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The Impact of Training and Development on Early Career Lecturers' (ECL) perceived performance in pedagogy: A study of Federal Government Universities in South-West Nigeria

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Summary (136 words)

Training and development are important aspects of any sector and should form one of the basic bedrock or foundation of an institution. Training breeds confidence and competence while employees undertake their duties (Howard et al 2021; Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Further to this, engaged and skilled employees lead to high level of job satisfaction, retention, commitment and productivity. Training has been regarded to be a vital ingredient in any sector because it helps to keep organisations operating collectively and successfully (Werner and DeSimone 2009; Al-Ghazali et al., 2021). It is the believe of the Researcher that if there is provision of training for Lecturers, they would be more competent in the application of contemporary pedagogies, graduates will be better qualified and ready for the world of work, and there would be improvement in Nigeria's educational system.

INTRODUCTION

According to Nelson Mandela (1990) “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. This statement implies that education is very important, not only to the people who are to be educated, but to the development of a country. Education is highly important in attaining a country’s developmental goals, as this is achieved through skilled workforce and an efficient educational system. A progressive higher educational system of a country will have skilled Lecturers, whose pedagogical skills would improve the quality of the learners. This would also help graduates to be prepared for the world of work.

Background of the Study

Due to the importance and the place of lecturing job in attaining a country’s developmental goals through skilled workforce development (Ukabi and Enang 2021), there is need to investigate the professional development of the Lecturers. The Lecturers play a vital role and occupy the strategic position as it relates to their pedagogical capability, in supporting students’ learning. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the available trainings at ECLs’ disposal, and if these trainings have an effect on their pedagogy. The case study is federal government universities in the South-West part of Nigeria, with the aim to generalise the findings on Nigeria as a country (Heale and Twycross, 2018). The focus is on Early Career Lecturers, who are classified as the new generation of Academics with 1 – 5 years’ experience. The Researcher believes that this category of Lecturers is still in their career formative years, and there is need to guide, orientate and train them. Concentrating on the ECLs would help to achieve a more efficient higher educational standard (Udegbe 2016), especially by proffering solution to students’ learning problems facing the higher educational sector.

Problem Statement

Aluede et al. (2012) explained that education plays a major role as learners go through the various stages of the educational system; from basic education all the way to tertiary education. The importance of universities in providing the much-needed education for the development of human capital within our society cannot be over emphasized (Onah et al., 2016). So also, is the importance of Lecturers in attaining these developmental goals through their teaching to aid students’ learning and development.

Literature reviewed explained that the state of the education in Nigerian universities has taken a downward trend (Ogunode et al 2022; Asiyai 2015; Adelabu and Akinwumi 2008) . They explained that a major factor affecting the quality of Nigerian university system is the poor funding of the universities, which affects the availability of fund for Lecturers’ development. When there is insufficient fund for training Lecturers, it leads to decline in performance, and ineffective teaching.

Lecturers might need to hone their pedagogical skill aside the classroom education received prior to their teaching career, which is usually theory-based (Korthagen, 2010; Akanwa and Eluwa, 2014; Postareff et al, 2007). Luneta (2012) explained that continuous professional development (CPD) is important to update and upgrade teachers’ professional competence. In line with the above, there is need to investigate the professional development of the Lecturers who play this vital role and occupy this strategic position, as it relates to their pedagogical capability.

Relevance and Gap

It is rare to find papers/articles written specifically about the training and development of academic staff in Nigeria, regarding the enhancement of their pedagogy, which is a major function and professional demand from Lecturers.

Halidu (2015) wrote about the impact of training and development on Lecturers' productivity in some selected Nigerian Universities, with a focus on the provision of aid/grant from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

So also, Kwache (2007) wrote about the improvement and effectiveness of Lecturers' performance through training, but his paper focused on the integration and use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the teaching and student learning process.

Ukabi and Enang (2021) explained that there is a lack of research focused on the higher education sector in Nigeria in terms of training of Lecturers and the development of their skills.

These papers emphasised the need for training and how it enhanced productivity generally but did not mention the effect of training on Lecturers' pedagogical skills. Hence, the need to look at this area of study deploying qualitative research methods.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

While the aim/purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of training and development on early career Lecturers' pedagogy, the following objectives have been set to achieve the aim of the study:

1. To holistically evaluate the current state of training and development of lecturers in pedagogical skills within a university/national context
2. To critically evaluate lecturers' perspective regarding the availability and relevance of the training programs
3. To critically investigate the provision of relevant training and development programs for lecturers from the universities'/national point of view

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study adopts the traditional approach to literature review, enabling the Researcher to gather literature around the focus of the research. This also evaluate relevant and significant existing literature, showing the relationships between different works and how it relates to the research problem at hand.

Professional requirement of ECLs – The focus of the following sub-topic is on the professional requirement of Lecturers, with a focus on Lecturers in their early career stage (Ukabi and Enang 2021). The professional demands of the job were reviewed in tandem with the provision of the required development opportunities at the disposal of the Lecturers (Ukabi et al., 2021). Also, the state of the educational sector in Nigeria was discussed (Esuh et al 2013; Onah et al. 2016; Ogunode et al 2022).

Importance of pedagogy and training – Furthermore, this work explores relevant literature to understand the importance of training and development (Howard et al 2021 Wilson 2012; Al-Ghazali et al., 2021; AlYahya et al 2013; Chekwube 2016), as well as the importance of pedagogy in Lecturers' delivery of their duties (Adams 2022; Mitchell et al., 2010; Olimov 2020; Ekoh 2018; Jacob et al 2021).

It is important for Lecturers to continuously develop their pedagogy and capacity through relevant learning programs, certifications, professional affiliations (Ukabi and Enang 2021). This is for compliance with professional standards and new knowledge acquisition for innovative and adaptive pedagogical approaches for improved performance in the 'now' of work.

In line with the above, literature on pedagogical demand and knowledge of Lecturers was reviewed. This is to shed light on the skills and pedagogical approaches that could be utilised in the classroom to aid students' learning (Ekoh 2018; Jacob et al 2021).

Approaches to pedagogy – Different approaches to pedagogy were explored, as a skill relevant to develop and construct new educational techniques (Arpentieva et al 2021; Amineh and Asl 2015; Lam 2021); explore collaborative learning that will aid students' thinking and learning outcomes (Androutsos and Brinia 2019; Sobko et al 2020; Olimov 2020). Another approach discussed is the integrative approach, which helps learners to understand the world by linking related information (Akhmedova et al, 2022; Garzón et al, 2020; Rapanta, 2021).

Role of human resource management – This chapter also discusses the role of human resource management and the challenges associated with the provision of development opportunities for the Lecturers (Lucky and Yusoff 2017). Discussion was around how they are recruited into the lecturing profession (Al-Ghazali et al., 2021; Fapohunda, 2015), any specific training or education they need to have prior to their appointment or recruitment, and the demands of the position (Okai-Ugbaje 2020; Hativa et al 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Saunders et al., (2019) advised that in mapping out a research design, the first step is to make the methodological choice of going with qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. They went further to explain that it is the choice of the method that will call for its corresponding elements (strategy, sampling, data collection, etc.), which would help in achieving a logical research design.

This study is defined as case study research because it is investigating the federal government universities in South-West part of Nigeria. This type of research involves studying a group of people with common factor or social problem, and gaining access to data which are obtainable through different methods (Yin 2014; Anderson 2016). Case study research method is widely preferred by qualitative researchers, and it is appropriate for exploratory investigation (Yin 2014; Rashid et al. 2019).

In achieving the aim of this research, this study adopts a qualitative case study research approach, because it is suitable for case study research (Creswell 2013). Qualitative research technique will be most suitable to add rigor to the study, as it allows respondents to use their voice to explain their experiences. This also allows for more understanding of the subject matter, while at the same time shedding more lights on areas that are yet to be explored within the research parameters (Saunders et al., 2019; Anderson 2016).

Data Collection

Interviews are logical as a tool of data collection if the research is exploratory, investigating peoples' attitude and feelings. Semi-structured interview has been classified as one of the instruments of data collection under qualitative research method (Gray 2004; Saunders et al., 2019). This shows that this method will be appropriate for this study, as it involves the investigation of Early Career Lecturers' perceived performance in pedagogy.

Sampling Methods

Non-probability sampling is one of the chosen sampling techniques for this study, as it is usually associated with qualitative and case study research, which is often used to investigate real life problem (Saunders et al., 2019; Taherdoost, 2016). The other sampling tools that will be used in this study are purposive and snowball sampling as a subset of non-probability sampling method (Elfil and Negida 2017; Anderson 2016).

Sample Size

Saunders et al., (2019) also explained that for homogeneous group, it is advisable to have around 12 participants and for heterogeneous group, between 12 and 30 sample size is advised. This study could be classified as homogenous because the Early Career Lecturers, the Senior Academics and Human Resource Personnel have common traits and background – university environment. However, because it is a multiple case study (we have two categories of respondents, one from each university under investigation), it is important to draw homogeneous samples from each university independently.

In line with the above, the study will have the following sample size:

10 Early Career Lecturers from each University (20)

4 Senior staff responsible for academic staff development from each university (8)

2 HR personnel from each University (4)

This will bring our total sample size to 32. Interviewing these categories of respondents will give credence to the research, and access to data regarding the provision of training for Lecturers.

The Researcher believes that this sample size should be sufficient for robust data gathering and enough to answer the research questions. However, the sample size is not cast in stone, as it can be adjusted depending on when data saturation is reached (Marshall et al. 2013).

Conclusion and Proposed contribution to body of knowledge.

This research intends to establish that training is crucial to Nigerian Universities' lecturers' development, especially their pedagogical skills. Lecturers might need to hone their pedagogical skill aside the classroom education received prior to their teaching career which is usually theory-based (Korthagen, 2010; Akanwa and Eluwa, 2014; Postareff et al, 2007).

The result of this study will help Lecturers to gain insight into the importance of an improved pedagogy and the impact this would have on their students' learning, and their teaching experience.

According to Mogaji (2019), there have been mixed reactions regarding how Nigerian university education can be compared to what is attainable in other countries. Therefore, the Researcher would be utilising this study to develop a competence framework, adopted from the UK Professional Standard Framework (UKPSF). This is with the believe that if adopted, it would guide the universities in the provision of relevant trainings and development opportunities.

Further to the above, there is lack of useful data in the Nigerian higher educational space (Jacob et al., 2020), and this research will gather critical and relevant data that would be useful for other interested Researchers.

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