

ASSESSING PERCEIVED HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY INITIATIVES AMONG NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LECTURERS

By

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Abstract

This study assessed perceived human capital development and productivity initiatives among Nigerian university lecturers. Two research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The researchers employed descriptive survey research design for the study. The population of the study comprised all university lecturers in Nigeria while the target population consisted of all lecturers in Federal universities across South-west and North-central zones of Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used to select South-west and North-central out of the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The study sample consisted of 200 respondents that were selected from four Federal universities (University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin and the Federal University of Technology, Minna) using simple random sampling. Human Capital Development and Productivity Initiatives Questionnaire of 4-point Likert type, developed by the researchers was used to collect information for the study. Reliability coefficients of the instrument, using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability, stood at 0.76 and 0.81 for Human Capital Development and Productivity Initiatives subscales respectively. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of percentage and mean, while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The findings showed that the level of human capital development among Nigerian university workers was high; the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university workers include attendance of workshops and seminars to improve productivity, publication of research articles with universities, and attendance of national conference; and that there was significant relationship between human capital development and productivity initiatives of Nigerian university workers. It was, therefore, recommended that school management should continue to be alive to the task of ensuring continuous development of their workers, and that university workers should be sensitized on the need to retain and build on the observed productivity initiatives.

Key words: Human Capital, Development, Productivity Initiative, University Lecturers

Introduction

Higher education is the backbone of development of any nation as it plays a critical role in equipping and improving youths for employment. Tertiary institutions are generally regarded as major actors in human capital development because of their roles in ensuring that manpower needed for human and national development are trained. In this age of globalization, the role of higher education in enhancing national development cannot be overemphasized. Tertiary institutions all over the world have the assignment of producing skilled manpower necessary for effective social, economic and political development of their societies. This reiterates the importance of education in the acquisition of vocational and intellectual skills necessary for the realization of potentials, wealth creation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation. The attainment of these goals is capable of being influenced by university workers' productivity initiatives.

Productivity involves doing the right things the right way, getting more output with less input, punctuality and promptness, elimination of wastes, justifying your pay, improvement in all aspects of life and yielding better quality (Ojeniyi, 2015). It is the ratio between the total organizational/educational outputs and the resource input utilised in the production process. With respect to this study, productivity is the efficiency with which university workers perform their multiple responsibilities of learning (product of teaching), knowledge (product of research), institutional community and professional activities (the product of shared governance, community service and professional activities). University workers' productivity can be said to be useful results obtained from efforts made by the workers to attain educational goals in the university setting (Amini-Philips & Okonmah, 2020). This is in relation to the observation of

Obadara (2019) that productivity enhancement is the ultimate aim of any organization, whether public or private, and requires a measure of both efficiency and effectiveness.

Productivity is much more important than revenues and profits of the organization because profits only reflect the end result whereas Productivity reflects the increase efficiency as well as effectiveness of business Policies and processes. The importance of productivity can never be under looked by any diligent business owner. Successful ventures are often those that give priority to productivity compared to solely looking into revenues and profits of the company (Etor, 2014). Lecturers' productivity can be said to be useful results obtained from efforts made by the lecturers to attain educational goals in the university setting. Thus, there is need for motivation because despite the cumbersome workload of lecturers, productivity needs to be attained but how can this be when there is little or no support from government and university management in career development through conference, seminars and constant promotion. Constant promotion as at when due could also be a factor that can boost or cushion lecturers' workload thereby yielding desired productivity (Amini-Philips & Okonmah, 2020).

It can be suggested from the above narratives that motivation and constant promotion are capable of increasing lecturers' productivity despite their workload, because when a lecturer is well paid, he can pay for frequent check up to maintain a healthy lifestyle to continue with the job. He/she can also be comfortable enough to work effectively, because you don't expect a stressed or sick lecturer to stand in front of a large class and lecture effectively (Okendo, 2018). Furtherance to productivity initiatives, university lecturers can be encouraged (by self or by the school management) to engage in certain productivity induced activities and services. Such activities include in-training, opportunity to go for further studies, organization of workshops and seminars for lecturers, sponsoring lecturers for local and international conferences, co-authorship

of book(s), contribution of chapters in Book of Readings, and contribution of chapters in an edited book (Muhamad, Nurhattati & Unifah, 2018). The extent to which these initiatives are encouraged depends on the human capital development programmes of the universities.

Human Capital (HC) development refers to processes that relate to training, education and management development initiatives in order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets of an employee which will lead to the employee's satisfaction and performance, and eventually on a firm's performance. HC development programmes are deliberately organised programmes (e.g. education, training, development, and career development) offered to employees over a certain period, to increase knowledge, skills, attitude, and other professional characteristics needed to execute strategic objectives (Atiku & Fields, 2018). In the opinion of Sharabati (2013) training programmes involve building the right and specific knowledge, skill in manners to approach current and future challenges. The human capital development programme is a deliberate and comprehensive training for positive outcomes in an organisation (Birdi, et al., 2008; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Enyakit, Amaehule, and Teerah (2011) put it that training and development can be used synonymously with human capital development. The foregoing shows the importance of the training programme as a fundamental tool in the human capital development programme. Ukenna, et al. (2010) records training as a strong predictor of HC effectiveness.

HC development is an important input for organizations especially for employees' continuous improvement mainly on knowledge, skills, and abilities (Manzini & Kufa, 2016). It is a concept that human capital consists of the intangible resources that workers provide for their employers, and the importance of training is fundamentally important in the provision of that resources. Training is the vehicle that takes organizations to their destination within a stipulated

time frame. The current market recently are facing increasingly rapid amount of changes in technology, systems and products (Ogbu, 2019). Usually most of the organisations make investments in training of their employees because they believe that it will lead to higher performance and it will give those results. Effective human capital development will increase workers' productivity and performance which will consequently increases organisational performance (Manzini & Kufa, 2016). As observed by Sharabati (2013), the level of HC development of tertiary institution was high. Human capital development tends to generate a significant contribution to organisational competencies (Youndt, et al., 2004; Lawal, et al., 2020). In other words, a well-articulated and strategically managed HC can boost innovativeness and increase the competitive advantage of an institution.

As good as human capital development to the productivity initiatives of workers, its practices and processes seems to be facing several problems that inhibit their effectiveness for organizational development and attainment of predetermined objectives. This is in relation to the observation of Nwamadi and Ogbonna (2021) that the level of productivity among university workers was low. To survive in a volatile environment the quality of the human element ought to be continuously upgraded through training and development. Unfortunately most human capital managers in Nigeria underrate and devalue the need to develop human capital. Some view the development of human capital as a loosely designed classroom training program. Others make use of Training and Development schemes as a means of settling expectations and organisational values. Knowledge and information fuel the engine. The provision of service requires knowledge and information from managers and leaders hence their methods of implementation must change to meet this new strategy. It is evidence from the literature that the existing studies on human capital development and productivity in Nigeria are scanty, and the few available ones were

conducted outside the university settings. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to evaluate human capital development and productivity initiatives among Nigerian university workers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study.

1. What is the level of perceived human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers?
2. What are the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers

In addition to the research questions, the null hypothesis below was tested.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between human capital development and productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all university lecturers in Nigeria which is estimated at 100,000, while the target population consisted of all lecturers in Federal universities across South-west and North-central zones of Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used in the stage. At the first stage, simple random sampling was used to select South-west and North-central out of the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria. At the second stage, simple random sampling was used to select two (2) federal universities from each of the selected geopolitical zones. This led to the selection of 4 universities, which are the University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin and the Federal University of Technology, Minna. The study sample consisted of 200 respondents that

were selected from the four Federal universities using convenient sampling. The choice of convenient sampling is premised on the fact that it might not be easy to gather the lecturers in a situation that allows the use of simple random sampling approach. Human Capital Development and Productivity Initiatives Questionnaire, developed by the researchers was used to collect information for the study. The human capital development sub-scale has 8 items of 4-point Likert type of Very True, True, Not True, and Not Very True, while the productivity initiative sub-scale has 12 items with response format of Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability. To achieve this, the instrument was administered to 25 lecturers who had the same characteristics with the actual respondents. The obtained responses were subjected to Cronbach Alpha. The instrument has reliability coefficients of 0.76 and 0.81 for Human Capital Development and Productivity Initiatives subscales respectively. The observed coefficients makes the instrument worthy of been used for data collection

Data obtained were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The research questions raised in the study were answered using descriptive statistics of percentage and mean rating while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of perceived human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers?

To answer the research question, responses obtained on human capital development among Nigerian university workers were summed and subjected to both mean and percentage analysis. Firstly, item by item analysis was done using mean as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Item analysis of the perceived human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers

S/N	In my institution, there is opportunity for:	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Mean
1	On-the-job training	58	29	116	58	18	9	8	4	3.12
2	Off-the-job training	87	43.5	88	44	25	12.5	-	-	3.31
3	Seminars and workshops	75	37.5	124	62	1	0.5	-	-	3.37
4	Conferences	118	59	82	41	-	-	-	-	3.59
5	Symposium	78	39	101	50.5	13	6.5	8	4	3.25
6	Orientation on instructional delivery	37	18.5	35	17.5	106	53	22	11	2.43
7	Career development	101	50.5	93	46.5	6	3	-	-	3.47
8	Continuing education	71	35.5	128	64	1	0.5	-	-	3.35

Having presented the item by item analysis of the items used in measuring human capital development, the researchers proceeded to the determination of the level of human capital development. The minimum obtainable, maximum obtainable and range score of the respondents were 8, 32 and 24. The range was divided by the three levels (high, average and low) and the cut off was 8. Scores between 8-16, 17-24 and 25-32 are categorized as low, average and high level respectively. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers

Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	122	61.0
Average	32	16.0
Low	46	23.0
Total	200	100.0

Result in Table 2 indicates that 122 (61%) of the respondents perceived that the level of human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers was high, 32 (16%) perceived that the level of human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers was average, while 46 (23%) perceived that the level of human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers was high. This shows that the level of human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers was high.

Research Question 2: What are the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers?

To answer the research question, responses obtained on productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers were summed and subjected to mean analysis. Decision as to the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers was based on the benchmark of 2.50. To achieve this, average of the numerical points for the response options were obtained as $(4+3+2+1)/4$. In which 4 stands for Always, 3 stands for Sometimes, 2 stands for Rarely, and 1 for Never. Items with mean score of 2.50 and above were regarded as productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers, while items with mean score below 2.50 were not seen as productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Rank ordering of the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers

S/N	Items	Mean	Ranking
1	I attend workshops and seminars to improve my productivity	3.55	1 ^{st*}
2	I attend national conference	3.29	3 ^{rd*}
3	I attend international conference	2.82	5 ^{th*}
4	My conference papers are published in conference proceedings.	2.94	4 ^{th*}
5	I publish research articles with universities	3.31	2 ^{nd*}
6	My research articles are published by a foreign journal.	2.78	6 ^{th*}
7	I author book(s.)	2.64	9 ^{th*}
8	I co-author book(s).	2.69	8 ^{th*}
9	I contribute chapters in edited book.	2.74	7 ^{th*}
10	I contribute chapters in Book of Readings.	2.66	10 ^{th *}
11	I participate in sponsored national research.	1.31	12 th
12	I participate in sponsored international research.	2.54	11 ^{th*}

Key: 0.0 – 2.49 = Adopted Initiative

2.50 – 4.00 = Not Adopted Initiative

Results in Table 3 show the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers. As shown in the table, in the order of ranking, the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers are attendance of workshops and seminars to improve productivity, publication of research articles with universities, attendance of national conference, publication of conference papers in conference proceedings, attendance of international conference, publication of articles with foreign journal outlets, contribution of chapters in edited book, co-authorship of book(s), authorship of book(s), contribution of chapters in Book of Readings, and participation in sponsored international researches.

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between human capital development and productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Human Capital Development and Productivity Initiatives of Nigerian University Lecturers

Variables	N	r - cal.	p-value	Remark
Human Capital Development	200	0.42	0.00	Significant
Productivity Initiative	200			

Result in Table 4 show r-calculated value of 0.42 and significance of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 ($0.00 < 0.05$). Since 0.00 is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis was not accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between human capital development and productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers.

Discussion of Findings

The thrust of the study was to evaluate human capital development and productivity initiatives among Nigerian university lecturers. Findings from this study revealed that the level of human capital development among Nigerian university lecturers was high. This means that majority of the sampled respondents expressed that many Nigerian university lecturers assessed human capital development opportunities. This result is possible where the lecturers sampled for the study have benefited from human capital development programmes organised within and outside their respective institutions. This result is in line with opinion of Sharabati (2013) who found that the level of HC development of tertiary institution was high.

The result of the study also showed that the productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers are attendance of workshops and seminars to improve productivity, publication of research articles with universities, attendance of national conference, publication of conference papers in conference proceedings, attendance of international conference, publication of articles with foreign journal outlets, contribution of chapters in edited book, co-authorship of book(s), authorship of book(s), contribution of chapters in Book of Readings, and participation in sponsored international researches. This means that attendance of workshops and seminars to improve productivity, publication of research articles with universities, attendance of national conference, publication of conference papers in conference proceedings, and attendance of international conference are among the initiatives or strategies used by Nigerian university lecturers to increase their productivity. This result corroborates that of Muhamad, Nurhattati and Unifah (2018) who found in-training, opportunity to go for further studies, organization of workshops and seminars for lecturers, sponsoring lecturers for local and international conferences, co-authorship of book(s), contribution of chapters in Book of Readings, and contribution of chapters in an edited book among the productivity initiatives of lecturers.

The finding of the study further showed that there was significant relationship between human capital development and productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers. This means that increase in human capital development necessitated considerable increase in productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers. This result is possible where the score obtained on human capital development and productivity initiatives of Nigerian university lecturers moves in the same direction necessary for a significant relationship. The observed significant relationship is in line with that of Lawal, et al. (2020) who found that human capital development significantly contributed to productivity.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study and the discussion it was concluded that human capital development has maximum role to play in productivity initiatives. This is premised on the positive relationship observed between the two variables among Nigerian university lecturers. It was also concluded that the human capital development of the Nigerian university workers was high, and that the university workers adopted variety of productivity initiatives in the quest to perform their duties.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that;

1. University management should provide more opportunity for human capital development.
This will help in maintaining the observed level of human capital development which was found to be high.
2. Based on the revelation of the significant positive relationship between human capital development and productivity initiative, school management should continue to be alive to the task of ensuring continuous development of their workers.
3. University workers should be sensitized on the need to retain and build on the observed productivity initiatives.

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