
**OPTIMIZING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR
EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY
INSTITUTIONS: A SURVEY OF STATE OWNED COLLEGES OF
EDUCATION IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The efficiency with which an organization can perform depends extensively on how well the human resources are managed. This study investigated ways human resources could be managed for effective service delivery. The need for the study arose based on the high rate of human resources' attrition in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The population of the study consists of nine Colleges of Education in the North Central States, Nigeria. The respondents were 321: these consists of 36 management staff, 63 deans, 222 heads of departments and units. Since the total population of the study was small, there was no sampling as the entire population was used for the survey. A descriptive survey design was employed for the study. Two research questions guided the study, and two null hypotheses were formulated. A 19 – item questionnaire was used. Data analysis was done using mean, standard deviation and the t-test. The findings revealed among others that an organization functions better when management: encourage workers to exercise their intellectual abilities and skills in a conducive and friendly work environment, exercise leadership authority over staff democratically rather than autocratically, recognize the desire of the employees for motivation and job satisfaction, create organizational climate in which the employees feel a sense of belonging. It was recommended among others that: management should reward performance positively, create an enabling organizational climate in which workers have a positive identification in decision making, management should enforce workers' compliance with organizational rules and goals.

Keywords: Human Resources, Management, Effective Service Delivery, College, Education

Nigeria today is plagued with a myriad of predicaments ranging from insurgency, terrorism, insecurity, recession, decline in the standard of education among others. These myriad of problems have impaired the human resources whose morale for effective service delivery has gradually dwindled as motivation, privileges and other incentives are being sacrificed for other pressing needs. The success or failure of any organization depends on her human resources hence the need for optimal management of human resources. Human resource management is concerned with obtaining the best possible staff for an organization, and ensuring effective and efficient use of the human talents to accomplish organizational goals. The goal of every manager is for the workers to contribute to improved productivity, quality, and service delivery. Nigeria is in dire need of human capital for nation building and established tertiary institutions across the country whose goals 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
- develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment
- acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society
- promote and encourage scholarship and community service
- forge and cement national unity and
- promote national and international understanding (National Policy on Education, 2004)

Olaleye (2012) likened tertiary institutions in Nigeria to other systems of education especially in developing countries that is going through a series of challenges. Similarly, Saint, Hartnett, and Strassner (2003) also observed that the potential of higher education systems in developing countries to fulfill its responsibility is frequently thwarted by long-standing problems. These multi-faceted problems have inhibited goal attainment due to draw backs in development and have created fear and doubt about the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria.

It was in the bid to deliver effective educational service to every Nigerian child that the Colleges of Education were established. Colleges of Education are tertiary institutions established to cater for the teaming educational needs of the nation's children. The aim of establishing these institutions was to train Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) teachers who will teach at both the primary and post primary levels

(Ogbonna, 2003). The aim of establishing these institutions was realized; many professional teachers were trained to meet the teaming educational needs. Over the last ten years (2006 – 2016) however, the Colleges of Education seized being the beacon of educational light as there is a rapid decline in the academic, physical, social, and psychological system of these institutions. Usman (2013) opined that this may be due to ineffective management of the human resources. Human resources are the people who work for an organization. According to Mathias and Jackson (2003), human resources are the people who make up the workforce of an organization, business sector, or economy. They are also called human capital, talent, manpower, labour, personnel or simply called people (William, 2013). Draft (2010) noted that the right people can make an organization great while the wrong people can be catastrophic. This is because the human resources are the most essential resources. They create value in an organization; no work can take place without their contribution. Even the most automated activities require their intervention in the programme process, monitoring and equipment. This was the reason Gates and Langevin (2010) maintained that the human resources are vital as they play a key role in organizational development; on them rest the success or failure of any organization.

The human resources in Colleges of Education are categorized under two groups namely the staff and students. For the purpose of this study, the emphasis is on the management staff, the deans, heads of departments and units. These groups of staff are the major force that propel the institutions and are responsible for decision making and staff welfare. The success or failure of the organization is hinged on them; they determine the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the institutions. This was the reason Onah (2008) asserted that the success of any organization is not only determined by the quality of the human resources but how well they are managed and coordinated towards realizing the goals of the organization. The human resources cannot function in isolation without the leading, directing, organizing, and control of the managers.

The decline in the standard of service delivery in the Colleges of Education in the North Central indicated that all is not well with its human resource management. Human resource management as defined by Draft (2010) is the effective and efficient use of human talents to accomplish organizational goals. The basic purpose of human resource management is to maximize productivity in an organization by optimizing the effectiveness of its employees through planning, development, and employee maintenance. According to Rouse (2016), the objectives of human resource management include the utilization of the staff, provision of desirable working relationships among all members of the organization, staff motivation, efficient and effective deployment of organization's resources where and when they are needed, and for them to be in possession of the tools, skills, and discipline required. The term human resource management in this study is the effective use of disciplined, motivated and skilled workers to accomplish organizational objectives. Any organization without

efficient management is bound to encounter serious problems as it will encounter dissatisfaction, poor service delivery and organizational decline. This seems to be the case with state owned Colleges of Education in the North Central States, Nigeria. According to Onah (2008), the effective utilization of the workers in achieving corporate objectives is founded on good managerial skills, and appropriate motivational techniques of the leaders. Motivation as defined by Moorhead and Griffin (1999), are a set of forces that lend people to behave in particular ways. Employee motivation represents one of the greatest propeller for productivity, and the key for increasing competitive advantage of any organization. It seems the issue of staff motivation has reflected negatively in the work behavior of workers in Colleges of Education in the North Central States hence the poor service delivery that characterize the institutions.

In this study staff motivation is concerned with the effort being made by the human resource managers that will improve effective performance and service delivery. Guest (2000) strongly believes that high employee motivation goes with organizational performance, result, and discipline. What this invariable means is that unmotivated workers are not result oriented, are poor performers, inefficient in service delivery and lacking in discipline. Discipline is the regulation of and moderation of human activities to produce a controlled performance. Calhoon (2013) defined discipline as the force that prompts the individuals to observe rules, regulations, standards, and procedures deemed necessary for the effective functioning of an organization. Discipline is employees being moulded, corrected, and strengthened to produce self-control, orderliness, and service delivery. One of the major sources of indiscipline in public enterprise according to Onah (2008) is lack of effective system of staff performance appraisal that attracts commensurate organizational action. The author further noted that good performance appraisal system is hinged on good leadership. Good leaders are expected to assess workers performance, reward performance either positively or negatively; praise and correct where necessary. Workers tend to respond positively and perform better under a democratic, open minded and friendly manager who encourages a climate of trust. While autocratic, harsh, demanding, and domineering manager tend to make workers rebellious and uncooperative. Wehrich and Koonz (2003) affirmed that optimum performance or capacity utilization is directly linked to good leadership performance. Studies have shown the direct influence of human resource management to effectiveness and efficiency of an organization (Delaney and Huselid, 1999), (Santos, 2000). In the absence of effective staff motivation, staff performance appraisal, efficient disciplinary measure, and effective democratic leadership, an organization is bound to perform below standard. Thus, the hope of effective service delivery becomes a mirage. It is against this backdrop that this study was investigated as there is an urgent need for the management of the Colleges of Education in the North Central States to revamp service delivery in the institutions so that they can take their former pride of place as the home of teacher trainers.

Statement of the Problem

There is a rapid decline in the educational standard in the tertiary institutions in the North Central States, Nigeria due to inefficient management, and poor service delivery on the part of the workers which seem to have affected the graduates. Graduates from these institutions are considered half baked as most of them find it difficult to communicate effectively in English Language let alone teach using same. Most government agencies and private organizations no longer have confidence in the graduates of these institutions as they are hardly considered for employment (Maigun, 2013). The reason for the poor quality of graduates from these institutions may be due to lack of motivation of their lecturers. The workers are not motivated for performance hence the abysmal service delivery. The staff members of the institutions are hardly available to impact the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience into their students. Instead, truancy, absenteeism, indiscipline, conflict, religious sentiments, tribal and political factions seem to be the norm in these institutions. Empirical researches (Maigun, 2013), (Usman and Malik, 2013), and personal observation showed that lack of motivation demoralizes workers, decreases efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, create dissatisfaction and friction. In addition, the autocratic leadership style of the managers seems to have impinged negatively on organizational goals and performance. Usman (2013) observed that the educational managers in the North Central put paperwork before people work; hence the present chaos in the educational system. In the absence of skilled, competent, democratic and effective educational managers, the goal of achieving effective service delivery in Nigerian tertiary institutions becomes an illusion. Thus, this study sought to find out from respondents ways human resource management could be optimized for performance, efficiency, and effective service delivery in the institutions.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the ways of optimizing staff motivation in the institutions for effective service delivery?
2. What are the ways of optimizing management staff for effective service delivery in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significant.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the management staff, deans and heads of departments with regards to optimizing staff motivation for effective service delivery in the institutions in the North Central States.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the management staff, deans and heads of departments regarding ways of optimizing effective service delivery in the institutions in the North Central States.

Research Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey design describes the characteristics or behavior of a particular population in a systematic and accurate way. Ali (2006) maintained that any study which seeks to find 'what is' and describes it, is a descriptive survey research design.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in state - owned Colleges of Education in North Central Nigeria. The North Central is situated in the middle of Nigeria's geographical region, popularly called the middle belt. It is so-called because the region is situated right in the middle of Nigeria. The North Central surround Abuja the Federal Capital Territory on all sides- North, West, East and South. The North central states are six in number the states are Benue state, Kogi state, Kwara state, Nasarawa state, Niger state, and Plateau state. The North Central is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi- linguistics region. The area is classified as educationally disadvantaged zone based on the limited educational facilities, and the poor performance recorded each year from every external examination in the region.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of the 9 State Colleges of Education in the North Central States. The respondents for the study consist of 321 principal officers made up 36 management staff, 63 Deans and 222 Heads of departments/units. Due to the manageable size of the population there was no sampling as the entire population was used.

Instrument of Data Collection

A 19 item questionnaire titled, Optimizing Human Resource Management Questionnaire (OHRMQ) guided the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The cut off mean score 2.50 formed the basis for accepting or rejecting any item on the questionnaire.

Research Question One: What are the ways of optimizing staff motivation for effective service delivery in the institutions?

Optimizing Human Resource Management for Effective Service Delivery In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: A Survey Of State Owned Colleges Of Education In North Central – Dr. Ahman Elizabeth Animoku and Dr. Inyamu Ene Egwa

Table 1: Means (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (SD) on Ways of Optimizing Staff Motivation for Effective Service Delivery in the Institutions

S/ N	Item statement on staff motivation	Mgmt staff N= 36			Deans and HODs/Units N=285			Total N = 321		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec	\bar{X}	SD	Dec	\bar{X}	SD	Dec
1	Ensure prompt payment of salaries/allowances	3.63	.64	SA	3.31	.64	A	3.35	.65	A
2	Provide adequate work material to enhance staff morale	3.27	.45	A	3.35	.62	A	3.34	.60	A
3	Provide comfortable office/residential accommodation for staff	3.64	.49	SA	3.55	.50	SA	3.56	.49	SA
4	Encourage members to participate actively in decision making about policies that affect their wellbeing	3.31	.47	A	3.25	.59	A	3.26	.57	A
5	Provide safe and conducive working environment for both staff and students	3.72	.45	SA	3.73	.46	SA	3.73	.45	SA
6	Give award to deserving staff members	3.31	.62	SA	3.56	.54	SA	3.53	.55	SA
7	Ensure the availability of funds for developing programmes such as conferences, research, seminars, workshops and study leave	3.53	.51	SA	3.48	.50	A	3.49	.50	A
8	Ensure promotions are done as at when due	3.42	.65	SA	3.48	.54	A	3.47	.55	A
9	Implement promotions with financial and materials benefits	3.63	.49	SA	3.55	.49	SA	3.56	.49	SA
10	Encourage open-door administration	3.53	.51	SA	3.40	.49	A	3.41	.49	A
	Cluster mean	3.49	.33	A	3.48	.35	A	3.48	.34	A

Mgmt – Management, HODs = Heads of Departments, Dec = Decision, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, N = Number

Data on table 1 indicated the mean responses of the respondents on ways of optimizing staff motivation for effective service delivery in the institutions. The data showed that the respondents strongly agreed that promotions be implemented with financial and material benefits, award given to deserving staff members, provision of safe and conducive working environment for staff and students, provision of comfortable office and residential accommodation for staff. This is shown by mean scores ranging from 3.55 – 3.73, SD .50 - .45. However, respondents on the average

agreed that promotions are to be implemented as at when due, prompt payment of salaries and allowances, provision of adequate work material to enhance staff morale, that open door administration be encouraged, and the availability of funds for projects. This is shown by the mean scores ranging from 3.25 -3.49, SD .59 – 50. The cluster mean of 3.48, SD .34 showed that the management, deans and heads of departments all agreed that the item statements constitute ways of optimizing staff motivation for effective service delivery in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of management, deans and heads of departments with regards to the ways of optimizing staff motivation for effective service delivery in the institutions.

Optimizing Human Resource Management for Effective Service Delivery In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: A Survey Of State Owned Colleges Of Education In North Central – Dr. Ahman Elizabeth Animoku and Dr. Inyamu Ene Egwa

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the Means Ratings of Management, Deans and Heads of Departments Regarding Ways of Optimizing Staff Motivation and Welfare Practices for Effective Service Delivery in the Institutions

S/ N	Items statement on staff motivation	Status	X	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig	Dec
1	Ensure prompt payment of salaries/allowances	Management	3.64	.64	2.81	319	.005	S
		Deans &HODs	3.32	.64				
2	Provide adequate work material to enhance staff morale	Management	3.28	.45	.69	319	.49	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.35	.62				
3	Provide comfortable office residential accommodation for staff	Management	3.64	.49	.34	319	.08	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.55	.50				
4	Encourage members to participate actively in decision making about policies that affect their well being	Management	3.31	.49	.52	319	.60	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.25	.59				
5	Provide safe and conducive working environment for both staff and students	Management	3.72	.45	.052	319	.96	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.73	.44				
6	Give award to deserving staff members	Management	3.31	.62	2.64	319	.10	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.56	.54				
7	Ensure the availability of funds for developing programmes such as conferences, research, seminars, workshops and study leave	Management	3.53	.51	.49	319	.62	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.48	.50				
8	Ensure promotions are done as at when due	Management	3.42	.65	.65	319	.51	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.48	.54				
9	Implement promotions with financial and material benefits	Management	3.64	.49	.96	319	.34	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.55	.49				
10	Encourage open-door administration	Management	3.53	.51	1.43	319	.15	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.40	.49				
	Cluster mean	Management	3.49	.33	.23	319	.82	NS
		Deans &HODs	3.48	.35				

\bar{X} = mean, SD = Standard Deviation, t-call = t-calculated, Df= Degree of freedom, Sig =level significance, Dec = Decision, Management = Management, Deans and HODs= Deans of schools and Heads of departments/units

Results on Table 2 indicated the differences in the mean ratings of management, deans, and heads of departments on ways of optimizing motivation for effective service delivery in the institutions. The data showed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of management, deans and heads of departments regarding item statement 31 on prompt payment of salaries and allowances. This is shown by the calculated t-value of 2.81 at 319 degree of freedom which is significant at 0.05 level of

probability. However, the data further showed that there were no significant differences in the mean ratings of the respondents on ways of optimizing staff motivation regarding the provision of adequate work material, comfortable office and residential accommodation, safe and conducive working environment, award to deserving staff, promotion effected with financial and material benefits, availability of funds for developing programmes such as conferences, research, seminars, workshops. These are shown by the calculated t-values which ranged from .34-2.81 at 319 degree of freedom which is not significant at 0.05 level of probability. The cluster t-value of .23 at 319 degree of freedom

Research Question Two: What are the ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery in the institutions?

Optimizing Human Resource Management for Effective Service Delivery In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: A Survey Of State Owned Colleges Of Education In North Central – Dr. Ahman Elizabeth Animokwu and Dr. Inyamu Ene Egwa

Table 3: Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) on Ways of Optimizing Management for Effective Service Delivery in the Institutions

S/ N	Item statement on effective management	Mgmt N = 36			Deans and HODs/Unit N=285			Total N=321		
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec	\bar{X}	SD	Dec	\bar{X}	SD	Dec
11	Management is to determine procedures for achieving stated objectives	3.30	.82	A	3.60	.52	SA	3.45	.89	A
12	Encourage staff members to express their opinions during staff meetings	3.50	.53	SA	3.60	.52	SA	3.55	.51	SA
13	Inspire good performance in the pursuit of organizational goals	3.50	.53	SA	3.40	.52	A	3.45	.51	A
14	Direct and control the workers within the bounds of the rules of conduct as defined by the organization	3.70	.48	SA	3.60	.52	SA	3.65	.49	SA
15	Encourage workers to exercise their intellectual abilities and skills in achieving the objectives to which they are assigned.	3.30	.48	A	3.10	.58	A	3.20	.53	A
16	Discourage staff members' participation in decision making to enhance performance and effective service delivery	1.70	.82	D	1.30	.84	SD	1.50	.69	D
17	Delegate deans, heads of department/units to provide adequate supervision to staff members	3.40	.66	A	3.10	.32	A	3.25	.72	A
18	Encourage a democratic approach to managing the workers	3.40	.70	A	3.20	.92	A	3.30	.81	A
19	Management is to determine the quality of staff members through training and development	3.30	.48	A	3.40	.52	A	3.35	.49	A
Cluster Mean		3.23	.30	A	3.14	.30	A	3.19	.29	A

X = means, SD = Standard Deviation, t-call = t-calculated, Df = Degree of freedom, Sig=level of significance, Dec= Decision, Mgmt =Management, Deans and HODs = Deans of schools and Heads of departments/units

The information on Table 3 presented the mean scores of the responses of management, deans and heads of departments regarding ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery in Colleges of Education. The data revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that management is to encourage staff members to express their opinions during staff meetings, and that management direct and control workers within the bounds of the rules of conduct as defined by the organization. This is shown by mean scores of 3.50 and 3.70, SD .53 and .48. The respondents were in agreement on items 29, 31, 33 and 35. This is shown by mean scores ranging from 3.10 – 3.45, SD .58 - .51. However, the respondents disagreed that staff members be discouraged from participating in decision making that enhance performance. This is shown by mean scores of 1.30 and 1.70, SD .84 and .82.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of management, deans and heads of departments regarding ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery in the institutions.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Management, Deans and Heads of Departments Regarding Ways of Optimizing Management for Effective Service Delivery in the Institutions

S/N	Item statement on effective management	Status	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig	Dec
11	Management is to determine procedures for achieving stated objectives	Management	3.40	.82	.98	18	.34	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.60	.52				
12	Encourage staff members to express their opinions during staff meetings	Management	3.50	.53	.43	18	.67	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.60	.52				
13	Inspire good performance in the pursuit of organizational goals	Management	3.50	.53	.43	18	.67	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.40	.52				
14	Direct and control the workforce within the bounds of the rules of conduct as defined by the organization	Management	3.70	.48	.45	18	.66	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.60	.52				
15	Encourage workers to exercise their intellectual abilities and skills in achieving the objectives to which they are assigned.	Management	3.30	.48	.85	18	.41	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.10	.57				
16	Encourage staff members' participation in decision making to enhance performance and effective service delivery	Management	1.70	.82	1.33	18	.20	NS
		Deans & HODs	1.30	.48				
17	Delegate deans, heads of department/units to provide adequate supervision to staff members	Management	3.40	.97	.93	18	.36	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.10	.32				
18	Encourage a democratic approach to managing the workers	Management	3.40	.70	.55	18	.59	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.20	.92				
19	Management is to determine the quality of staff members through training and development	Management	3.30	.48	.45	18	.66	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.40	.52				
Cluster Mean		Management	3.30	.30	.67	18	.51	NS
		Deans & HODs	3.40	.30				

\bar{X} = means, SD = Standard Deviation, t-call = t-calculated, Df = Degree of freedom, Sig = level of significance, Dec = Decision, Mgmt = Management, Deans and HODs = Deans of schools and Heads of department/units

Data on table 4 showed that there were no significant differences in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery. The calculated t-values for item statements 20 – 28 which ranged from .43 – 1.33 at 18 degree of freedom are not significant at 0.05 level of probability. The cluster t-values of .67 at 18 degree of freedom also revealed that there were no significant differences in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery in Colleges of Education. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Ways of Optimizing Staff Motivation

The result from research question one revealed that management, deans and heads of departments agreed that the ways of optimizing staff motivation for effective service delivery are: give award to deserving staff members, provide safe and conducive work environment, provide comfortable office and residential accommodation for staff, implement promotions with financial and material benefits, availability of funds for projects such as conferences, research, seminars, workshop, and study leave, provide adequate work materials to enhance staff morale. The mean ratings of the items (see table 1) indicated agreement between management, deans and heads of departments regarding ways of optimizing staff motivation in Colleges of Education in the North Central. The finding is in agreement with Enyi (2004) who noted that the extent to which workers' needs are met, determines their level of motivation and hence their performance and commitment.

Ways of Optimizing Management for Effective Service Delivery

Result obtained from research question two showed that the respondents agreed regarding the ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery in the institutions. They are: encourage workers to exercise their intellectual abilities and skills to achieve objectives to which assigned, direct and control the workers within the bounds as defined by the organization. The mean ratings of the items (see Table 3) indicated that the respondents are in agreement regarding ways of optimizing management for effective service delivery. The finding is in agreement with Onah (2008) who maintained that management is the ability to getting things done through people by determining objectives, setting priorities, and achieving stated objectives.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study;

1. Management should motivate staff with financial and material benefits, provide safe and comfortable office and residential accommodation, and ensure the availability of adequate work material to enhance staff morale, and high productivity.

2. Management should inspire good performance in the pursuit of organizational goals, encourage workers to exercise their skills and abilities to achieve organizational goals, delegate authority when necessary, and encourage workers' participation in decision making to enhance performance and effective service delivery.

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