

ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ON STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS

Dr. Aliyu Mamman

Department of Business Management
Faculty of Arts, Management and Social Sciences
Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State, Nigeria

Kabiru Sani Aminu

Department of Accountancy
College of Business and Management Studies
Kaduna State Polytechnic

ABSTRACT: *The paper assesses the existence and the extent of application of management strategy on staff training and development in Nigerian Polytechnics with a view to determining how far is it from the ideal. The study adopted a population of 10,512 academic staff of total of 80 public and private Polytechnics. A sample size of 300 was randomly chosen and Chi square test provided analysis on the survey data. The paper concludes that there is no defined Management Strategy on Staff Training and Development in the Nigerian polytechnics and therefore the extent of application cannot be measured. The paper recommends that the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) with the Polytechnics to come up with a defined management strategy on staff training and development for all Nigerian Polytechnics.*

KEYWORDS: *Management Strategy, Staff Training and Development and Polytechnics*

INTRODUCTION

In the past organizations rely more on their physical and financial assets as source of competitive advantage or achievement of objectives. As at that time human resources were simply considered as cost centres (Millmore, Lewis, Saunders, Thornhill and Morrow, 2007). Technological innovation and globalization has changed the trend. Currently organizations can only compete favourably and achieve their objectives if they focus on building a sound human resource foundation as people and knowledge are the key drivers of the today's world (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhard and Wright, 2006). Tertiary educational institutions are labour intensive and therefore largely depend on their employees for delivery of services and achievement of goals (Naris and Okpere, 2009). The goals of tertiary education as contained in National Policy of Education (2004) include among others contribution to national development through high level relevant manpower training and developing the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments. In addition to the said goals, the policy stated the specific goals of the Polytechnic education as follows, among others: Provide full-time or part-time courses of instructions and training in engineering, other technologies, applied science, business and management, leading to the production of trained manpower; Provide the technical knowledge and skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development of Nigeria;

Train people who can apply scientific knowledge to solve environmental problems for the convenience of man.

Academic staffs are central in the achievement of the statutory goals of polytechnic education. The staffs themselves need training to effectively perform their functions (Goldstein, and Ford, 2002). This makes staff training and development in the polytechnics imperative. For training to achieve its desired objectives, a defined Management Strategy on it is necessary. Institutions that have defined strategies on staff training and development and are capable of implementing them, could gain benefits such as staff retention, improved job performance, higher job and higher job satisfaction (D'Netto, Bakas and Bordia, 2008)

The objective of the paper is to examine the existence and extent of application of management strategy on staff training and development in Nigerian Polytechnics with a view to determining how far is it from the ideal.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Training and Development

Wright (2003) defines training as planned effort to facilitate the learning of job-related knowledge, skills, and behavior by employees. He defines "Development" as acquisition of knowledge, skills and behavior that improve employees' ability to meet the future challenges of the existing job. The importance of training and development in organization cannot be over emphasized. Mullins (1999) stated some of the benefits of staff training and development as follows;

- Increase the confidence, motivation and commitment of staff;
- Provide recognition, enhanced responsibility, and the possibility of increased pay and promotion;
- Give feeling of personal satisfaction and achievement, and broaden opportunities for career progression; and
- Help to improve the availability and quality of staff.

Nmadu (1999) further identified the following benefits of staff training and development:

- Increased productivity- increase in skill from training usually result in increase in both quality and quantity of output;
- Heightened morale-knowledge and skills acquired from training help to satisfy employees psychological needs like security and self-actualization;
- Less supervision-trained employees may need less supervision than the untrained ones;
- Less industrial accidents- some industrial accidents are usually caused by mistakes committed by employees. Proper training may reduce incidences of making mistakes and consequently reduce rate of accidents
- Increased organizational stability and flexibility- through training an organization can have reservoir of manpower that can make it stable despite the loss of key personnel through labour turn over or death. In the area of flexibility an organization with trained manpower can easily adjust to short run variation in volume of work due to staff going on annual leave or other short term engagements.

According to Naris and Ukpere (2009) staff training and development is a process that involves need assessment, instruction and evaluation. Training Need Assessment (TNA) is defined as

process of identifying a training problem, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and using it to select or design an appropriate training programme to address the identified problem (Opperman and Meyer, 2008). In the conduct of TNA, Forster (1995) provided some useful questions that need to be asked and answered as follows;

- Who is to be trained-number and types of employees?
- Why are they to be trained-what are the training objectives? what should be taught?
- How training should be done-what methods should be used?
- Who should do the training?
- When can it be done-length and frequency?
- Where will it be done-location?
- How will it be assessed?

After the conduct of TNA and the training programmes (instructions), the next important issue is that of evaluation. Goldstein and Ford (2002) define evaluation of training as systematic process of collecting subjective and judgemental information to determine to determine if training is effective. D'Netto et al (2008) further viewed training and development effectiveness as the extent to which training and development programmes and activities yield desired results. In the evaluation of training programmes, Forster (1995) suggested asking and providing answers to the following questions;

- Did the results meet the set training objectives- that are, did performance improve?
- What benefits accrued to the practice?
- Where there any spinoffs over and above the objectives set?
- How much did it cost?
- What revision needs to be made to training programmes in the future?
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Goldstein and Ford (2002) identified some barriers that might affect evaluation of training programmes. They include lack of priority by top management, lack of skills amongst those responsible for evaluation of training programmes, lack of organizational criteria to set training goals, failure to understand what is to be evaluated, lack of planning and a perception that training evaluation is expensive and risky. Investment in training and development is a waste if learning by trainees is not evaluated as a result of inadequate information or any of the identified evaluation problems. Information that can be used in evaluation of training programmes can be obtained from beneficiaries through interviews and administration of questionnaires.

For training and development to be effective in an organization, its conduct needs to be guided by certain principles. According to Cumming (1993), the principles include the following;

- Motivation; a highly motivated trainee tends to learn faster than the un-motivated one. Training programmes need to be related to ends which the trainee's desires, like recognition, promotion, increase in salary etc.
- Progress report; this involves monitoring of trainees to find out information on the level of progress the trainee is making in a training programme. Care must be taken to ensure that right information is obtained so as to avoid misinterpretation of a trainee progress.

- Reinforcements; knowledge and skills acquired from training and development should be reinforced by means of rewards or punishments. Rewards may include commendations, pay increases etc. and punishments may include queries, denial promotion and the rest of them.
- Practice; to determine the extent of learning and skill acquisition during training, there should be room for active participation by the trainee during and after each training programme.
- Whole Versus Part; training programmes usually deal with some aspects or sub portions of the job and the trainee is saddled with the responsibility of applying the training to the other parts of the said job. To accomplish this kind of onerous task, trainees need to be assisted through in-house training on application of knowledge and skills on the assigned job.
- Individual differences; although group training is more economical and convenient, it is important for training programmes to take in to cognizance the individual differences of the trainees. Ignoring the differences may significantly reduce the desired impact of the training on the trainees.

Management strategy

The concept of management has multiple uses, and can therefore be applied to many situations and circumstances (Adeleke, 2004). In the context of this paper, “management” refers to an internal organizational or administrative process.

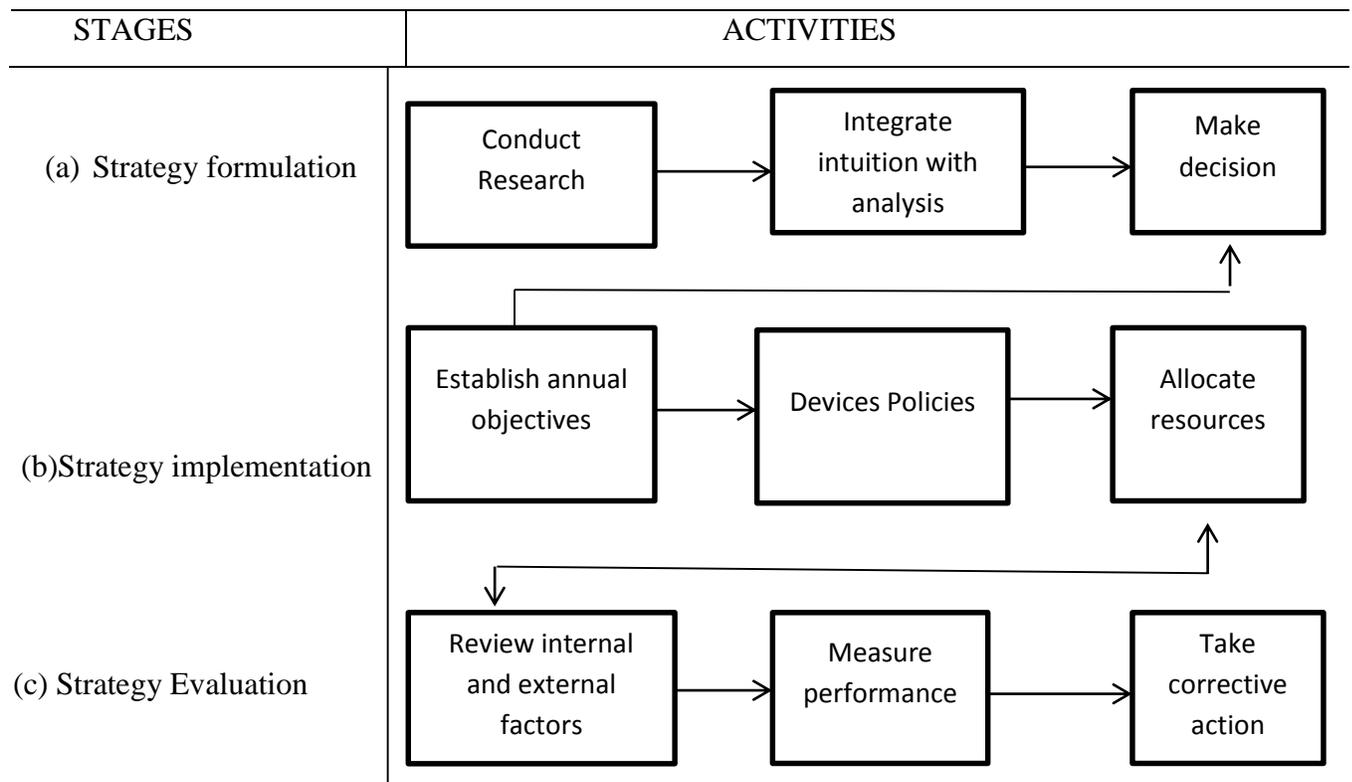
As for strategy, Armstrong (2006) refers to it as the determination of the basic long term goals and objectives and the adoption of courses of action and allocation of necessary resources for achievement of the set goals and objectives. Aluko, Odugbesan, Gbadamosi and Osuagwu (1997) define strategy as set of objectives, policies and plans that define scope of a phenomena and the approach to achieve stated objectives.

Management strategy on staff training and development entails determination of goals and objectives of training programmes and allocation of the required resources to achieve the said objectives by the administration of an institution.

According to Aluko et al (1997) an ideal strategy (administrative, operational or business) needs to under go the following stages:

- Strategy formulation; at this stage long term objectives are established based on the internal factors like the vision and mission of the institution and external factors like funding and other government policies. This is achieved mainly through conduct of research, analysis of data and making of decisions;
- Strategy implementation; this stage involves mobilization of resources comprising the 5ms (men, money, machine, method and materials) to achieve the stated long term objectives. The major activities that take place at this stage include establishment of short term objectives, devising of policies and allocation of resources;
- Strategy evaluation; at this stage the institution periodically (may be annually or after every 2, 3, 4 or maximum of 5 years) measures its performance in terms of achieving its long term objectives after implementation of the formulated strategy. The major activities usually carried out at this stage include review of bases of strategy (internal and external factors), measurement of performance and taking of corrective actions if need be. In conducting strategy evaluation, the following basic questions need to be asked and answered;
 - Are the long and short term objectives of the strategy appropriate?
 - Are the major policies and plans adopted to achieve the long and short term objectives appropriate?
 - Are results obtained after performance evaluation satisfactory or otherwise?

The stages can be presented diagrammatically as follows;



Source; Aluko et al (1997: 24).

The paper will adopt the Aluko et al model in examining the extent of application Polytechnic Management Strategy on Staff Training and Development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a population of 10,512 academic staff of the total of 80 public and private Polytechnics in Nigeria (NBTE, 2013). A sample size of 300 was randomly chosen and considered adequate because Kaiser Criterion suggested a sample size of not less than 250 for a survey study (Field, 2005). Principal components analysis, categorical regression and Chi square test provided analysis on the survey data, and Cronbach’s alpha, Split-half test and Guttman’s lambda provided the analysis for testing the reliability of the factors used.

Table 1 Management Strategy on Staff Training and Development.

Rep	
F ₁	The Polytechnics have defined and definite strategy on staff development.
F ₂	The long term objectives of the strategy on staff development achieved in your polytechnic.
F ₃	The resources allocated to staff training and developments are adequate and accessible to beneficiaries.
F ₄	There is adequate periodic review of strategy/policy on staff training and development.
F ₅	There is measurement of performance of trainees after attending training and development programmes.
F ₆	There is motivation for trainees in form of promotion, recognition, increase in salary etc. after successful completion of training and development programmes.
F ₇	There is punitive measures for erring trainees in form of queries, denial of promotion, warnings etc.
F ₈	There is mechanism for monitoring progress of staff on training and development programmes.
F ₉	The Polytechnic considers individual differences of trainees in monitoring their progress.
F ₁₀	There is mechanism for monitoring the level of application of knowledge and skills acquired by staff after training programmes.
F ₁₁	The Polytechnic organizes follow-up training programmes to assist trainees on application of knowledge and skills to assigned jobs.
F ₁₂	The Polytechnic is having a policy on staff retention after training.
F ₁₃	There is reasonable success in retaining staff after training.

DISCUSSION OF RESULT

This section presented the results of analysis of existence and extent of application Polytechnic Management Strategy on Staff Training and Development. The results are as follows: reliability statistics, chi-square test, and subsequently interpreted the result.

Reliability Statistics

Table 3 Reliability Statistics

Cases	Valid	N
	Excluded	246
	Total	4
	Items	250
Cronbach's Alpha		.749
Split-half Coefficient		.729
Guttman Lambda		.719

The reliability statistics table above indicates that there are a total number of 250 cases of which 246 are valid and 4 are excluded. And also there are 13 items in each case. To assess the reliability of the factors, Cronbach's alpha, Split –half Coefficient and Guttman lambda were computed as

0.749, 0.729, and 0.719 respectively. All the coefficients are above 0.7 and this suggests that the measures are acceptable.

Table 2: Statistical Test of management strategy on staff training & development

Variable Attribute	Chi Square	<i>df</i>	<i>Critical Chi</i>	Level of Sig.
F₁	5.815	4	9.488	.318
F₂	3.089	4	9.488	.543
F₃	8.911	4	9.488	.210
F₄	14.04	4	9.488	.030
F₅	7.5	4	9.488	.091
F₆	3.153	4	9.488	.500
F₇	89.218	4	9.488	.000
F₈	5.581	4	9.488	.343
F₉	14.5	4	9.488	.000
F₁₀	6.315	4	9.488	.311
F₁₁	4.903	4	9.488	.386
F₁₂	6.387	4	9.488	.065
F₁₃	4.903	4	9.488	.324

From the chi square computed above for 13 factors, 3 are significant at 1% while one at 5%. Therefore the research deduced that there is no defined Polytechnic Management Strategy on Staff Training and Development in the Nigerian polytechnics and therefore the extent of application cannot be measure.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Polytechnics in Nigeria like other tertiary institutions also train their academic as well as nonacademic staff so as to abreast them of developments in teaching and learning. The absence of well-defined training and development policies in the polytechnics will seriously limit research efforts on determining the impact of training programs on staff of the institutions. The implication of this unfortunate development is that the funds expended on staff training cannot be justified and the future training needs of the said staff cannot also be precisely determined.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper concludes that there is no defined Management Strategy on Staff Training and Development in the Nigerian polytechnics and therefore the extent of application cannot be measured. The paper recommends that each Polytechnic should come up with a defined management strategy on staff training and development. This enable management of various polytechnics to properly determine their training needs objectives and criteria for measuring performance after training. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) as a regulatory agency for all Nigerian Polytechnics, should a provide a minimum guidelines on staff training and development

FUTURE RESEARCH

There are three categories of tertiary institutions in Nigeria: Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. In future research can be conducted on Management Strategy on Staff Training in Universities and/or Colleges of Education.

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