

Employment Programmes, Induction and On-the-Job Training as Predictors of Strategic Goal Achievement in Public Universities in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examined the relationship between employment programmes, induction and on-the-job training, and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria. Anchored on manpower planning theory and Beck's cognitive development framework, the study adopted a descriptive survey and correlational research design. A sample of 600 academic and non-academic staff was selected from six public universities (three federal and three state) across three geo-political axes in Southwest Nigeria using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected using two validated instruments the Questionnaire on Employment Programmes and Induction (QEP1) and the Questionnaire on Strategic Goal Achievement of Public Universities (QSGAPU) structured on a four-point Likert scale. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test both hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between employment programmes and strategic goal achievement ($r = .405, p < .05$), and a significant positive relationship between induction and on-the-job training and strategic goal achievement ($r = .357, p < .05$). Both null hypotheses were rejected. The study concludes that strategic and transparent employment practices, supported by structured induction and continuous on-the-job training, are critical determinants of institutional goal attainment. Recommendations include regulatory reform of the recruitment process in public universities, systematic induction frameworks for new staff, and sustained investment in on-the-job training to build institutional capability and drive strategic outcomes.

Keywords: employment programmes, induction training, on-the-job training, strategic goal achievement, public universities, manpower planning, Nigeria,

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1. INTRODUCTION

Achievement of strategic goals is one of the key performance indicators of Higher Education Institutions. Strategic goal formulation and articulation is the essence of the management practice in Public Universities in the context of academic excellence, infrastructural development, research and innovation, and entrepreneurial development. Utulu (2007) states that strategic goals help to determine priorities, allocate resources, identify capabilities and determine budgets; they help to set goals for individuals and teams; and they guide the benchmarking of planned and actual results. In such a context, the human resource aspect in university management is not an external aspect but is the main aspect, because people who will be recruited, developed and deployed in an institution determine the ability of the institution to achieve its strategic program.

The challenge of manpower planning practices in public universities to meet strategic goals has been a persistent challenge in the Southwest of Nigeria as documented elsewhere. Political meddling, nepotism and the foisting of candidates by influential institutional and political players often mar the employment process – recruitment, selection and placement. The implications are serious: Universities do not attract and retain the best staffing for the institutions, leading to structural mismatch of available competencies to the needs of the institutions. Other areas that are also concerning are the lack of induction and on the job training programmes. The orientation of newly appointed staff to the vision, values and strategic goals of the university system are poorly structured and opportunities for ongoing staff training through induction experiences are not always available and are poorly funded (Malaolu & Ogbuabor, 2013).

These gaps have direct implications in terms of achieving strategic goals. Induction training is an important mechanism for bringing on new staff, to introduce them to the expectations and strategic priorities of the institution and to ensure they can contribute effectively from the start of their employment (Boselie et al., 2005). Continuous on-the-job training, whether in the form of seminars, workshops or peer mentoring, continually ensures that staff are provided with the various skills that are needed to satisfy institutional needs (Gelade & Ivery, 2010). These training methods combine to form an institutional investment in human capital which will support strategic capacity and organisational effectiveness.

Although the theoretical and practical importance of these relationships are appreciated, the empirical studies of the specific linkages between employment programmes, induction and on-the-job training, and achieving strategic goals in public universities in Nigeria are still limited. The majority of the existing literature has been based on an overall manpower planning approach without specifically taking into account the role of employment and training sub-dimension in the achievement of strategic results. This research seeks to fill this gap by specifically addressing two research objectives: (i) to determine the relationship between employment programmes and strategic goal achievement and (ii) to examine the relationship between induction and on-the-job training and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria. The study thus provides empirical evidence in the process of reforming institutional structures and formulating policies in higher education management in Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employment Programmes and Strategic Goal Achievement

The foundation of institutional capacity and strategic goal realisation is employment programmes, attraction, selection and placement of personnel. Dorra and Al-Sabbag (1986) stated that implementing recruitment is one of the basic administrative activities in human



resource management, which is the lifeline of the human resource in an organisation to achieve its goal. AL-Mousawi (2004) stated that recruitment was a process of meeting the employment requirement of an organization in line with their strategic plan through attracting, selecting and placing of the most suitable candidates for employment. Jyothi and Venkatesh (2007) also highlighted that employment programme development should be based on an employment inventory in comparison with long-term strategic employment forecasts.

The attraction stage is to find and reach out to suitable candidates who can fulfil present and future requirements of the institution. According to AL-Mograbi (2009), attraction is the process of looking, studying and reviewing qualified manpower in order to select and attract the best candidates for vacancies in the institutions. Issa (2014) claimed that through good attraction, universities can ensure that they hire the best available talent, and thus can ensure good inter-departmental cooperation and the execution of practical and realistic measures. The selection stage is the careful, systematic and screening process in order to provide the competencies needed for specific positions (Sultan, 2003; AL-Mograbi, 2009). The final stage is placement which is the formalisation of the employment relationship, orientation to the mission and vision of the institution and the expectations that will guide the strategic contribution of the employee (Bruns, 2014).

There is consistency in the research to show that there is a positive relationship between employment programme quality and transparency and organisational performance. Kurtal (2012) reported that employment programmes had a significant effect on employee performance in private universities in Jordan, and that this reflected on the performance of the university. Ogbodo (2007) also found that inadequate human resource planning which encompasses inadequate recruitment also affects the functioning of the organisation to a great extent. In this regard, Susan (2012) stated that employment programming, which is one of the main aspects of a HRM system, can help the employees to be productive in achieving the institution's objectives. Overall, these findings validate the importance of employment programmes' quality, transparency and strategic alignment as antecedents of strategic goals achievement in universities.

2.2 Induction and On-the-Job Training and Strategic Goal Achievement

Induction training is a structured way of introducing newly appointed staff to their jobs, fellow staff, culture of the institution and strategic priorities. According to Bennett (2001), induction is a specific kind of training to help new employees understand their work, introduce them to their peers and acclimatize them to their new working environment, which is an integral part of institutional communication. Boselie et al. (2005) defined orientation as a deliberate acquisition of certain employees with their new jobs, co-workers, and organisation culture. Asare-Bediako (2008) proposed a more strategic interpretation which sees orientation as a tool to communicate an organisation's vision and values, influence employee attitude and integrate new employees into the structure of the organisation. This strategic framing is relevant especially in university contexts where individual employees have to be in line with institutional objectives in order to achieve strategic action as a group. The importance of good induction is well documented. Beatty (2009) identified effective orientation as a way of letting new hires know what is expected of them in their new positions, and what they must do to achieve it, and Belcourt et al. (2008) stated that if employees don't know what is expected of them, they can't take the necessary corrective actions to improve performance. Lings and Greenley (2005) also noted that beyond the formal learning system's ability to prepare graduates for specific work skills, a high level of



induction training is often required for the new university employees to be able to make a meaningful contribution towards the University's goals.

On-the-job training is ongoing learning and development of employees' skills, knowledge and capabilities through formal and informal learning processes that are integrated into the workplace, such as seminars, workshops, conferences, peer learning, etc. Gelade and Ivery (2010) showed positive link between positive workplace training practices and progressive human resource management practices and performance of the organisation. According to Koene et al (2002) employee orientation, which is a part and parcel of on the job training is one of the factors that play a pivotal role in business success. According to Aguinis and Kraiger (2009), training and development can benefit the organization, as well as the individual employees and teams. Regular on the job training enables the university to train new and existing employees to address the current and future manpower demands of the University and therefore facilitate the realization of the University's strategic objectives such as quality graduate production, research and innovation, as well as entrepreneurial services (Adeleye et al., 2014).

2.4 Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical grounding and empirical literature reviewed above, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between employment programmes and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between induction and on-the-job training and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey and correlational research design. The descriptive component characterised the current state of manpower planning practices and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria. The correlational component was used to examine the nature and strength of the relationship between the key study variables: employment programmes, induction and on-the-job training, and strategic goal achievement without manipulation of any variable. This design is appropriate for the study's objectives, which seek to establish the direction and statistical significance of associations between human resource management sub-dimensions and institutional strategic outcomes (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target population comprised all academic and non-academic staff of the 18 public universities (6 federal and 12 state) in the six Southwest states of Nigeria (Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo). According to National Universities Commission (NUC, 2021) records, there were 12,844 academic staff at the time of the study. A multistage sampling procedure was employed. At the first stage, the six states were stratified into three geo-political axes: Lagos-Ogun, Oyo-Osun, and Ondo-Ekiti. One state was randomly selected from each axis. At the second stage, purposive stratified random sampling was used to select two universities (one federal and one state) from each selected state, yielding a total of six universities (three federal, three state). At the third stage, proportionate sampling was used to select 100 academic and non-academic staff from each university, producing a final sample of N = 600 participants.

3.3 Instruments

Two validated self-designed instruments were used for data collection. The Questionnaire on Employment Programmes and Induction (QEP1) measured employment programmes and induction and on-the-job training, while the Questionnaire on Strategic Goal Achievement of Public Universities (QSGAPU) assessed the extent of strategic goal attainment. Both instruments comprised a demographic section (Section A) and a Likert-scale response section (Section B), rated on a four-point scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). Face and content validity were established through expert review by supervisors and specialists in Educational Management and Test and Measurement at Ekiti State University. Reliability was determined using the test-retest method on a pilot sample of 60 staff at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State (excluded from the main sample). Pearson Product Moment Correlation yielded reliability coefficients of $r = .80$ (QMPPU) and $r = .78$ (QSGAPU), both deemed adequate for the study.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The instruments were administered personally by the researcher and trained research assistants, who maintained direct contact with respondents to ensure clarity and maximise the response rate. Completed questionnaires were screened for completeness prior to analysis. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were computed to characterise variable distributions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test both hypotheses at $\alpha = .05$, using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25. The decision rule for hypothesis testing was: reject H_0 if $p < .05$ and $r\text{-calculated} > r\text{-critical}$ ($r\text{-tab}$).

4. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Employment Programmes and Strategic Goal Achievement

The first hypothesis tested whether a significant relationship exists between employment programmes and strategic goal achievement. The PPMC analysis results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation: Employment Programmes and Strategic Goal Achievement (N = 94)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab	p-value
Employment Programmes	94	16.921	3.803	0.405	0.178	.000
Strategic Goal Achievement	94	56.107	9.977			

Note. $r\text{-cal}$ = Pearson correlation coefficient; $r\text{-tab}$ = critical value at $\alpha = .05$, $df = 92$; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 1 shows that the calculated Pearson correlation coefficient ($r\text{-cal} = .405$) exceeded the critical table value ($r\text{-tab} = .178$) at the 0.05 level of significance, with a p-value of .000 ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis was accordingly rejected. This finding indicates a statistically significant, moderate positive relationship between employment programmes and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Induction and On-the-Job Training and Strategic Goal Achievement

The second hypothesis tested whether a significant relationship exists between induction and on-the-job training and strategic goal achievement. Table 2 presents the PPMC results.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation: Induction and On-the-Job Training and Strategic Goal Achievement (N = 94)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab	p-value

Induction/On-the-Job Training	94	28.534	6.014	0.357	0.178	.000
Strategic Goal Achievement	94	56.107	9.977			

Note. r -cal = Pearson correlation coefficient; r -tab = critical value at $\alpha = .05$, $df = 92$; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 2 indicates that r -cal (.357) exceeded r -tab (.178) at the 0.05 significance level, with $p = .000$ ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. These results confirm a statistically significant, moderate positive relationship between induction and on-the-job training and strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria. Universities that invest more substantively in structured induction activities and sustained on-the-job training programmes demonstrate higher levels of strategic goal attainment.

5. DISCUSSION

The result corroborated the presence of a significant positive relationship between employment programmes and strategic goal achievement ($r = .405$, $p < .05$) confirming the meaningfulness of quality and integrity of the recruitment, selection and placement process as determinant of institutional strategic outcome in Southwest Nigerian public universities. This outcome seems to be in line with the theory behind the Human Capital Hypothesis that the quality of employees hired into an organization provides a significant measure of its performance capability (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 2014). Universities that recruit, select and appoint staff based on academic achievement, professional competence and fit to their institution create the human resource base for the realization of the institutional goals.

The result is consistent with the findings of Kurtal (2012) who studied the employment programmes in private universities in Jordan and found that the employment programmes which include attraction, selection, placement, compensation, training and employee participation had a statistically significant effect on employee performance and consequently on the performance of the institutions. The current finding would suggest that achieving university strategic goals, whether in respect of research output, quality of graduates, community engagement or institutional rankings, is closely linked to the frequency of employment exercises, the emphasis on academic and professional excellence in the selection process, the transparency of the employment process and the ability of employment programming to prevent over-staffing and under-staffing. Ogbodo (2007) also noted that inadequate human resource planning which is a factor of inadequate recruitment has serious implications for the functioning of the institution.

On the other hand, the existing picture of politically motivated appointments and promotions of unqualified candidates in Southwest Nigerian public universities (Adetunji, 2015) is a hindrance to the strategic human resource alignment for the achievement of goals. Administrative appointments done by imposition, where people are often placed in positions regardless of their competence, lead to gaps in ability and lack of motivation, which in turn means that the institutional commitments to strategic goals fall short. The moderate correlation that was obtained ($r = .405$) may have been influenced by the fact that the achievement of strategic goals is a multidetermined phenomenon, as the quality of the employment programme is only one of a number of factors such as funding, regulation, infrastructure and governance that influence the outcome. However, the positive and highly significant nature of the relationship indicates the need for reform in the employment practices in Southwest Nigeria public universities.

The results showed that induction and on-the-job training have a positive correlation with strategic goal achievement, and that these two factors are significant factors ($r = .357$, $p <$

.05). This indicates that training and development of staff in public universities are important factors related to strategic goal achievement. This finding agrees with the theoretical arguments of Gelade and Ivery (2010), which showed that favourable training environment and progressive human resource management practices relate to better organisational performance. It also supports the findings of Koene et al. (2002) that employee orientation which is one of the basic elements of induction process is one of the key factors that relate to successful institutional performance. Belcourt et al. (2008) also identified that when employees' roles are clearly defined and their skills are trained and nurtured through a formal training process they are likely to perform the corrective actions required to enhance their performance and thus improve the institution's performance.

The implication of this finding is that the extent of actualisation of the strategic objectives of the Southwest Nigerian Public Universities in infrastructural development, quality graduate production, innovation and research and entrepreneurial service provision, is meaningfully related to the quality and consistency of training Academic staff receive. Structured induction programmes, where newly recruited staff are oriented to the vision, values, strategic goals and expectations of the institution, establish the conditions for early and sustained strategic contribution of new employees. On the Job Training (OJT) schemes, be they internal or external, seminars, or even peer mentoring, continually develop existing staff skills and enhance their ability to adjust to the changing needs of their jobs and the institution's strategic objectives (Adeleye et al., 2014; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

This relationship is moderately strong ($r = .357$), which is typical of multi-causal relationships to strategic goal achievement and which recognizes that while training is a necessary but not sufficient element to achieve institutional performance. The interconnection between training and performance is mediated and moderated by individual staff motivation, organisational culture, resources and leadership quality. However, the sense of the finding and its meaning makes it clear that there is empirical evidence for institutional investment in induction and on-the-job training as strategic levers for achieving the goal. The finding is also in line with Aigbepue and Mammud (2012) who noted that training and development are of a critical importance to the performance of an organization and with Ndibe (2014) who found that employee training has a positive effect on the performance of an organization in Nigeria institutional context

6. CONCLUSION

This study has lent empirical support to the fact that employment programmes and induction and on the job training are both important positive predictors of strategic goal achievement in public universities in Southwest Nigeria. The results of the study support that public universities are not just administrative organizations but strategic organizations, which means that the performance of public universities is determined by the quality of HRM practices that is contained in the manpower planning system. With a merit-based, transparent process, and strategically aligned hiring, and systematic induction and on the job training of new and continuing staff, universities are much stronger in achieving their desired strategic objectives in the four areas of academic excellence, research, community engagement and institutional development.

In addition, the study proves that the existing gaps in employment programming (political interventions, nepotism, inadequate orientation practices etc.) are systemic barriers to achieving the strategic goals and thus need to be deliberately addressed through policy. The moderate correlation found for both variables highlight the multi-determined nature of the performance of institutions and emphasize the need to comprehensively consider the entire



spectrum of manpower planning practices, such as staff welfare, manpower forecasting, and assessment of manpower plans in any strategy that aims at enhancing the attainment of strategic goals in Southwest Nigeria public universities. The implications of these findings are far reaching for university administrators, governing councils, universities regulatory commission and government policy makers; and thus an immediate institutional and policy reform is needed to meet up with the strategic aspirations of the Nigerian university system.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are presented for policy makers, university administrators, governing councils and regulatory agencies:

First, there is a need to establish a rule-governed, transparent, and merit-based employment system, which is removed from the influence of political interference and nepotism at the University level by governing councils and management. Recruitment panels should be formed separately and recruitment, selection and induction should be audited and there should be clear criteria for attraction, selection and induction, which should be aligned to the strategic human resource plan of each institution. Recruitment practices need to be regulated more closely by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to ensure it meets the approved standards in academic staffing in all public universities.

Secondly, public universities should design and execute systematic and comprehensive induction programs for all newly appointed staff. These programmes need to go beyond administrative procedures to include substantive orientation with regard to the institution's strategic goals, values, culture and expectations about how it operates. Induction process should be formalized in human resource policy and be periodically reviewed for being effective in speeding up the integration of new employees into the company strategy.

Thirdly, training and professional development of both academic and non-academic staff should be a matter of deliberate and sustained attention of the university governing councils. Each institution should have its own on-the-job training calendar which includes in-house seminars, workshop attendance, external conferences and peer mentoring schemes. Training programmes need to be aligned with the strategic vision of the institution, and should be assessed for their contribution to institutional capacity and performance.

Fourth, the federal and state governments must boost and continue to invest in staff training and development in public universities, viewing it as an investment and not an overhead. Intervention agency funding should be targeted to the delivery of structured training interventions, especially in areas of strategic institutional priority, for example, research capacity, teaching quality, technology adoption, etc.

Particularly, university management must make strategic goals known to everyone within the institution (including all institutional members of staff, academic and non-academic) via formal communication channels. It is important to build the conditions for goal alignment and collective strategic commitment by developing staff awareness and understanding of the institutional strategic agenda and the roles they play in its realization, at all levels.

Sixth, future studies are needed to extend the scope of this study using longitudinal study design that can investigate the changes in goal attainment as a result of strategic goal over time in relation to manpower planning practices and also using qualitative method to investigate lived experience of the staff with regard to employment programming and quality of training in Nigerian public universities..

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Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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