HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT: A PANACEA FOR SUSTAINABLE ACADEMIC STABILITY IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The paper analyzed the approaches that lead to sustainability of academic stability in tertiary institutions. Human resource development was seen as a veritable tool in academic sustainability and stability. Various approaches were noted as impacting on the development of employees. Some of the approaches are operative training, decision-making skill, job knowledge and general knowledge. The paper noted that if these approaches to staff development are applied in staff development systematically, there is benefit to be attained by both the institution and the individual. To the institution, there is the creation of a healthy work environment and to the employee, a self fulfillment and actualization. It concluded that human resources development is crucial in tertiary institutions and recommended that the funds meant for training staff in these institutions should not be diverted and the staff thus trained, should be promoted and recognized accordingly. This gives room for a healthy tertiary institution where goals are achievable.

Key words: Human resources development, sustainability and feedback).

The stability of academic activities in tertiary institutions to a large extent depends on the human resources available and not just available but developed to an appreciable level. There is the need to develop human resources since the initial training, retraining and education of employees requires a follow up as human skills could become obsolete. Human resource development is brought about as a result of the fact that individual attitude, ability and institutional requirements are not static and constant.

The need to develop employees in a tertiary institution stem from the fact that there is a concern for a long term career development which must accompany a comprehensive human resource development program and as such, if an institution of higher learning is to survive the test of time and be reckoned with in this ever changing technological environment, its human resources must be in a constant state of development. This development should be stable and sustained for future needs of the institution since most of its employees go into retirement when they have put in a good number of their productive years.

Meaning of Human Resource Development

There is no sole definition of human resource development. Since various authors view it from various perspectives. It is a framework through which employees develop their personal skills, knowledge and abilities. It can be formally or informally done. It involves employee training and career development. Lippitt in Saiyadain (1988) pointed out that human resource development includes the work itself and the employees, the individual's personal and professional growth, improved output and the organisation itself. It is an avenue whereby the capabilities of personnel are sharpened to perform various tasks associated with their present or future roles. It is the discovering and developing of the inner potentials of the individual personnel for the growth of the institution. It is also the source of

increasing knowledge, capabilities and positive work attitudes of all the people working at all levels or strata in the institution.

The Necessity of Human Resource Development in Tertiary Institutions

The necessity of human resource development in tertiary institutions can never be over emphasized as they are places for imparting knowledge to other persons and for current knowledge to be imparted on the learners, the personnel's profession needs to be developed constantly to be abreast with current events globally. Human resource development is needed by an institution to bring in dynamism and be growth oriented since institutions of learning can become dynamic and grow through the efforts, contributions and competence of its human resource.

Employee capabilities must be continually, sharpened and also put to use. Policies must be put in place to give an enabling culture that motivates the personnel and keep their morale high. It is when employees are allowed to use their initiative, take risks, experiment and make things happen that the institution will then be referred to as having an enabling environment where development is taken seriously for the growth of the institution. The necessity of human resource development is to develop personnel in an institution so that their skills and knowledge can constantly be updated and applied in the teaching and learning processes in the institution (http://www.whatishumanresources.com).

From the foregoing, the necessity of Human Resource Development in tertiary institutions is summarized thus:
1. To develop the capabilities of the individual employee to meet up with the challenges of the job.
2. To develop the much needed team-spirit that enables them to work together cordially in departments and in units.
3. To develop the employee in relation to the present role.
4. To develop the employee in relation to the expected future role.
5. To develop the entire institutions overall healthy culture and constantly renewing capabilities of the employees

Features of Human Resource Development

Some features of human resource development according to Saiydain (1988) are the following:
1. It promotes team spirit among personnel in the institution.
2. It tries to develop competencies and stress on providing healthy climate for development to take place.
3. It recognizes that human resource is a viable asset of an institution.
4. It tries to identify and examine employee needs and meet them to the best possible extent.

Approaches to Human Resource Development

There are various approaches through which human resource can be developed. This paper will consider the following approaches.
1. **Operative Training:** This involves specific increase in skills and knowledge, to perform a particular job. According to Flippo (1984), the following methods are applicable for use in this approach:

i. **On-the-job training:** This type of employee development is done within the institution. This is the most direct form of employee development as it gives the employee an opportunity for improved performance. On-the-job training is important in that it is conducted in anticipation of future requirements of the job. In this type of training, the instructor and the trainees are prepared, followed by the presentation of the task on which learning is to be carried out. At the end,

there is a try it-out performance and a follow up of the outcome for future use by the institution.

ii. **The vestibule school:** In using this medium of staff development, the trainee will acquire specialized skills more quickly as more individualized instructions are provided. The major advantage of using this method is that, it provides room for specialization.

iii. **Special courses:** In using this method of development, the course that are particular to the employee's job are focused on. This method of learning utilizes the basic learning concepts. Explicit goals are established, the subject to be taught is broken into bits of logically sequenced knowledge, active role from the learner is highly required, feedback is promptly provided to the learner.

2. **Decision-Making Skills Approach:** In this approach to employee development, the following methods are involved as noted by Flippo (1984) and Omozuawo and Omozuawo (2011),

i. **Case studies method:** In this method, actual case examples collected from other institutions are applied for dagnostic purposes. In using this method, the trainee/employee identifies the major and minor problems in the case, sort the significant from the insignificant, analyze the significant and come up with identified means of solving the problems. What this method actually teaches are perseverance and tolerance of others view point.

ii. **Business game method:** In this method, the employees are made to believe an hypothetical situation to be true and trained to make a decision on the issue on

ground. In using this method, the employees are broken into sub-groups at the end, there is feedback to let the trainees know about the impact of the decision taken by them. When carefully applied and developed, the games method gives a quickness of thinking, and the ability to adapt under stress.

iii. **In-basket method of training:** This method is used for training and identification of potentials of employees. This method can also be referred to as a follow up technique, as the trainees are provided with a basket of assorted memoranda, requests and data pertaining to the course of study and the trainees are requested to make meaning out of them.

3. **Interpersonal Skill Development Approach:** The development of interpersonal skills according to Aldaig and Steams (1991) and Omoregie (2004) take the following forms so as to attain the desired competencies in the staff:

i. **Role playing:** Role playing could be likened to a laboratory situation when applied to work situation. It is used to develop the employee in respect of interacting with others within the institution to solve a problem. It teaches the individual about team-spirit.

ii. **Behaviour modeling:** In using this method of developing an employee, the trainee is given an opportunity to deal with actual employee problems and immediate feedback is received on the performance. This type of training is carried out using four steps; films of actual situation are viewed, the trainees are exposed to extensive practice and rehearsals of the behaviours demonstrated. There is reinforcement through praise and feedback.

The training received is transferred to the job for efficiency.

iii. **Sensitivity training:** This training involves the development of awareness and sensitivity to behavioural patterns of oneself and others. What this training tends to achieve are openness with others, increased tolerance for one another, understanding of group processes, greater concern for others and increased trust and support. The general learning outcome of this method is open managerial sensitivity and trust as well as increased support for other employees' contribution in the system.

4. **Job Knowledge Approach:** In this approach of employee development, the employee acquires knowledge in the area of his/her specialization.

The careful use of this approach to human resource development will yield the much needed benefits to an institution based on the actual job done.

To actualize the desired staff development through this approach, the training is given in the following methods as noted by Cole (2002):

i. **On-the-job experience:** Learning by experience is an important method of staff development. As the saying goes, it is said that experience is the best teacher. On-the-job experience involves interaction between professionals through publishing, independent reading, formal courses and outside meeting in solving on-the job-problems.

ii. **Coaching Method:** This is an effective method of developing an employee. The employees are taught by involving face-to-face with the coach. Here the employees are guided by the coach to know the relevance of information and how to generate alternatives for problem solving. In this method the staff are taught how to carefully plan tasks follow up with continuous appraisal and counselling.

5. **General Knowledge Approach:** This is the development on the job that involves taking trainees from the source of training to the job situation as noted by Omoregie (2004), these methods are:

i. **Special courses:** In developing the employee, the employee is made to leave the workplace and devote some reasonable time to development objectives, example of these special courses are: workshops, seminars, conferences. The reason for developing staff through this method is to have them keep up with rapid technological changes in the institution's learning environment.

How can the above development approaches be obtained? The above development approaches could be gotten either internally or externally according to Forster (1993). When done externally, it is received through off-the-job, at colleges, universities or private training agencies, such as the executive trainers. Another external means of developing an employee noted by Cole (2002) is that, it can also be through secondments or special project, while the internal development of staff can be through the in-service off-the-job using the institution's own facilities. The internal development of the individual employee can also be done through guided experience in the workplace.

Benefits of Human Resource Development to an Institution

When the personnel/employees who make up the human resource in an institution is

adequately developed, the institution will enjoy the under listed:

Firstly, the employee's competence is enhanced. The skills, knowledge, and the behaviour of the employees are better developed, this creates more confidence in the employees.

Secondly, there is commitment to the job. When an individual is trained and constantly retrained, the resultant effect is commitment. This commitment is brought about knowing full well that the needed performance by the employees is granteed due to the fact that the employee has a more mastery of the subject content of his career/profession and is able to discharge his teaching to the excitement and satisfaction of the students.

Thirdly, it creates efficiency. When employees are constantly developed in their career, it creates efficiency in the work place. The instructional materials are better utilized, the resources are properly shared among the employees making them to achieve institutional effectiveness, hence goals are better achieved.

Fourthly, there is an all round growth in the institution. The development of employees brings about individual development and advancement. This in turn rubs on the institution which is made up of the employees. The more an institution of higher learning is able to develop the employees, the greater the academic improvement in the institution, which manifests positively in the students performance, the output of the institution.

Fifthly, the environment of trust is created as the employees become aware that they can put in their best with the thought that something good in terms of growth/development is up for them.

Sixthly, active participation in activities. With employees' development, they are more eager to participate in the activities of the institution as they arise, such activities as conferences, seminars, workshops and other training and retraining refresher courses. What this does is that the worker feels satisfied doing the job and also feels a sense of pride achievement and contentment.

With human resource development, changes in the institution are acceptable and applicable to the daily needs of the institution and the students. Thus, the employees are able to create team-spirit, become more open in their behaviours and acceptance of new values. With the above listed benefits, the place of human resource development can not be over emphasized as it brings about the much needed sustainability in academic activities in higher institutions of learning which in turn results in stability in the institutions (http://www.whatishumanresources.com).

Contributing, Cole (2002) noted that the benefit of development is not peculiar or advantageous to the institution alone. The employees also benefit in the following ways:
1. There is the benefit of internal promotion.
2. There is increased job satisfaction and a feeling that the development obtained brings about knowledge increase in the employee's career.
3. The value of the employee is increased within the labour market.

There is the personal increase in the employee repertoire of skills.

Sustaining Academic Stability through Human Resource Development in Tertiary Institution

The various approaches to employee development when harmonized will result in sustainable academic stability in the following ways: Promotion, recognition, job rotation and job enrichment.
1. **Promotion:** When an employee is promoted, it is an upward movement to a new title in the career ladder. The new position according to Aldag and Stearns

(1991) means moving the person into a position having greater potential impact on the institution. When an employee is promoted, he becomes somewhat satisfied with the job role and tends to put in more effort. The effort that is added to the job is very crucial as employees in tertiary institutions are constantly in contact with the students to whom knowledge is impacted upon. The promotion of an employee in a tertiary institution implies that the individual has merited it. Thus, the individual is able to impact the newly acquired skill on which he merited the promotion on the students. This can lead to academic stability as the students are gaining the required knowledge in their course of study with contentment.

2. **Self-actualization and Recognition:** When honour is given to whom it is due, the tendency is that more will be given by the one who is recognized and honoured. Koontz and Wechrich (2007) noted that when an individual is rewarded, based on actual performance on a job due to the doing of tasks and meeting of goals, the individual get satisfaction on the job. When one feels a level of satisfaction about the job, the sustainability of the goals to be achieved will be supported and this has positive implication for academic stability in tertiary institutions.

3. **Job Rotation:** Job rotation can be used as a tool for enhancing academic stability. Forster (1995) observed that job rotation involves programmes whereby employees regularly change their jobs thus being enabled to acquire an overall understanding of the various units and departments in the institution.

4. **Job enrichment:** In order to sustain academic stability in tertiary institutions it requires that the job of the employee who impacts knowledge on the students should be enriched. Job enrichment entails giving the employee greater opportunity to execute the job. Flippo (1984), Koontz and Weihrich (2007) collaborated job enrichment by agreeing that the employee will become turned-on to his or her job. To achieve this:

i. The job has to be meaningful
ii. The employee has the knowledge for achieving results
iii. The employee knowing the demands of the institution makes sure that he is responsible for results. In order to enhance job enrichment, meaning can be placed on the job by providing for skill variety, task identification, knowledge of operating result can be achieved through feedback to enable the employee to be acquainted with results. Since job enrichment is related here to tertiary institution, and as such, if an individual's performance has impacted on the students, then the stability of the institution can be enhanced.

Conclusion

The paper has noted that human resource development in tertiary institution is very crucial. There is a dire need to constantly develop and update the employees in tertiary institutions to enable them make impact in the teaching of their various courses offered by the students. Human resource development brings about benefit, self-actualization and satisfaction on the job. What this translates to is a healthy institutional environment where results for planned academic policies, objectives are achievable and positive impact made in the career of the students.

A well developed human resource will bring about the sustainability of both the academic activity and the employee since as they advance through the various approaches mentioned in the paper, they get promoted which

is a booster of the employee's egp. This contributes to stability in the institution.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby made:

1. There should be a concerted effort to making sure that employees in tertiary institutions are developed to keep abreast with current happenings globally.
2. The fund meant for staff development should be judiciously used for the purpose. It should not be diverted.
3. There are various approaches in developing the human resource in a tertiary institution. Institutions of learning should endeavour to access these approaches for goal attainment.
4. The sustainability of academic activities should be involved in by all. Employees should as much as possible make themselves available for training as at when due.
5. Promotion and recognition should be encouraged as they are boosters to academic sustainability and stability.
6. The employee who has had training should be magnanimous enough to extend the training to his colleagues.

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