

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING METHODS FOR IMPLEMENTING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN TECHNICAL COLLEGES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the strategic human resource management and its influence on vocational education programme in technical colleges in Rivers State. The study examined how management styles and in-service training of technical instructors influence vocational technical education programmes. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey was used and a structured questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The population of the study was 200 students and technical instructors of the four technical colleges in Rivers State. A simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 100 respondents. The instrument was sent to two experts for validity. A test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.8 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha (α). Results from the study revealed that participative, pace-setting and coaching management styles improved the standard of technical colleges. The in-service training of technical instructors offered the opportunity to acquire new skills and improve the performance of teachers in the classroom. It is therefore recommended that the participative, pace-setting and coaching management styles be practiced in technical colleges. Furthermore, there should be regular in-service training of technical instructors since this will improve the quality of vocational technical education programmes.

Keywords: Strategic, Human Resource, Management, Technical Colleges, Vocational and Technical Education

Introduction

The development of any nation lies to a great extent on vocational technical education. The national policy on education (2004), defined vocational and technical education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving in addition to general education, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. This type of education develops the mental and physical qualities of people thereby increasing their skills, knowledge and attitudes required for utilizing the natural resources needed for the economic development (Vareba, 2011). One of the means whereby vocational education can be acquired is through the technical colleges. Technical colleges are educational institutions that prepare students for career choice. The primary objectives of technical colleges as outlined by the national policy on education are:

1. To enable the students secure useful employment at the end of the programme
2. To enable students set up their own businesses, thus enabling them to be self-employed and be able to employ others
3. To enable students to pursue further education in advanced craft at the tertiary level.

The main purpose of establishing technical colleges as outlined above is for skills development which will help the students gain useful employment in the world of work.

However, it is very pathetic to note that the students of vocational technical institutes such as the technical colleges lack requisite skills necessary for employment. Ordu (2009) pointed out that youths' unemployment appears to be on the increase due to the simple reason that many of the youths do not possess employable skills which are usually acquired from vocational schools. In a related study Ibehim (1994) also lamented that products of trade schools were rejected by industries because they had the wrong type of training in schools. This shows that the noble objectives of technical colleges have not been realized.

In order for the objectives of technical colleges to be achieved it calls for strategic human resources development. Human resources refers to the skill, energy, talent; abilities and knowledge possessed by individuals who have passed through professional training that are used for the production of goods and services or rendering of other services. Human resources could also be referred to as employees or manpower. In technical colleges, the human resources refer to the technical instructors, workshop attendants,

laboratory technicians etc. It is one thing to have these human resources; it is another thing to develop these human resources. Human resources development according to Heathfield (2015) is the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities. Employees can be developed through effective management style and in-service training.

Management according to Balogun (2003), means to handle or arrange people, things or situation to bring about what one desires. Also Light (2004) defined management as the body of knowledge about managing. To him management is the process of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling men, materials, money and so on so as to secure the optimum achievement of objectives. The manner in which an organization manages its employees and their work activity is known as management style. Rosalind (2013) identified five management styles namely

1. Directive management style
2. The affiliative management style
3. The participative management style
4. The pace-setting management style
5. The coaching management style

Directive Management Style: This is a management style where the manager gives orders and sets high standards and disciplines those who do not meet the standards. He requires immediate compliance from his employees without any questions

The Affiliative Management Style: The manager who uses this pattern spends more time helping his employees to bond. He has the goal of creating harmony among employees and between manager and employee. The people take priority and ignore the task ahead of them.

Participative Management Style: This is also known as democratic management style. This has the objective of building commitment. In this pattern all employees have an input to make when reaching a decision. There must be a consensus agreement reached before the job can commence for the day.

Pace Setting Management Style: The manager in this method sets a cracking pace from the beginning. The team operates with high energy, engagement and motivation.

Coaching Management Style: This is the management style with the objective of long term professional development of employees. When a team member progresses on a task, the manager ask him to train others.

It is very important to note that there is no one best management style The key to being an effective manager according to Rosalind (2013) is to have a repertoire of styles and use them when appropriate. From the above

mentioned management styles discussed, the style adopted by the Principals, Heads of Department and the technical instructors influences vocational technical education programmes.

Another important factor that influences vocational education is in-service training of technical instructors. In-service training refers to special courses given to employees in a particular profession so as to improve their skills or to learn about new development in their field of activities. It could come in the form of conferences, seminars or workshops attended.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how management styles and in-service training of technical instructors will influence vocational education programmes.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study.

- (1) What is the influence of management styles on vocational technical education programmes?
- (2) How does in-service training of technical instructors influence vocational technical education programmes?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students and teachers on influence of management styles on vocational education programmes.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students and teachers on influence of in-service training of technical instructors on vocational education programmes.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research method was adopted in this study to source data to answer the research question, which centered on the strategic human resource management and training methods for implementing of vocational education programmes in technical colleges. The population for the study comprised all teachers and students of all the four technical colleges in Rivers State. A sample of 100 (70 students and 30 teachers) was drawn using random sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled “strategic human resource management and training methods for implementing of vocational education programmes in technical colleges (SHRMTMIVEPTC)” with 5 items on a 4-point likert

scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The SHRMTMIVEPTC was validated by three experts in technical and vocational education. The reliability of the instrument was carried out by test re-test method on data collected through a pilot test on 30 respondents selected from the technical colleges who were not part of the sample of the study. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.8 using Cronbach's Alpha.

The researchers personally went to the colleges used for the study and administered 100 copies of the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer the research question. An item with a calculated mean value of 3.00 and above was accepted and below this was reject. An inferential statistics of t – test was used to test the only null hypothesis at 0.05 level of confidence. It was deduced that where t – calculated value was equal or greater than table t – value, it indicates significance difference, so reject the null hypothesis but otherwise, accept the null hypothesis.

Results and discussion

Research Question 1

What is the influence of management styles on vocational technical education programmes?

Table 1: Responses on influence of Management Styles

S/N	ITEMS	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D
1.	Directive management style leads to and increases performance of technical instructors	3.00	0.89	3.14	0.91
2.	Affiliative management style encourages technical instructors thereby resulting in high standard of vocational education programmes.	3.44	0.82	3.22	0.91
3.	Participative management style leads to increase in productivity of technical instructors thereby improving technical education.	3.18	0.79	3.02	0.83
4.	Pace-setting management style makes technical instructors highly motivated thereby encouraging high standard of vocational education programme.	3.14	0.93	3.02	0.91
5.	Coaching management style encourages skill development among technical instructors.	3.06	0.97	3.18	0.62
Grand mean		3.16	0.88	3.11	0.84

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students and teachers on influence of management styles on vocational education programme.

Table 2: t-test Result on Management Styles

RESPONDENTS	\bar{X}	S.D	N	DF	t-CAL	t-CRIT	P	DECISION
Teachers	3.16	0.87	50	98	0.29	1.98	0.05	Ho: Accepted
Students	3.11	0.84	50					

In Table 1 above, the grand mean values of 3.16 for teachers and 3.11 for students which are above the average mean rating of 3.0 shows that the entire management styles influenced vocational education programme. However, the Affiliative management style was rated highest (3.44 and 3.22). In Table 2, the calculated t-test value of 0.29 is less than the table value of 1.98. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Research Question 2

How does in-service training of the technical instructors influence vocational technical education programmes.

Table 3: Responses on In-Service Training

S/N	ITEMS	TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D
1.	In-service training offers technical instructors the opportunity to learn about new development in their field of activities.	3.34	0.79	3.00	0.89
2.	In-service training develops the necessary skills of technical instructors for effective operation of workshop facilities.	3.14	0.89	3.34	0.72
3.	In-service training enables technical instructors to maintain existing facilities.	3.14	0.85	3.26	0.81
4.	In-service training sharpens technical instructors' teaching skills.	3.42	0.66	3.04	1.13
5.	Skills acquired through in-service training boosts the morale of technical instructors.	3.28	0.70	3.44	0.83
Grand mean		3.26	0.78	3.22	0.88

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of students and teachers on influence of in-service training of technical instructors on vocational education programmes.

Table 4: t-test Results on In-Service Training

RESPONDENTS	\bar{X}	S.D	N	DF	t-CAL	t-CRIT	P	DECISION
Teachers	3.26	0.78	50	98	0.25	1.98	0.05	Ho: Accepted
Students	3.22	0.88	50					

In Table 3 above, the grand mean values of 3.26 and 3.22 shows that in-service training of technical instructors influences vocational technical

education programmes. Table 4 shows clearly that the calculated t-test value of 0.25 was less than the table value of 1.98. Therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

Discussion of findings

In Table 1 all the items were accepted. Item 1 showed that directive management style increases the performance of technical instructors. These findings were in disharmony with the words of Benincasa (2012) who suggested that directive management style should be avoided in almost every case. The reason being that, it can alienate people stifles flexibility and inventiveness. Principals and Heads of Department and technical instructors that use this directive management style on experience should do so with care so that the later does not become resentful and feel micromanaged. Benincasa (2012) further recommended that the directive management style should be used during emergency situations on in times of crises. Hence adopting this management style when needed will positively influence vocational education programmes. Benincasa (2012) in agreement with question item 2 of Table 1 which described the affiliative management style as “people come first” and its result would be high performance and good direction. Hence this management style should be adopted in combination with other styles. Items 3, 4 and 5 representing the participative, pace-setting and coaching management styles respectively were also accepted. Item 3 revealed that participative management style increases productivity. Item 4 showed that the pace-setting management style increased high standard of performance of technical instructors. Item 5 showed that the coaching management style encouraged skills development among technical instructors. The findings of this study is not far from the observations of Rosalind (2013) who noted that employees under a participative manager are more committed to their work and take responsibility for their work. This management approach results in team work and a steady working environment. Because of the exemplary approach of the manager, technical instructors are highly motivated leading to high standard in technical colleges. Also her study was in agreement that coaching management style focuses on the skill development of technical instructors. So when participative, pace setting and coaching management styles are adopted it goes a long way in the realization of the objectives of technical colleges.

All the items in Table 3 were accepted showing that in-service training sharpens the teaching skill, offers the opportunity to learn about new development in their field of activities. Table 3 also shows that the skills acquired through in-service training will enable the technical instructors to operate and maintain existing facilities in a workshop and also boost the

performance of technical instructors. The findings of this study was in line with the objective of vocational education which was highlighted in the National Policy on Education (2004) as a means of training and imparting necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically. This skill can be impacted by means of a strategic human resources development of technical instructors. Amaechi (2013) agreed with the findings of the study highlighting the importance of in-service training, He noted that lack of it makes teachers stagnant without something new to offer to the students. This affects vocational education programmes thus leading to the poorly equipped students of technical colleges. In a study conducted by Edem (2010) entitled in-service training and teachers performance in secondary schools where he acknowledged that in-service training enhances the productivity of teachers in secondary schools and also improves the performance of technical teachers as well.

Conclusion

For a successful vocational education programme there must be an effective management style. A good management style increases the performance and productivity of technical instructors which will translate into a high standard in technical colleges. In-service training of technical instructors will enable the instructors to develop new skills needed for the maintenance and operation of workshop facilities. This will in turn enable the students in the technical colleges to acquire the requisite skills needed for their employment after graduation.

Recommendations

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

1. More of participative, pace-setting and coaching management styles should be practiced in technical colleges since this management approaches will yield high standard in technical colleges.
2. For an effective operation and maintenance of workshop facilities regular in-service training should be organized for technical instructors. Since these training will enable the instructors to impart the necessary skills required of the students to face the world of work.

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