

HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES OF PRINCIPALS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated human resource capacity building strategies adopted by principals of public secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The researcher adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised of 3,313 teachers drawn from 3 education zones in Benue state. Using stratified proportionate random sampling technique, 20% of the population was sampled and this gave a sample size of 662. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher developed 33 item structured questionnaires titled: Human Resource Capacity Building Strategies Questionnaire (HRCBSQ). The Instrument was administered to the respondents and collected by 5 research assistants. Out of the 662 questionnaire administered, 652 returned. The collected data was analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation to answer research questions. T-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the male and female teachers differed on their opinions on the extent to which principals adopt training and, performance recognition strategies for human resources capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue state. The study therefore recommended that government and public secondary school administrators should intensify efforts at giving their staff wider opportunities for training in terms of seminars, workshops and conferences to enhance their knowledge and also put in place a reward system to boost quality teaching and learning.

Keywords: Capacity building, human resource, principal, teacher

Introduction

The issue of human resource capacity building in corporate organizations including public secondary schools has become a matter of critical concern by organizational managers in recent times. This may be due to the significance of human resource capacity building in maintaining the corporate existence of organizations through the performance of individual staff. Mullins and Gill (2010), established that organization that value building up its human resource capacity is capable of increasing its productivity and gaining competitive advantage over its rivals. On the other hand, organization that fails to build up its human resource capacity is likely to experience low productivity and stand to lose its competitive advantage. The human resource is the workforce of an organization. In secondary schools, just like any other educational institution, the human resource constitutes teachers, non-teachers and students that are harnessed to achieve the objectives of education (Bua, 2020). The term capacity is defined as the ability of humans, institutions and societies to perform successfully, to identify and reach their goals and to change when necessary for sustainability, development and advancement purposes (Ubels, Fowler and Acquaye-Baddoo, 2010). Human resource capacity building on the other hand, according Lara (2014), is considered an endogenous dynamic process that relies on one's motivation, effort and perseverance to learn and progress which enables organizations to change, flourish and grow.

Human resource capacity building is very much related to the ways organizations operate (Ubels, et-al, 2010). An organization operates based on its procedures, beliefs and

values; and this is usually affected by the people employed in it, the past incidents, present influences, and the type of work it undergoes (Westat, 2015). The remarkable evolution in the twentieth century has been a result of a new perspective in understanding the importance of investing in individuals and organizational human resource, and the implementation of capacity building strategies in various organizations and in societies (Lara, 2014). Disregarding human resource capacity building would probably lead to lack of growth and possible failure in organizations like secondary schools.

Secondary schools are post-primary institutions of learning which provides education for children within the age of 11 – 18 years. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) specifies the broad aims of secondary school education as preparation of the individual for higher education and preparation of the individual for useful living in the society. The achievement of these aims depends on some factors including human resource capacity building strategies as may be adopted by principals. Principals are the heads of secondary schools that perform both administrative and academic functions to ensure effective realization of education objectives. The principals' ability to adopt appropriate human resource capacity building strategies would result in providing the human resource with the much needed skills and competencies to achieve the school goals and objectives. This explains the rationale for the study. To this, Eze and Okenwa (2019) asserted that school leaders which include principals must focus on establishing the context in which students can best achieve their potentials through the continuous improvement of products and services which in turn leads to the realization of set goals.

Principals, just like teachers' job in society cannot be quantified, since their job transcends the whole spectrum of society (Yawe and Ivagher, 2016). The job of the human resource in education especially teachers is not limited to the classroom or school alone. The whole community looks up to them as beacons of hope for shaping the lives of future generations (Bua and Ivagher, 2019). The human resource in education especially teachers have significant responsibilities as leaders, counselors, tutors, managers and team members which seem to be very difficult. These responsibilities carried out by teachers make them unique; as such require a high degree of professional competence which should be kept in growth through capacity building. Building up the human resource of secondary schools to perform effectively is one of the responsibilities of principals in Nigeria especially in Benue State. Many public secondary schools in Benue State are suffering from inadequate human resource capacity building and this tends to hinder effective achievement of educational objectives at the secondary level (Bua and Ivagher, 2014). Principals' human resource capacity building strategies are essential for addressing the problem of human resource which is affecting qualitative teaching and learning for the realization of secondary school objectives. Principals' human resource capacity building strategies is defined as tactics, techniques, or approaches put in place by principals to encourage human resource of the secondary schools to improve their skills, competencies, expertise in achieving job objectives (Akpakwu, 2012). It is, therefore, important to mention that human resource capacity building skills are *sin qua non* for principals of secondary schools. These capacity building skills or strategies will help principals to harness the salient skills of teachers. This will in turn enhance teachers' productivity.

Public secondary schools in Benue State of Nigeria operate in a dynamic and competitive environment where there are other private secondary schools and institutions within the state and other public secondary schools in the neighboring states. Therefore, there is need to develop strategies to acquire and retain teachers to enhance competencies. Ojeleye and Okoro (2016) noted that in recent times, human asset is considered to be the most important asset of any organization. In Benue state, education stakeholders usually complain of poor performance of products of secondary schools in terms of level of intelligence, application of knowledge in given situations as well as their level of discipline. All these shortcomings point

to the low level of human resource capacity building among school principals. When the level of human resource capacity building adopted by the principals is high, these shortcomings would be controlled. With this fact in mind, this study focuses on principals' adoption of human resource capacity building strategies such as training and performance recognition. These strategies are considered among others because of their impact in shaping and transforming workforce of any organization.

One of the human resource capacity building strategies that could be adopted by principals is training. The worry here is that not much attention is paid to training and retraining as observed by relevant stakeholders (students and the community). Training of the human resource could be in form of short courses, conferences, seminars and workshops that prepare the human resource to face the wide array of tasks in schools. In a situation where there is lack of training, the human resource may lack relevant skills to meet up with the fast changing society and this may affect effective performance of the organization. Training is essential for human resource capacity building and needs to be aligned with performance recognition. Performance recognition is one of the strategies adopted by principals in human resource capacity building in secondary schools. Performance recognition is about giving positive feedback based on results or performance (Ojeleye and Okoro, 2016). Sometimes this happens in a formal way: an award, a bonus, a promotion, a raise. Sometimes, recognition is given more informally: it may be verbal thank you, a handwritten note. All these help in building up the human resource of the organization especially in secondary schools. Recognition seems to increase teachers and non-teachers' happiness on their job. It is human nature to be happy when appreciated or recognized (Agburu, 2012). With this fact in mind, principals need to value training and performance recognition especially of teachers as strategies for human resource capacity building.

A teacher is a person who helps others to acquire knowledge, skills, competences or values. According to Nwangwu, Nwoye, Chukwu and Ebuoh (2023), a teacher is one who teaches the young ones, builds up, instructs, trains and guides them for healthy growth and stable adult life. The success or failure of any education system depends to a large extent on quality and caliber of teachers who are interpreters and transmitters of desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in the society (Ayoro and Onyeike, 2020). For education to be effective, teachers ought to be trained, recognized and rewarded so that they could be productive. The input of teachers in the learning process is indispensable. According to these authors, teachers are arguably the most important group of professionals for nation's future. The increased importance of teachers in education of the society has made it extremely important to identify the strategies of building their capacities for optimum and sustained performance. To attain these, training and performance recognition of teachers as capacity building strategies by principals are of paramount importance. Teachers' perceptions, opinions or view point on issues may differ due to gender difference.

Gender is described as behavioral characteristics distinguishing males and females in any society. Uko (2012) defined gender as the differentiation in roles between men and women construed by the society through socialization. Scholars have given contrasting views about gender differences in performance, effectiveness and opinion among school administrators and teachers. For instance Dikeogu and Eric (2019) reported that female principal and teachers are more effective and efficient in administration and teaching because they extend their motherhood roles to school in what they do. Uko (2012) however noted that males have superiority over females as male administrators usually apply their domineering capabilities to achieve school goals. This could be the general assertion, but there could be exceptions here and there regarding the performance of males and females. This study looked at the view point of teachers in terms of their gender to see whether they have varying opinions.

The advent of modern technology has made human resource capacity building

imperative. Modern technology has made education so volatile that educational concepts, theories and assumptions of today become obsolete tomorrow. For teachers to be relevant in 21st century, there is absolute need for continuous human resource capacity building. The focus of this research is therefore to determine the extent to which secondary school principals adopt human resource capacity building strategies. Based on the above background, the researcher is motivated to investigate human resource capacity building strategies adopted by principals of public secondary schools in Benue State of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do secondary school principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue?
2. To what extent do secondary school principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools?

Hypotheses

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

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female Teachers on the extent to which principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue state.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female Teachers on the extent to which principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue state.

Methods

The design adopted in this study was descriptive survey research design. This design was preferred because it enabled the researcher to collect original data from the population or a representative of the population and use the result of data analyses to describe as it was found. Area of the study was Benue State, Nigeria. The state was made up of 3 Senatorial Districts called zones A, B and C. Population for the study was made up of 2,097 male and 1,216 female teachers teaching in public secondary schools in Benue State at the time of the study. This gave a total of 3,313 teachers. Stratified proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw 20% of male and female teachers in the 3 education zones of the state which yielded a population of 419 for male teachers and 243 for female teachers. This gave a sample size of 662 as population for the study. A structured questionnaire titled "Human Resource Capacity Building Strategies Questionnaire (HRCBSQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire contained sections A and B. Section A elicited information on personal data of the respondents while Section B which contained 2 clusters namely A, and B focused on the two research questions that guided the study. Cluster A contained 11 items which addressed research question one, while Cluster B, with 12 items focused on research question two thus giving a total of 33 items. The instrument was validated by three research experts, two from educational management department and one expert in measurement and evaluation. These experts made useful corrections and inputs and consequently certified the instrument to be adequate, relevant and appropriate with a clear language. Validated copies of the instrument were administered to twenty male teachers and 10 female teachers in Kogi State in a trial test. Responses of these teachers were used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Using the Cronbach's Alpha method, the instrument yielded 0.78 for cluster A and 0.96 for cluster B, with a coefficient index of 0.87. This value shows that the instrument is reliable.

A four-point rating scale with option categories was used to establish the disparity in the respondents' opinions. The option categories are, Very High Extent (VHE)=4; High Extent (HE)=3; Low Extent (LE)=2 and Very Low Extent (VLE)=1 and was used by respondents to

respond to the item in each cluster. Five research assistants were chosen based on vast expanse of land covered by Benue state and their familiarity with the area of study. The research assistants were briefed on issue of technical terms used in the questionnaire in order to properly assist the researcher and the respondents in carrying out distribution and collection of the questionnaire. A total of 662 copies of questionnaire were distributed to 419 male teachers and 243 female teachers in public secondary schools in Benue State. The research assistants used the face to face method in the administration of the questionnaire. This approach was aimed at minimizing instrument mortality. The questionnaire was collected after two weeks to allow them enough time to complete the questionnaire. On collection of the completed copies of the questionnaire, the research assistants sent them back to the researcher without hitches. Out of 662 questionnaire distributed, 652 returned, representing 98.5%, while 10 copies were not returned representing 1.5%. Descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. T- test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent do secondary school principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Rating on the Extent to Which Secondary School Principals Adopt Training as a Strategy in Human resource capacity Building in Public Secondary

S/No	Item Statement	N	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Organizing regular training for staff in the school.	652	158	218	159	99	2.74	1.02	A
2	Taking roll call to ensure that every staff is present during training sessions.	652	169	218	155	110	2.70	1.04	A
3	Staying around during the training session to see and observe things.	652	189	195	161	107	2.73	1.05	A
4	Ensuring that those absent with no cogent reason during any training are sanctioned	652	177	215	151	102	2.74	1.03	A
5	Ensuring that staff are sponsored to attend conferences to build their capacity for good performance	652	138	212	195	107	2.61	1.00	A
6	Encouraging personal efforts made by staff for their training	652	166	175	198	113	2.63	1.05	A
7	Arranging job rotation among staff so they can learn	652	180	172	184	116	2.66	1.07	A
8	Sending staff for apprenticeship so they can acquire needed skills	652	208	176	132	136	2.72	1.12	A
9	Encouraging field trips to	652	188	190	133	141	2.67	1.11	A

	companies for practical knowledge								
10	Recommending study leave with pay	652	193	178	137	144	2.66	1.12	A
11	Monitoring training needs of teachers	652	203	174	128	147	2.68	1.14	A
Cluster Mean							2.68	1.07	A

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 1 indicates the Mean response values of items 1-11 as 2.74, 2.70, 2.73, 2.74, 2.61, 2.63, 2.66, 2.72, 2.67, 2.66, 2.68 and a cluster mean of 2.68 with a corresponding Standard Deviation values of 1.02, 1.04, 1.05, 1.03, 1.00, 1.05, 1.07, 1.12, 1.11, 1.12 and 1.14 respectively. All the mean response values are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that secondary school principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in Public Secondary Schools In Benue State, Nigeria by organizing regular training for staff in the school, taking roll call to ensure that every staff is present during training sessions, staying around during the training session to see and observe things, ensuring those absent with no cogent reason are sanctioned, ensuring that staff are sponsored to attend conferences and workshops to build their capacity for good performance, encouraging personal efforts made by staff for their training, arranging job rotation among staff so they can learn, sending staff for apprenticeship so they can acquire needed skills, encouraging field trips to companies for practical knowledge, allowing study leave with pay and monitoring training needs of teachers. The Cluster Mean score value of 2.68 is found to be above the mean cut-off point of 2.50. This shows the extent to which secondary school principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity in public secondary schools in Benue

Research Question Two: To what extent do secondary school principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Rating on the Extent to Which Secondary School Principals Adopt Performance Recognition as a Strategy in Human resource capacity Building in Public Secondary Schools

S/No	Item Statement	N	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
12	Giving awards to staff to encourage them to do more.	652	158	185	193	116	2.61	1.04	A
13	Announcing on assembly name(s) of staff that distinguishes himself in any given task	652	187	205	197	100	2.64	1.00	A
14	Giving welfare packages to staff who put in extra efforts.	652	139	204	185	124	2.57	1.03	A
15	Giving letter of commendation to staff for excellent performance	652	160	188	192	112	2.63	1.04	A
16	Rewarding any teacher whose student(s) score "A" in external	652	103	261	182	106	2.58	0.95	A

	examination alongside the student(s).								
17	Recommending staff for promotion	652	108	248	170	126	2.54	0.99	A
18	Recommending staff for state award	652	112	257	168	115	2.58	0.98	A
19	Giving enriched job responsibilities to staff that are performing well	652	115	248	168	121	2.57	0.99	A
20	Giving fair treatment to hardworking staff	652	173	221	81	177	2.62	1.15	A
21	Giving management support to committed and dedicated staff	652	165	232	73	182	2.60	1.14	A
22	Making the staff feel that their work is valued	652	154	223	81	194	2.54	1.15	A
23	Acknowledging progress made by staff	652	159	205	90	198	2.52	1.15	A
Cluster Mean							2.58	1.05	A

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 2 indicates the Mean response values of items 12-23 as 2.61, 2.64, 2.57, 2.63, 2.58, 2.54, 2.58, 2.57, 2.62, 2.60, 54, 52, and a cluster mean of 2.58 with a corresponding Standard Deviation values of 1.04, 1.00, 1.03, 1.04, 0.95, 0.99, 0.98, 0.99, 1.15, 1.14, 1.15 and 1.16 respectively. All the mean response values are above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agreed that secondary school principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy for human resource capacity building by giving awards to staff to encourage them to do more, announcing on assembly name(s) of staff that distinguishes himself in any given task, giving welfare packages to staff who put in extra efforts, giving letter of commendation to staff for excellent performance, rewarding any teacher whose student(s) score "A" in external examination alongside the student(s), recommending staff for promotion, recommending staff for zonal, state or national award, giving enriched job responsibilities to staff that are performing well, giving fair treatment to hardworking staff, making the staff feel that their work is valued and acknowledging progress made by staff. The Cluster Mean score value of 2.58 is found to be above the mean cut-off point of 2.50. This shows the extent to which secondary school principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy for human resource capacity in public secondary schools in Benue State

Hypotheses

Test of hypotheses was done using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significance difference between the mean rating of male and female Teachers on the extent to which principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in secondary schools in Benue state.

Table 3: T-test Analysis of Significance Difference between the Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to Which Principals Adopt Training as a Strategy in Human resource capacity Building in Secondary Schools in Benue state.

Variables	Group	N	X	Std.	t	df	sign.	Dec.
Principals' use of Training Strategy	Male	410	2.06	.75				
					-30.23	650	.000	sign.
	Female	242	3.70	.47				

Table 3 shows computation of t-test analysis of significance difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public Secondary Schools in Benue State. The result of t-test value of (650df) = -30.23, $P < 0.05$. It was observed that male teachers scored ($\bar{x} = 2.06$, $SD = .75$) less than female teachers scored of ($\bar{x} = 3.70$, $SD = .47$). With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted. The result shows that there is a significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in Secondary Schools in Benue State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significance difference between the mean rating of male and female Teachers on the extent to which principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue State.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of Significance Difference between the Mean Rating of Male and Female Teachers on the Extent to Which Principals Adopt Performance Recognition as a Strategy in Human Resource Capacity Building

Variables	Group	N	X	Std.	t	Df	sign.	Dec.
Principals' use of Performance Recognition Strategy	Male	410	2.03	.84				
					-24.70	650	.000	sign.
	Female	242	3.47	.48				

Table 4 shows computation of t-test analysis of significance difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building in Secondary Schools in Benue State. The result of t-test value of (650df) = -24.70, $P < 0.05$. It was observed that male teachers scored ($\bar{x} = 2.03$, $SD = .84$) less than female teachers scores of ($\bar{x} = 3.47$, $SD = .48$). With this result, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted. The result implies that there is a significance difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue State.

Discussion

The first finding of the study shows there was a significance difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt training as a strategy in human resource capacity building in Benue State, Nigeria. This finding could be justified to mean that secondary school principals adopt training as a strategy for human resource capacity building by organizing regular training for staff in the school, taking roll call to ensure that every staff is present during training sessions, staying around during the training session to see and observe things, ensuring that those absent with no cogent reason are sanctioned and staff are sponsored to attend conferences and workshops to build their capacity for good performance, encouraging personal efforts made by staff for their training, arranging job

rotation among staff so they can learn, sending staff for apprenticeship so they can acquire needed skills, encouraging field trips to companies for practical knowledge, recommending study leave with pay and monitoring training needs of teachers. The study is in line with the findings of Hervie and Winful (2018) whose findings revealed that training has significant impact on teachers' performance.

The second finding of the study shows there was a significance difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy in human resource capacity building. This finding could be justified to mean that secondary school principals adopt performance recognition as a strategy for human resource capacity building by giving awards to staff to encourage them to do more, announcing on assembly name(s) of staff that distinguishes himself in any given task, giving welfare packages to staff who put in extra efforts, giving letter of commendation to staff for excellent performance, rewarding any teacher whose student(s) score "A^v in external examination alongside the student(s), recommending staff for promotion, recommending staff for state award, giving enriched job responsibilities to staff that are performing well, giving fair treatment to hardworking staff, making the staff feel that their work is valued and acknowledging progress made by staff. The study is in line with the findings of Ansah (2017) whose result of the study showed that performance recognition has positive significant impact on human resources capacity building in University of Cape Coast. The study is also in line with the findings of Falola, Ibidunni and Olokundun (2018) whose results show that performance recognition has significant positive impact on staff capacity building.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was established that there was a significance difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the extent to which principals adopt training, and performance recognition, strategies in human resource capacity building in public secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and public secondary school administrators should intensify efforts to provide teachers with wider opportunities for both short-term training (seminars, conferences, and workshops) and long-term training (study leave with pay).
2. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in training programmes organized within and outside the state to build capacity, improve competency, and enhance proficiency.
3. Principals of public secondary schools in Benue State should establish effective reward systems to recognize and motivate staff who distinguishes themselves in assigned tasks.
4. Regular staff job performance appraisals should be conducted to identify and reward teachers based on their performance.

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