

## Human Resource Development: Imperatives for Achieving Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Human resources development is the strategy or effort to develop the mind and skills of people. It is a means of acquiring skills. Human resources development is usually directed towards the improvement of staff personnel job-related skills in organizations. Human resources development leads to efficient production of goods and services. This paper, examines the concepts of human resources development and quality assurance in education. The paper also examines the importance of human resources development and the methods for human resources development. Finally, the paper examines the imperatives of human resources development for quality assurance in higher education in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Human Resources Development, Quality Assurance, Higher Education, Types of Training and Professional Development

### 1. Introduction

Education is closely linked to development. It enlightens people especially in this modern world. It brings about the transmission and acquisition of skills, abilities and competences, which enable individuals live, work, and contribute to the development of the society at large. Therefore, education is expected to satisfy the individual's wants and those of the society since ultimately, it is the combination of individuals that form a society. In this regard, quality education is fundamental to development. This is in consonance with the 1999 World Conference on Education Commitment that higher education should be geared towards development and progress. To use higher education to achieve development, there should be staff with the necessary skills and expertise to carry out their work. Hence, the maxim that the quality of a country's workforce cannot rise above its educational system.

Today, the world is experiencing frequent changes in technological development. Ndu (1991) observed that changes in technology like the introduction or improvement of automation, computers or management strategies have a tendency to change human resource needs in terms of numbers, training and skill development. Thus, the quality of education provided is crucial for a sustainable development in Nigeria. This implies that the quality of teaching in higher institutions should be geared towards imparting required skills and competences necessary for economic growth and development. It implies that quality assurance is needed. Quality assurance in education is a process of continuous improvement in the teaching and learning activities which will be achieved via pathways of employing mechanisms, internal and external to the universities (Okebukola, 2004). Quality assurance in higher education can be realized where the staff are adequately developed with the required skills to carry out their duties to ensure high productivity, progress and development. Therefore, human resources development helps to discover and develop the potentials of the workers (teachers and non-teachers), as well as meet the modern market demand and requirement.

### 2. Conceptualizing Human Resources Development

Human resources development is the strategy or effort made to develop the mind and skills of people. It is a means of acquiring skill. Human resources development is usually directed towards the improvement of job-related skills in organizations. Thus, it increases skills of the individuals as well as, their personal earnings and the manpower needed for economic development. It promotes competency and efficiency to facilitate the achievement of organizational objectives and goals. This is consistent with the view of Ukoha as cited in Ileubaoje (2002) that the field of human resources development involves the efficient production of goods and services. It deals with the quality of work life experienced by workers and the changing workforce both as people and as workers. Ileubaoje (2002) remarked that human resources development is the art and science of the workplace which requires the design of a socio-technical system that facilitates

work accomplishments internally as well as, adjusting to external changes in the outer environment.

### 3. Quality Assurance in Education

Quality assurance in education is the ability of education institutions to meet the needs of the users of manpower in relation to the quality of skills acquired by their products, that is, the students (Ubogu, 2012). Thus, quality assurance extends its focus from outcomes or outputs to the process which produces them (Onoshakpokaiye, 2012). In this way, Okebukola (2004), presented quality assurance in Nigeria universities as a process of continuous improvement in the quality of teaching and learning activities which will be achieved via pathways of employing mechanisms, internal and external to the universities. It is ensuring that at least the provision of the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) document are attained, maintained and enhanced. Quality assurance in education is further described by Adedjoja (2010) as the modalities for evolving, monitoring and re-appraising indices, bench-marks and good practices within an education system. Therefore, the focus of quality assurance process is monitoring and application of sanctions to providers who offer services below minimum standards. It is a system put in place to support performance according to established standards (Ogunu & Momoh, 2011).

The principles below are indicators for quality assurance:

1. Quality assurance in recruitment and admission: To ensure that courses are accessible to the entire community and that the admissions procedures are fair, transparent and subject to regular reviews.
2. Quality assurance in course design and delivery: To ensure that internationally recognized standards are achieved and that the courses provide students with knowledge and skills that are relevant to the current market locally, nationally and internationally.
3. Quality assurance in student assessment: To ensure that the intended learning outcomes have been achieved and that the academic standard of each course is maintained.
4. Quality assurance in approval and review process: To maintain the academic quality of courses and ensure that the courses remain relevant in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline.
5. High quality support for student: To optimize students' learning experience and equip them to manage their personal and professional development.
6. Staff training and welfare: To empower staff to fulfill their evolving roles in higher education and ensure the delivery of high quality programme (Ogbodo, 2012: 22-23)

### 4. Importance of Human Resources Development

The importance of human resources development is to transform staff technical expertise to enable them do their jobs creditably and also adopt to technological changes and advancement in science and technology. Chukwuma (2001) stressed the importance of development of human resources opined that the universities and other higher educational (or post-secondary) establishments are there in order to produce the most highly qualified individuals that the country needs. They must produce high level training and research so as to ensure that the country's personnel will be able to master and develop the requisite expertise and technologies. To do this, they must ensure the recruitment and renewal of their own staff. This means that the conditions of service of the universities' personnels must compare favourably with those of the staff employed in other high profiled establishments in the society (Chukwuma, 2001). Kulwart (2000) listed the following as the importance of human resources development:

1. That the vast reservoir of human talents could be harnessed to achieve industrial objectives through developmental programmes;
2. Developmental programmes make human resources adapt to the changing technologies improvements;
3. Development programme which comprises planned development and training extends to every process of management and is aimed to improve the role of a manager, his interventions with the group and his ability to get things done through the group;
4. Formal and informal development of people would be possible through well-planned and executive development programme; and
5. Manpower (resource) development approach involves policies which will be useful in providing satisfying work, enhancing opportunities for career growth and in reducing the sense of frustration among human beings.

Training helps employees to gain particular job skills and development involves on-going education to help

prepare employees for future jobs. In the short term, the training has to facilitate the change and evolution of the jobs, the development of the potential, the management of the careers (Dumitrana, Dumitru, Jianu, Jinga & Radu, 2009). In the long run, Dumitrana et al opined that the training accompanies the culture change and helps the adaptability of employees. Development involves more than learning a skill such as problem analysis, creativity, team-building and leadership. Training and development is important for accomplishing the mission and vision that managers chose for an organization.

## 5. Methods of Human Resources Development

The methods of human resources development are legion. However, the types of training methods adopted by an institution depend upon the needs of the organization as well as the needs of the staff that are involved. The decision about the types of methods according to Egungwu (1992), are influenced by the number of employees being developed; the contents and the objectives of developmental and utilization plans; the urgency of development and utilization plans; the facilities and the manpower available for the implementation of decided plans; the estimates of the cost of methods, and the expected benefits of the methods. Considering the most appropriate method to use or adopt in the educational institutions, Nwideduh (2004) argued that those holding managerial positions in organizations such as institutions of higher learning (universities, polytechnics and colleges of education) must be equipped with a broad range overview of business fundamentals among which are elements of management principles, management process, economic and finance, industrial psychology and sociology; elementary statistics, human resources administration, and production and marketing management. Those in teaching position in higher institutions must be acquainted with the latest knowledge in their subject of specialization, advancement of science and technology and its impact on instructional materials and methodology as well as new approaches to classroom organization and management (Oboegbulem, 2002). Below are some types of human resources development techniques:

On the Job Training: This takes the following forms:

- a. Orientation/Induction Training: This is aimed at assimilating the person who has accepted a job, to assist the new employee in adjusting to his job and the organization.
- b. Job Rotation: It involves cross training given to employee by placing him on different jobs for a period of time ranging from a few hours to several weeks. This gives the employee a deeper and more general view of organization.
- c. Apprenticeship: This takes place on-the-job by placing the new employee under the guidance of a skilled, experienced and certified worker.
- d. Job Instruction Training (JIT): The supervisor follows many steps when training an employee; these are preparation, presentation, performance tryout and follow-up steps where learners are allowed to work independently and are checked upon frequently to make sure they do their jobs correctly.
- e. Internships (IT): This is also called Industrial Training programme. It is a kind of co-operative job experience training. It usually combines job-training with classroom instruction in technical schools, polytechnics or universities.
- f. Site-Based or Clinic-Based Training: This is a form of self-paced training/learning that allows the individual requiring training to acquire the necessary knowledge and develop the required skills while on the job.
- g. Enlarged Job Responsibility (EJR): This technique involves assigning more duties, responsibilities and assignments to an employee. It is used mostly for managers, professional staff and skilled clerical employees (Anho, 2012: 16 - 17).

The Simulation Training Methods: This is a technique where the trainees are presented with a mock of real things for them to practice with. It is a useful technique for skills development. This technique is useful as it may not be possible to allow trainees experience the real thing at the early stage of the learning programme but when they get into simulated conditions, they perfect the skill they intended to acquire by learning from their mistakes (Ezele, 2010). Simulation method is very useful for development of lectures in medical school, school of aviation and military school. Different training technique associated with simulation methods is gleaned from the work of Anho (2012: 17) viz:

1. Case Study Method: The case study method involves the examination of an organizational event or series of actual or hypothetical events. This helps to improve the analytical thinking, problem solving and decision making ability of the trainees.
2. Incident Method: The trainee is given only a sketchy outline of a particular incident. They have to question the trainer and when they think they have enough information, they attempt a solution. At the end of the session,

the trainer reveals all the information he has and trainees compare their solution to the solution based on complete information.

3. Business Games: These are computer-based business games that often have to do with labour management negotiations.
4. Programmed Group Exercise that Incorporate: Trainees examine their responses first as individuals then with members of their own groups and finally, with a larger group and with the trainers.
5. Role-Playing: It is a developmental technique which requires the trainee to assume a role, character or function of another in a given situation and act out behavior associated with that role.
6. The Task Mode: A task is set, constructed and a group of trainees are assigned the task of duplicating the model, given the proper materials. The trainee views the model and common problems are discussed as they arise and solutions are proffered through group discussion.
7. Assessment Centres: This is a set of individual and group activities in which a number of candidates participate. It is not a physical location. It is a multiple method group selection technique. This is used to identify areas in employees that need development and are useful in selecting managers.
8. Managerial Modeling: It is a very natural way available to managers to develop young or developing managers with appropriate models and reinforcing the desirable behavior that are exhibited. Modeling occurs regardless of design, intent and desire.

Supplementary Training Programme: This will help to improve their knowledge and professional expertise and also orient them towards greater commitment to their profession. Refresher courses, in-service training programmes should be mounted and made compulsory for serving staff. Every higher institution should allow their staff to access supplementary training to help modify and improve the quality of teaching and efficiency in the system. This is because, through this, competent staff will be abreast with new concepts, methods or procedures and improve their skills as needed for the job, and also achieve personal satisfaction.

Information Presentation Techniques: Here, it covers the following:

- a. Lectures: This is a teaching method, organized talk, giving information about a specific subject matter.
- b. Programme Instruction (PI): It is a guided self-learning method. Trainees respond to segments of information by answering questions or responding on a machine.
- c. Organization Development: It is a systematic long-range programme of organizational improvement through action research.

## 6. Imperatives for Human Resources Development for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The essence of human resources development in higher institutions is to see that the staff are adequately and continuously educated, trained and retrained and also upgraded to meet new challenges of the overall organization and society at large. According to Ileubaoje (2002), human resources development prevents employees from becoming redundant as result of development in technology, economic recession, and changes in consumers demands. In this way, Ogbodo (2012) noted that generally, quality education is crucial to national development. According to him, the success and development of every educational system in any organization depend on the quality of its human and material resources. Of all these factors, the human resources appear to be the most important because without it, all other factors are inept. Ogbodo (2012) further stressed that human capacity building hinges absolutely on the education system, and of course teachers are the pivot of the education system. Teachers being the epicenter of teaching and learning process need to be adequately prepared and exposed to a continuous professional development and training programmes to enable them to be more productive and adapt to the changing world of teaching and the highly competitive and globalized economy. As such, it becomes apt that higher education system be repositioned to fall in line with the modern technological and economic realities. Such realities can be achieved through human resources development in higher education to:

1. improve teachers' pedagogical skills,
2. keep teachers abreast with new knowledge,
3. help newly-trained teachers adjust to the demands of teaching profession (FRN, 2004),
4. upgrade and update the academic qualification of teachers to assume new roles and perform special tasks connected with changes in the curriculum and instructional methodologies,
5. expose teachers to the preparation, maintenance and use of instructional technology such as computers, Microsoft, internet, etc. and

6. make teachers aware of recent research findings in the field of education particularly, as they apply to teaching, learning and classroom management (Oboegbulem, 2002).

Quality assurance cannot be assured in higher education if staff are not developed professionally. Whatever principles, strategies and measurements are introduced in higher education system to achieve standard will not yield positive results unless teachers who are the bedrock of education are sufficiently trained, re-trained and constantly exposed to developmental programmes that focus on the following areas according to Ogbodo (2012): teaching special learning needs of students, ICT teaching skills, students' discipline and behavior problems, instructional practices, subject field, student counseling, content and performance standard, students assessment practices, teaching in a multi-cultural setting, induction and mentoring, school management and general administration.

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the concepts of human resources development and quality assurance in education and the importance of human resources development. The paper also highlighted various techniques/methods for human resources development such as on-the-job training, apprenticeship, simulation and supplementary training programme. Furthermore, the paper examined the imperatives of human resources development to achieve quality assurance in higher education. Therefore, it is recommended that there should be:

1. regular in-service programmes, workshops, seminars and conferences for both academic and non-academic staff to inform them of new development in their discipline,
2. need to overhaul higher education system to evaluate the extent low quality standards have infiltrated into the system.

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