

Human Capital Management and Staff Job Performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria

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Abstract

Using descriptive survey design, this study investigated impact of human capital management on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) in North Central Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 2,431 staff in 7 SUBEBs in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 365 (15%) staff was used. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire, containing 10 items. It was validated by two research experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University, Makurdi and it yielded a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92. Data collected was analysed using mean scores and standard deviations to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested using Chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study showed that staff training and staff engagement have significant impact on staff job performance. It was recommended among others that the chairmen and management of the SUBEBs should make it a policy to regularly carry out staff training to enable both new and existing staff to acquire relevant skills that would enable the effective performance of their job towards the realization of the objectives of Universal Basic Education in North Central Nigeria.

Keywords: Human, capital, training, engagement, job, performance

Introduction

Education is the key for development, and it liberates the people. It can also be seen as a co-operative, dynamic and life long process through which a society deliberately generates knowledge, skills, values and other forms of behaviour for its survival and

sustenance as well as transmits same from one generation to another. Nigeria is a great nation full of population with great potentials to exploit the natural resources for national development and effective survival. However, Nigeria seems to be confronted with a number of challenges militating against realization of national development and effective survival, which include poverty, illiteracy, security and health related issues among others. InfoGuide Nigeria (2021) maintains that the major problems that most developing nations experience is poverty, illiteracy, health-related issues which gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in which some of its goals are eradication of poverty and illiteracy; this was the basis in which the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced.

The Universal Basic Education Programme was launched in Nigeria by President Olusegun Obasanjo on 30th September 1999. The main policy thrust of the programme was to ensure that education is free, compulsory and qualitative from Basic One (1) to Basic Nine (9) for the Nigerian child, aged between six and fifteen years. In addition, it is to offer nomadic and adult education and to emphasize religious and moral values. According to Ubulom, Enyakit and Amaewhule (2011), the programme as packaged in the implementation guidelines aims at: developing the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion; the provision of a free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age; reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system through improved relevance, quality and efficiency; and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills, ethical, moral and civic needs for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

The development of the entire citizenry requires a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its vigorous promotion. The launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in September, 1999 and its take-off in 2004 is one of such reforms (Ubulom et al., 2011). It is worthy to note that the issues that led to the inauguration of the UBE are all developmental in nature. North Central Nigeria is one of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria comprising of Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Plateau, Nasarawa, Niger and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. All the six states including FCT are made of a State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) responsible for ensuring effective implementation of the basic education programme. According to Ijov (2017), the functions of the boards, among others, include management of universal basic education in the states, appointment, promotion and discipline of teaching and non-teaching staff, provided that all matters relating to officers on grade level 06 and below may be delegated to the local education authority and disbursement of funds to it from federal and state sources.

The aforementioned functions are performed by staff who are the human capital in the boards who served in different departments for the smooth running and effective implementation as well as realization of the objectives of universal basic education in Nigeria and North Central in particular. However, the extent to which the human capital management is harnessed to set pace for effective job performance towards effective achievement of quality universal basic education in North Central Nigeria appears to be murky. There also seems to remain an academic knowledge gap in human capital management literature with regards to SUBEB, which continuously elicits the need for further empirical research in North Central Nigeria.

The term human capital has come to be generally accepted by economists as a component of the labour force due to the influence of education and training. It is defined as the quality of a person that includes knowledge, skill and qualifications that one acquires through education, training and experience (Perera & Weerakkody, 2018). It also entails all human abilities that are either innate or acquired. Human capital or human resources can further be regarded as the human being who is endowed with knowledge, skills and expertise to be used in various ways, to operate the social and economic systems in a given society (Tucker, 2018). Human capital management therefore refers to the recruiting, supporting and investing in people through education, training, engagement, coaching, mentoring, internships and organizational development (Eteng, 2016). Healthfield (2011) defines human capital management as the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and ability.

The generally agreed causal factors for the impressive performance of the educational system and the economy of most of the developed and the newly industrialized countries could be an impressive commitment to human capital management. According to Nicol-Keita (2013), human capital management influences staff job performance. Staff job performance is the result of a person or the overall success rate for a certain period in the task compared with a range of possibilities such as the work standards, targets, goals or criteria predetermined and agreed upon (Bohlander & Snell, 2010). It may also be a set of results, the act of achievement and the implementation of any work required. Staff job performance seems to play a significant role in the competitive environments. Good performance could lead to success, while bad performance may lead to failure.

Staff's job performance may be affected by different human capital management factors. Healthfield (2011) identifies factors such as employee training, career development, performance management and development, coaching, mentoring and succession planning as factors affecting staff job performance. Leadership practice,

employee engagement and knowledge accessibility also affect staff job performance (Odhong, Were & Omolo, 2014). Organizational design is an additional factor that affects staff job performance (Deloitte, 2016). In trying to investigate human capital management and staff job performance in States Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria, attention has been focused on staff training and staff (employee) engagement partly because of the rising concern about these factors in the study area.

Staff training is a human capital improvement function that needs to be handled appropriately. Akpakwu (2012) emphasizes that workers should be fully involved in training programmes and there must be a relation between employees and employer. The main aim of training is to train staff to work in current competitive environment. Training programmes may create creative behaviours among staff for expected job performance. Bekele, Shigutu and Tensay (2014) observe that training and other human capital management practices have positive impact on job performance. Training improves the level of skills, information and competency which are essential in performing work efficiently. It bridges the gap to remove deficiencies in performance which results in improved job performance (Bua & Shaayongo, 2018). Performance of educational staff may be improved if training of the human capital is geared towards enhancing their skills. The skills may enable them to be more committed to their duties. As such the staff may become engaged.

Staff engagement is conceptualized as the individual's investment of his/her complete self into a role (Thomas, 2011). It is a discretionary effort or a form of in-role or extra-role effort that fosters change and practically affects the staff morale, productivity, commitment, loyalty to internal and external customers, staff absenteeism and turnover in the organization (Schaufeli, 2013). Febriansyah (2010) posits that the engagement advocates in organizations seek their staff to be more productive and create profitable outcomes to the organizations. According to Tucker (2018), it is the ultimate expectation of the business leaders to acquire high workforce performance towards business results through optimized workforce. Nicol-Keita (2013) asserts that organizations focus on multi-faceted strategies to strengthen human capital management through staff engagement with high commitment to create high performance. Nicol-Keita further adds that organizations that consider staff engagement and emphasize it achieve improved job performance. Educational organizations may improve their staff job performance if their staff are fully engaged in performing their duties.

Statement of the problem

Despite the fact that a good number of staff are employed in each State Universal Basic Education Board in Nigeria, it seems that since the inception of the State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria, staff job performance has been poor. It seems that many staff show lack of commitment to work, other staff come to work late, while some leave before time. In some instances, some members of staff seem to abandon their duties. Even when they report to duty, they rather engage in private discussions or other personal businesses thereby making job performance quite poor. This has created serious worries as to what may be responsible for poor staff job performance. It appears that human capital management has not been fully given its place to ensure staff training and staff engagement among others to make staff job performance improve.

The researchers observe that in many of the State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria, staff are neither offered training opportunities nor are willing to attend training courses to acquire new skills and even update the existing ones for better job performance. It was further observed that members of staff of the boards are not often engaged with responsibilities to utilize their potentials, expertise, skills and experiences to bring out their best for improved job performance. All these seem to make staff job performance poor. This has become a matter of continuous worry and challenge in Nigeria especially in North Central Nigeria in achieving the objectives of Universal Basic Education. Therefore, the problem of this study put in a question is: What is the impact of human capital management on staff job performance in States Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria?

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of staff training on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of staff engagement on staff job performance in States Universal Basic Education Boards?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: Staff training has no significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria.

Ho2: Staff engagement has no significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 2,431 staff in seven (7) State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria (SUBEBs North Central Nigeria, 2020). A total of 365 staff representing 15% of the entire population was selected from all the seven (7) State Universal Basic Education Boards. This agrees with Emaikwu (2015) who recommended that when a population is 1000 or above, 10% or more will be enough to constitute the sample of the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample the number of staff in all the Boards. The instrument used for data collection was Human Capital Management and Job Performance Questionnaire (HCMJPQ). The questionnaire contained 10 items. Items 1 to 5 sought responses on influence of staff training on staff job performance while items 6-10 sought responses on influence of staff engagement on staff job performance. The instrument was structured on four-point rating scale of Strong agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The questionnaire was validated by two research experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Benue State University, Makurdi. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.92 which shows that the instrument was high enough to be used for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer the research questions. If an item has a mean score of 2.50 cut-off point and above, human capital management has influence on staff job performance. On the other hand, if it scored less, human capital management has no influence on staff job performance. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

The results are presented as follows:

Research question one: What is the influence of staff training on staff's job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviations of staff’s responses on influence of staff training on staff’s job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria

S/N	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
1	Training is not regularly carried out to enable me enhance my skills for better job performance.	365	128	142	34	61	2.92	1.05	Accepted
2	It is once in a while that my board sponsors some staff for training to acquire effective skills for better job performance.	365	170	96	44	55	3.04	1.09	Accepted
3	Lack of training due to lack of sponsorship leads to poor job performance in my board.	365	158	121	36	50	3.06	1.04	Accepted
4	My board does not make it a policy to regularly train staff for better job performance.	365	113	19	69	164	2.22	1.30	Not Accepted
5	Regular training increases staff job performance in my board.	365	163	82	34	86	2.88	1.21	Accepted
Cluster summary							2.84	1.14	Accepted

Table 1 shows that the staff’s mean ratings of items 1 to 5 were 2.92, 3.04, 3.06, 2.22 and 2.88 with corresponding standard deviations of 1.05, 1.09, 1.04, 1.30 and 1.21. Based on the cut-off point of 2.50, staff responses showed they accepted all the items except item 4. This implies that the staff accepted that training is not regularly carried out to enable them to enhance their skills for better job performance; it is once in a while that their boards sponsor some staff for training to acquire effective skills for better job performance; and lack of training due to lack of sponsorship leads to poor job performance in the boards. The staff however opposed the view that the boards do not make it a policy to regularly train staff for better job performance but they rather accepted that regular training increases staff job performance in their boards. The cluster mean of 2.84 with its corresponding standard deviation of 1.14 was accepted since it was above the 2.50 cut off point. This implies that staff training has influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria.

Ho1: Staff training has no significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis of the significant influence of staff training on staff's job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria

Response	O	E	Df	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{tab}	P	Remark
SA	128	91.3					
A	142	91.3					
D	34	91.3	3	88.973 ^a	7.82	.000	Significant
SD	61	91.3					
Total	365	365					

From Table 2, the calculated value of Chi-square $\chi^2_{cal}=88.973 > \chi^2_{tab} = 7.82$; $P < .05$ at 3df. Thus the null hypothesis which states that staff training has no significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This shows that staff training has significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria.

Research question two: What is the influence of staff engagement on staff's job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards?

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviations of staff’s responses on impact of staff engagement on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards

S/N	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
6	My job performance is high when I am not engaged in my board.	365	104	37	69	155	2.25	1.27	Not Accepted
7	My morale tends to be high when I am engaged thereby making my job performance high.	365	137	103	66	59	2.87	1.09	Accepted
8	My engagement reduces my absenteeism leading to enhanced job performance in my board.	365	189	60	54	70	2.96	1.19	Accepted
9	Lack of engagement in my board reduces my job performance.	365	139	95	62	69	2.86	1.13	Accepted
10	When I am not engaged I leave office before closing hour making my job performance poor.	365	142	90	35	98	2.76	1.23	Accepted
Cluster summary							2.73	1.18	Accepted

Table 3 shows that the mean ratings of items 6 to 10 were 2.25, 2.87, 2.96, 2.86 and 2.76 with corresponding standard deviations of 1.27, 1.09, 1.19, 1.13 and 1.23 respectively. Based on the cut-off point of 2.50, staff responses show that they accepted all the items except item 1. This implies that the staff opposed the view that their job performance is high when they are not engaged in their boards. The staff, however, accepted that their morale tends to be high when they are engaged thereby making their job performance high. They responded that their engagement reduces their absenteeism leading to enhanced job performance in their boards. Lack of engagement in their boards reduces their job performance and when they are not engaged, they leave office before closing hour thus making their job performance poor. The cluster mean of 2.73 with its corresponding standard deviation of 1.18 was accepted since it was above the 2.50 cut off point. This implies that staff engagement has influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards.

Ho2: Staff engagement has no significant influence on staff’s job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis of the significant influence of staff engagement on staff's job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria

Response	O	E	Df	χ^2_{cal}	χ^2_{tab}	P	Remark
SA	104	91.3	3				
A	37	91.3					
D	69	91.3		83.997 ^a	7.82	.000	Sig.
SD	155	91.3					
Total	365	365					

From Table 4, the calculated value of Chi-square $\chi^2_{cal}=83.997 > \chi^2_{tab} = 7.82$; $P < .05$ at 3df. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that staff engagement has no significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This shows that staff engagement has significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria.

Discussion of the findings

The finding of the study showed that staff training has significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria. This finding agrees with Bekele, Shigutu and Tensay (2014) who found that training and other human capital management practices have positive impact on job performance. The finding further agrees with Bua and Shaayongo (2018) who opine that training improves the level of skills, information and competency which are essential in performing work efficiently and bridges the gap to remove deficiencies in performance which results into improved job performance. The finding is justified on the basis that staff training is necessary in enhancing staff job performance because without staff training, there may be lack of skills and competences for maximum result in organizations.

The finding further revealed that staff engagement has significant influence on staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards. This finding agrees with Schaufeli (2013) who sees staff engagement as a discretionary effort or a form of in-role or extra role effort that fosters change and practically affects the staff morale, productivity, commitment, loyalty to internal and external customers, staff absenteeism and turnover in the organization. The finding also corroborates the view of Febriansyah (2010) that the engagement advocates in organizations seek their staff to be more productive and create profitable outcomes to the organizations. Nicol-Keita (2013) asserts that organizations focus on multi-faceted strategies to strengthen human capital management through staff engagement with high commitment to create high performance. Thus staff engagement could enhance staff job performance.

Conclusion

Human capital is an indispensable asset of any organization and its management cannot be toyed with because it is through human capital that the objectives of organizations are best achieved. Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that human capital management is significant for effective staff job performance in State Universal Basic Education Boards in North Central Nigeria for the achievement of the objectives of Basic Education in North Central and Nigeria at large. It is therefore important to ensure effective human capital management in SUBEBs to enhance staff job performance for quality basic education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The chairmen and management of the State Universal Basic Education Boards should make it a policy to regularly carry out staff training. This would enable both the new and existing staff to acquire relevant skills that would enable them perform their jobs effectively which could lead to the realization of the objectives of Universal Basic Education in North Central Nigeria. This can be achieved through adequate organization of training programmes, funding and sponsorship of the staff to attend conferences, seminars and workshops. The experienced staff could also mentor and coach both new and inexperienced staff so that their skills and experiences can be improved for better job performance.

2. The chairmen of the boards through the heads of departments or sections should ensure adequate staff engagement through assigning of functions in their areas of specialization so that staff may remain on duty to perform one function or the other to the success of Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria and North Central Nigeria in particular.

3. The federal, state and local governments should ensure that adequate human capital management is maintained in State Universal Basic Education Boards. This could be achieved through adequate funding of UBE programme and sponsorship of Universal Basic Education Boards' staff for training programmes such as conferences and seminars. The adequate funding may also facilitate the payment of staff of the boards to motivate them and make them committed and engaged at their jobs.

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