
Quality Assurance in University Education And Human Resource Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The search to the cause of the low standard of education is yet to be achieved. This study determined the relationship between academic staff motivation as a quality assurance index and human resource development. The survey research design was adopted. The study was carried out in south-south Nigeria. The sample size was 300 respondents. Questionnaire generated data for the study; simple regression analysis was used to analyse data. The findings showed that academic staff motivation has a significant relationship with human resource development. It was concluded that academic staff motivation can enhance human resource development. Quality assurance has become an issue of global concern. It is the mechanism through which Universities can effectively produce manpower which would in turn boost human resource development for the overall development of the society. Products of our educational institutions should be made competitive to meet internationally accepted standards of quality and excellence.

Quality assurance is the measure of attaining desirable levels of accountability in schools. Some basic determinants of quality assurance in the school system are the quality and content of instruction and curriculum; quality of students as inputs; modern teaching techniques; students-teacher ratio and workload among others.

Okon (2011) noted that the development of socio-economic structure of a country depends on its education system. Higher education is a major contributor in the overall progress of any country. The University system, the lapse of the “education tree” (the highest education system) is a status symbol expected to provide activities not only to enrich teaching, but also the process of societal reforms and development. The importance of education is recognized worldwide and in this regard, governments commit immense resources to ensure not only its provisions but also gear policy towards ensuring its quality and accessibility. Considering the popular views that education is a dynamic veritable tool for development and the greatest hope and light of any nation, the need for effective teaching through quality assurance in the University system becomes imperative.

The roles expected of the University system, according to Federal Government of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) are to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; forge and cement national unity, and promote national and international understanding and interaction. The University system shall achieve these functions through: teaching; research and development; virile staff development programmes; generation and dissemination of knowledge; Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES); Maintenance of Minimum Education Standard (MES) through appropriate agencies.

Quality assurance was first used in industry in the western world as a proof that a product met certain acclaimed quality. The purpose was intended to build consumer confidence on the products (Ijeoma and Osagie, 2005). Here, quality was seen as a judgmental concept which helps the consumer to differentiate one product from another. Such judgment was usually made by consumers who had the option of whether to patronize a particular manufacturer or not. Omojola (2005) asserted that for a manufacturer to remain in business, its utmost desires is that all its products conform to agreed customer’s specifications or National Industrial Standard (NIS). When this is achieved, the product is said to be of high quality. If it fails to conform, the product is of low quality. If the product’s specification exceeds the agreed specification at no extra cost, the product is of excellent quality.

Omojola (2005) further highlighted the following as some of the product quality reliability indicators:-

- i) Decreasing number or percentage of rejected goods from customers or warranty claim.
- ii) Decreasing trend in the cost of rejected goods.
- iii) Reduced rate of customers complaint on goods and services.

Quality according to Collins (1992) cited in Omoregie (2008) is the combination of all the attributes and peculiar features that make one or an object fit for a purpose. Ramon-Yusuf (2005) cited in Omoregie (2005), simply defined quality as “fitness for purpose”.

In the educational system, quality assurance is relatively a new concept. Ijeoma and Osagie (2005) posited that the rationale for quality is the need to match programmes with industrial requirement for manpower. Quality assurance has become a yardstick by which the standard of programmes run by Universities are determined.

The philosophical base of quality assurance is the ability of an educational programme to train individuals to achieve competency in a given area of industrial production function. The quality of an academic programme is a universal concern, because a graduate of one University invariably, becomes an employee in another University or other culture’s industrial setting.

Farushidin (2005) noted that the lofty ideals of University education which are relevant for all times and all places are possible only through an assured system of quality education at this level. Farushidin (2005) suggested that what is needed is an institutional mechanism for monitoring various aspects of education against established norms with a ranking that portrays the relative strength or weakness of a programme or institutions and provide information for enlightened decisions by the public on the quality of University education. A watchdog body is necessary to ensure quality as well as define benchmark against which it judges standards and quality.

In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has decades of existence as a regulatory body for Nigerian Universities. Parameters for ensuring quality education include activities in three major categories:

- a) academics of which teaching is inclusive;
- b) infrastructure; and
- c) management (Farashudin, 2005).

Similarly, Rao (2007) posited that levels of attainment in a wider range of school activities brings to fore standards of provision, e.g. the number of teachers, books; may be talking about behaviour and other social phenomena.

Quality in Nigerian University education is a multi-dimensional concept which should embrace all its functions and activities such as teaching and academic

programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment (UNESCO, 1998 cited in Omoregie, 2008).

Similarly, Okebukola (2004) cited in Omoregie (2008), viewed quality assurance in Nigerian universities as a process of continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning activities which will be achieved via pathways of employing mechanisms, internal and external to the universities. It is ensuring that at least, the provision of the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) documents are attained, maintained and enhanced. The MAS was developed in 1989 for all undergraduate programmes taught in Nigerian Universities.

Academic Staff Motivation and Human Resource Development

Duruamaku-Dim (2002) cited Benton (1959) who defined motivation as the process of arousing and sustaining behaviour or of changing the pattern of activity in process. It applies to drives, needs, desires, wishes and other forces which cause a person to act or work. George (2008) defined motivation as that invisible force that ignites the mind and sets one's heart with feelings of zeal and zest and propels the person into action, changing one's vision and life.

However, before one could think about how to mobilize the staff to achieve results, there is need to clarify what results the University aims to achieve – its vision and mission. One also has to be clear about the necessary plans to achieve the mission – the university's strategy. While the mission stated in broad terms, the university's purpose, the strategy lays out a good plan for fulfilling that purpose – a set of more specific goals to be achieved, an array of approaches to be used, a mechanism for evaluating progress and improving continuously. The mission should capture the very reason the university exists; the strategy should be the blueprint by which the University management team acts to achieve that mission.

George (2008) further explained that academic staff of Universities could also be motivated through performance appraisal. Evaluating, improving and rewarding academic staff are critical devices of creating a motivating, high performance climate. A well-designed performance appraisal process and appropriate reward system can help management to further motivate the committed staff to succeed.

In Nigeria, education remains the most neglected field. In a democratic country as (Nigeria) where fundamental rights and duties, equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work, University lecturers are being shamefully deprived and capitalized upon. The government does not pay heed to lecturers demands. Dikawar (2008) quoted Dr. L. P. Patterson (Canada) who declared that the 'shortage of teachers' had not only brought a 'decline in the level of education' but also that 'the principal reason for the shortage was poor pay, and the resultant drift of teachers to other professions.

Quality teaching may be hampered by management failure to bring motivation at the door step of academic staff. This would further have a devastating effect on human resource development. Rao (2007) noted that the main reason for failure in teaching is lack of senior management backing and commitment. Rao further noted that to succeed in education, there is need for Teaching Quality Management (TQM) which in turn requires strong and purposeful leadership. The function of leadership, Rao added, is to enhance the quality of learning and to support the staff who deliver it. In Teaching Quality Management, everybody has to assume the position of a leader and champion the quality process. They need to communicate that mission and crusade it throughout the institution. TQM empowers the teachers and can provide them with greater scope for initiative. It is for this reason that it is often said of TQM that they require less management and more leadership. A leader must have a vision of total quality for his or her institution, have a clear commitment to the quality improvement process, communicate the quality message, etc.

In relation to the study, academic staff of Business Education in Nigerian Universities can be motivated through teaching quality management. This means that they have to be involved in the leadership process. When special responsibilities are saddled on them, they tend to show more commitment even in their teaching activity.

Studies carried out on quality assurance and human resource development show a significant low level of skills and competencies among graduates. Ozuruoke, Ordu and Ahiauzu (2007) conducted a study on teachers career enhancement system among institutions of higher learning in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study made use of a population of 855 teachers in six tertiary institutions within the zone. A structured questionnaire generated data analysed using chi-square. The study show a low career development. The implication of this findings to the present study is that quality assurance is low. It is therefore recommended that career development should be developed to promote lecturers' competencies. The purpose of this study therefore was to determine the relationship between academic staff motivation and human resource development.

Research Question

Research question that was postulated in this study is: "What relationship exists between academic staff motivation and human resource development"?

Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis tested in this study at .05 level of significance is:
H₀: There is no significant relationship between academic staff motivation and human resource development.

Methodology

This study employed survey research design. The population of the study comprised lecturers and students in Nigeria Universities. Sample of the study was 300 respondents comprising 250 University students and 50 lecturers in 4 Federal Universities in South-south zone of Nigeria. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used.

Two researcher-made instruments were designed and administered on both lecturers and students – Quality Assurance in University Education Questionnaire (QAUEQ) comprising 10 items was administered on lecturers while Human Resource Development Questionnaire (HRDQ) was administered on students. Both instruments were validated by lecturers who are experts in measurements and evaluation. The instruments were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis using responses from 50 respondents each of QAUEQ and HRDQ. The reliability coefficient of .82 and .86 were high enough to reliably assess the respondents.

Analysis of Data

Research Question

What relationship exists between academic staff motivation and human resource development?

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Regression Coefficient for Relationship between Staff Motivation and Human Resource Development

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	R
Academic staff motivation as quality assurance	50	20.53	5.64	0.6822
Human resource development	250	98.23	7.23	
N =	300			

From Table 1, it is noted that the academic staff motivation's relationship with the human resource development was slightly above average with R value of 0.6822.

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between academic staff motivation and human resource development.

To test this hypothesis, simple regression analysis was employed and summary shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression Coefficient for Relationship between Academic Staff Motivation and Human Resource Development

Regression coefficient (R)	=	0.6822
R ²	=	0.4654
R ²	=	0.4537
Standard Error	=	5.8431
Analysis of variance		

Source of variance	SS	df	ms	Fcal	Fcri
Regression	435	1	435.00		
Residual	6723	298	22.56	19.28*	3.84
Total	7158	299			

N = 300 *Significant < .05

Data in Table 2 shows that the computed F is greater than the critical value of F (3.84) at df of 1,298 and .05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between academic staff motivation and human resource development. The value of R² (0.4537) indicates that academic staff motivation accounted for 45.37% of variation in human resource development.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that academic staff motivation had above average relationship with human resource development. With the calculation of mean, standard deviation and regression coefficient, the R value of 0.6822 was above average. Similar result was obtained with further application of simple regression analysis in testing hypothesis one. The calculated F value of 19.28 was far greater than the critical F value of 3.84. This showed that there is a relationship between academic staff motivation and human resource development.

This finding is seen to further affirm the views of George (2008) who explained that academic staff of universities could be motivated through performance appraisal. George added that evaluating, improving and rewarding academic staff are critical devices of creating a motivating, high performance climate. Similarly, Duruamaku-Dim (2002) avered that human performance varies with the incentives employed or used. Also, Benard (1938) cited in Duruamaku-Dim 2002 noted that one of the key management tasks is to know subordinates’ or workers motive and develop a package of incentives that can make them contribute to a high level to the organization.

Conclusion

Based on the findings which emanated from this study, it is concluded that academic staff motivation can enhance human resource development. Quality assurance has become an issue of global concern. It is the mechanism through which Universities can effectively produce manpower which would in turn boost human resource development for the overall development of the society. Education should therefore be such that products of educational institutions are competitive and meet internationally accepted standards of quality and excellence. The increasingly popular global demand of a workforce marketization seems to have influenced considerably, educational policies and programmes across institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn in this study, the following recommendations are made:-

- 1) Quality assurance in the University system in Nigeria should be enhanced optimally to enable the system cope with world standard.
- 2) Funding of the University should be improved by relevant ministries such as Ministry of Education, Department of Budget and Planning to afford management of the Universities the opportunity to put in place the necessary quality assurance measures.
- 3) Also, quality assurance should be a continuous process aimed at encouraging attitude change and teamwork and the inculcation of a value that acknowledges the student and other customers as the best judge of quality deserving optimal service delivery in the teaching process.

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