterparts ($Z_{cal} = 3.62$) at the 5% level.(Table 3)III.

3 Discussion

This study has shown that on the basis of rank, senior lecturers in the universities participated more in human resource development activities than readers and professors. This findings is understandable, because for a lecturer in Nigeria to advance from the rank of Senior Lecturer which is a career position to Reader and then Professor, he or she requires many scholarly publications in form of journal articles, books and book chapters in his or her area of specialization within a discipline. Similar observations have been made by Uche (1998) and Coombe (1999), who in their respective studies on the level of academic research activities, reported that the volume of human resource development activities such as teaching and research activities embarked upon by academics in the universities, is used as a criterion for staff advancement. The less emphasis on human resource development activities by academics on professional ranks may be due to the fact that when they reach the top of their professional cadre they no longer emphasize more on human resource development activities -such as teaching and publications, and some appear to be very busy, (Laundry, 1996;Okeke, 2001).

The findings in this study also indicated that male lecturers participated more in human resource development activities than their female counterparts. These findings corroborate the reports by Uche (1998), Nnabuo (1994) and Amiche & Emeka (1997). This should be expected realizing that most female lecturers take human resource development activities as secondary assignment, and many do not show enough commitment due to their excess workload in teaching and students supervision which is time and energy consuming, coupled with their domestic

work. On the other hand, such should be expected for a developing nation like Nigeria where women academic was a recent development (Nnabuo, 1994), ?? Emeka, 1981).

4 IV.

5 Conclusion

The university is committed to providing its academic staff with the opportunity to become excellent teachers, leading scholars and researchers in their different fields of endeavour. In the same vain, it behoves on these institutions to also develop their academic, administrative, and technical abilities. Strategies for achieving these goals include the provision of academic development programmes and high quality professional development to assist academics in meeting their development objectives.

The essence of any manpower programme is to enhance the welfare of workers by maximizing quantity of their employment opportunity, and, in so doing, add to the country's economic strength. Thus, all human resource development activities embarked upon by university academic are aimed at increasing knowledge, skills and capabilities.

V.

6 Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The participation of universities in human resource development activities should be encouraged by the government and university authority through the provision of adequate funding for academic staff development activities both within and outside Nigeria. 2. Emphasis should be on training and retraining of academics to enable them acquire and update their skills regularly, to enable them develop necessary competencies needed in the education sector.



Figure 1: 3 . 5 .

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development activities.

Participation in human resource development activities

Variable

1. Carrying out regular research activities

2. Disseminating research information through regular teaching and publications

3. Encouraging interdisciplinary programmes within the Universities

4. Encouraging membership of academic or professional organization

Lecturers Senior Readers Professors Total

x Sd x Sd x sd x Sd

3.47 0.58 3.50 0.65 3.44 0.65 3.47 0.61

3.86 0.38 3.80 0.40 3.82 0.38 3.84 0.39

3.19 0.82 2.91 0.94 2.60 0.95 3.01 0.90

3.51 0.51 3.45 0.50 3.54 0.50 3.50 0.51

Figure 2: Table 1 :

2

Compared Categories of

Academic Staff

Senior lecturers

Readers

Professors

Mean value was highest for senior lecturers (3.42) followed by readers (3.33) and was lowest for professors (3.31). It can be seen as indicated in table 2, that the mean difference is significant between Senior Lecturers and Readers, and Senior Lecturers and Professor. No significant difference exists between Readers and Professors. Senior Lecturers significantly participated more in Human Resource development activities than Readers and Professors.

Number of Respondents

Mean

SD

F-Value

P-value

Remarks

259 3.42 0.18

74 3.33 0.24

13.83 0.00

Significant

97 3.31 0.24

Figure 3: Table 2 :

3

Compared

Number of

Mean

SD

Z-Value

df

Critical

Decision

Categories

Respondents

X

SD

Z-Value

df

Critical

Decision

Male

292

3.43

0.14

3.62

428

1.96

Significant

Female

138

3.36

0.24

Figure 4: Table 3 :

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