

STAFF TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated impact of staff training on the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 16,281 academic and non-academic staff from 13 public universities in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 390 academic and non-academic staff was selected and used for the study. The selection was done using multistage sampling procedure. A 10-item structured four-point rating scale questionnaire titled “Staff Training and Administration of Public Universities Questionnaire (STAPUQ)” was used for data collection. A trail test was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument, which yielded over all variable coefficient of 0.87. Data obtained from the field study were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean scores and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions. Chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of-fit was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that staff training has significant impact on the administration of public universities in North Central, Nigeria. Based on the finding, it was recommended that University administrators should ensure that Government and university administrators should provide adequate funds as well as make a sustainable policy of giving their staff the opportunity to undergo various kinds of training. Training programmes such as seminars, conference, workshops among others should be given to staff to make them develop new knowledge and skills that would equip them better for the university job.

Introduction

University education is the pinnacle of higher education where human capital skills are trained and developed for a meaningful transformation of the society into a desirable state. Universities educate future leaders and develop the high level technical capacities that underpin economic growth and development (Kabiru, 2018). Universities provides not only high level skills necessary for every market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, entrepreneurs, scientists and a myriads of personnel. In this regard, the administrator (Vice chancellor) is expected to understand individuals and groups and to utilize their individual talents rather than just manage the university with fixed positions to be filled by replaceable, standardized parts. This type of administrator needs more than training in scheduling classes, disciplining students, increasing efficiency and managing the university. In addition, the administrator (Vice chancellor) needs to control and organize collective efforts toward positive ends so as to ensure quality in the university system (Ibukun, 2017).

The university administrator in their daily routine exercise in performing administrative duties are expected to undertake total quality management strategies in order not just to effectively manage the university system in terms of staff recruitment, staff promotion, instructional supervision, staff training, communication, maintenance of facilities and assessment of staff by annual performance appraisal but also for the purpose of achieving the aims and objective of the university system (George & Jones , 2016).

Staff training is also an administrative variable, which appear to have impact on university administrators. Training refers to the methods used to give new or present employees the skills they need to perform their jobs more effectively while development is any attempt to improve managerial performance by imparting knowledge, changing attitudes or increasing skills. He adds that the ultimate aim of such training and development programmes is to enhance the future performance of the educational organization itself (Dessier, 2015). In parallel with this, training has become something of an issue, in this decade, due to the rapid growth of technological innovation and development. This may also call for the need for proper communication to as to create better understanding between management and staff of the universities.

Assessment of staff by annual performance appraisal in public universities is also a variable of concern in this study as far as university administrators is concern (Effiong, 2014). Performance appraisal is a vital tool to measure the frameworks set by any organization to its staff. It is utilized to track individual contributions and performance against organizational goals; identify individual strengths; identify opportunities for future improvements and assess whether organizational goals are achieved as well as serve as basis for the future planning and development of the organization (Oduwaiye, 2014). According to Okafor (2015), the main purpose of appraisal is to help managers to closely monitor their subordinates to enable them to perform better on job. If properly conducted, performance appraisal leads to higher motivation of individuals towards better job performance. Hence, this study is undertaken to investigate the impact of staff training on the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria with particular focus on staff training and staff annual performance appraisal.

Statement of the Problem

The university is expected to be administered in a manner that the set goals will be achieved. Moreover, there has been so much worry and concern expressed by relevant educational stakeholders on the level of inconsistency in the performance of administrative functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating and controlling. There also appear to be the problem of poor planning and implementation of policies plans and programmes, lack of commitment, teamwork, communication gap, ineffective and inefficient instructional delivery and students' discipline which seems to affect administration of public universities.

Personal observation by the researcher has also revealed that administrative roles of the university administrators such as staff training and annual performance appraisal may not have been properly carried out in the university system. Such situations seem to have hindered achievement of university set goals which has not been well investigated in North Central Nigeria to proffer solution. It is against this background that this study is motivated to be undertaken by the researcher in this area. The problem of this study is to examine the impact of staff training on the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of staff training on the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the impact of on staff training on the administration of public universities.
2. Examine the impact of staff annual performance appraisal on the administration of public universities.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of staff training on the administration of public universities?
2. What is the impact of staff annual performance appraisal on the administration of public universities?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This design was chosen as appropriate for the study because it allowed the study of sample of a population from which a generalization can be made. This study was carried out in North Central Nigeria. It is one of the six geo-political zones in the country. It consisted of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau State and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Nigeria. North Central Nigeria is situated geographically in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, spanning from the west, around the confluence of the River Niger and the River Benue.

The population of this study comprised 16,281 academic and non-academic staff from 13 public universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample of this study was 390 academic and non-academic staff selected from 13 public universities in North Central Nigeria. The multistage sampling procedure was applied in the selection process. A self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled “Staff Training and Administration of Public Universities Questionnaire (STAPUQ)” was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of 10 items and was modeled based on the four-point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (SA) =4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 for positively framed statements and the reverse coding for negative statements. The 390 copies of the questionnaire distributed across the 13 public universities were all returned at the completion by each respondent in each day of visit to each of the university. The chi-square (χ^2) test of independence fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What is the impact of staff training on the administration of public universities?

Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Impact of Staff Training on the administration in Public Universities

Item No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Academic staff of the universities are giving opportunity to attend conferences.	390	183	167	16	24	3.31	0.82	Agree
2.	University administrative give staff of the universities opportunity to attend workshops.	390	148	159	44	39	3.07	0.94	Agree
3.	Staff of the universities are still allowed to attend conferences.	390	22	45	172	151	1.84	0.84	Disagree
4.	Induction training are organize for newly employed staff.	390	170	163	30	27	3.22	0.86	Agree

5.	University administrators allow their staff to further their studies as a result of staff training programme.	390	165	188	24	13	3.29	0.73	Agree
Cluster mean							3.03		Agree

Source: *Field Survey (2024).*

Table 1 showed that items 1-5 had mean scores of 3.31, 3.07, 1.84, 3.22 and 3.29 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.82, 0.94, 0.84, 0.86 and 0.73 respectively. Based on the criteria for decision making, it means the cluster mean 3.03 is above the cut-off mark of 2.50. This implies that staff training has significant impact on the administration of public universities.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of staff annual performance appraisal on the administration in public universities?

Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the impact of Staff Annual Performance Appraisal on the administration in Public Universities

Item No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6.	Recommendation of university staff for appraisal is based on their performance within a stated period of time.	390	184	188	11	7	3.41	0.64	Agree
7.	The use annual performance enhances identification of staff areas of improvement towards attaining prescribed target in the university.	390	201	158	16	15	3.40	0.74	Agree
8.	University administrators who do not apply approach still have ways of assessing staff performance to help identify their areas of weakness.	390	41	38	148	163	1.89	0.96	Disagree
9.	Communicating performance standard to lecturers after appraisal exercise enhance job performance.	390	199	164	9	18	3.39	0.75	Agree
10.	University administration nothing to do with assessment of staff by annual performance	390	38	21	159	172	1.81	0.92	Disagree

appraisal in public
universities.

Cluster mean

2.78

Agree

Source: *Field Survey (2024).*

Table 2 showed that items 6-10 had mean scores of 3.41, 3.40, 1.89, 3.39 and 1.81 with corresponding standard deviations of 0.64, 0.74, 0.96, 0.75 and 0.92 respectively. Based on the criteria for decision making, it means the cluster mean of 2.78 was also above the cut-off point of 2.50. The standard deviations are small which shows that there is homogeneity in respondents' responses for the items raised. This implies performance appraisal has significant impact on the administration of public universities.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of the analysis of the seven research questions and testing of the seven hypotheses posited for this study, the following findings are organized and discussed for ease of understanding.

The first finding of the study also revealed that staff training has significant impact on the administration of public universities. This clearly shows that academic staff of the universities are giving opportunity to attend conferences with the application, attend workshops and induction courses are organize for newly employed staff. This finding aligned with the finding of Joseph (2019) which revealed that effective training and development can improve job performance of the respondents within the Judicial Service of G3hana and that appropriate training content and delivery approaches can assist in achieving set targets and objectives of the Judicial Service of Ghana. Field observation by the researcher indicated that staff training goes a long way in inspiring all categories of staff towards better commitment to their duties. The researcher personally discovered that staff who undergo in-service training, and are given opportunities to attend seminars, conferences and workshops by the university administrator to enhance further knowledge and skill acquisition by the staff in giving their best in the system.

The final finding of the study revealed that staff annual performance appraisal has significant impact on the administration public universities. The finding corroborate with Nwamadi and Ogbonna (2021) which revealed high level of academic staff performance with regards to published paper assessment, teaching, research, general performance appraisal, community service, research, teaching and community service, project evaluation appraisal, employee self-assessment, advisory and counsel service, new curricula designed and developed), attraction of research grants and success in general external funding to support research or other programme. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the parameters of performance appraisal and academic staff productivity in public universities in north central, Nigeria. The researcher also discovered that assessment of staff by annual performance appraisal is a very important aspect that university administrators make it a priority hence it result to knowing areas of strength and weakness of staff through proper evaluation of their work and possibly rewarding those who do well as a form of encouragement.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it was established that staff recruitment and staff annual performance appraisal in public universities in North Central, Nigeria has a great impact. It was therefore concluded that staff training has significant impact on the administration of public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Recommendations

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

1. University administrators should ensure that there is a sustained recruitment processes in their bid to filling in vacant positions in their respective universities. Such recruitment processes should include advertisement, shortlisting, selection test/examination, job interview, background checks/references, selection decision, physical medical examination, job offer/final selection and placement. If such is followed, the right caliber qualified and competent staff will be recruited into the university system geared towards achieving the university goals.
2. Government and university administrators should provide adequate funds as well as make is a sustained policy of giving their staff the opportunity to undergo various kinds of training. Training programmes such as seminars, conference, workshops among others should be given to staff to make them develop new knowledge and skills that would equip them better for the university job.
3. University management should also make it a regular policy of assessing staff by annual performance appraisal to ensure that staff are evaluated in their performance. If such is done, the university management would be able to know the strength and weaknesses of her staff in the performance of their responsibilities and possibly reward deserving staff accordingly.

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