

HEADS' OF DEPARTMENT QUALITY PLANNING MANAGERIAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study seeks to examine heads of department quality managerial skills assessment in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted evaluative survey research. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study comprises 300 heads of department in public universities in Cross River State. The researchers developed an instrument for data collection titled "Heads of Department Quality Managerial Skills Assessment Questionnaire (HDQMSAQ)" mean analysis was used to answer research questions while ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that heads of department in public universities in Cross River State possess some managerial skills and they are less efficient in some managerial skills. Recommendation, it was recommended among others that heads of department in public universities in Cross River State should be given the opportunity to attend some top management officers in-service training programme regularly in order to improve in the areas of deficiency in the office.

Keywords: Head of department, quality, managerial skills, assessment and universities.

Introduction

University education is the type and level of education that is given to persons who are qualified for admission and enrolment for courses after receiving secondary school education and have fulfilled admission requirements or criteria. Such qualified persons are offered: opportunity to enrol and to study and obtain degree, diplomas and certificates of their respective choices (Nwadiani, 2018, Mgbekem, 2004).

University is a veritable instrument for national transformation sustainable development. It is the production point for highly skilled manpower to drive the sustainable development needs of any country. Consequently, the purpose of education at this level still remains to enlighten the mind and develop national consciousness in the individuals. The role of university education in achieving this purpose is to ensure that their educational programmes, their implementations, meet the needs of the present, without compromising future generation's ability to meet their own needs (Offem 2021). University is regarded as the key sector in the process of social change, economic, and political development. Nations depend increasingly on knowledge, ideas and skills which are produced in universities and other higher institutions (World Bank, 1998).

Nigeria as in other countries it is the apex tertiary education and research institution with the mandate to award academic degrees in accredited academic disciplines at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels rightly exercising academic freedom. Academic as an antecedent comes in handy from the ancient life of the University of Bologna (1088 BC) which adopted constitution habit as an academic charter in 1158 or 1155.

The goals of university education, university is a centre for excellence, ivory tower and a storehouse of knowledge and research. These features are catholic across time and space. According to article 59 in FRN (2013) following are the goals of tertiary particularly university education: (a) contribute to national development through high level relevant training (b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual (c) Develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment (d) Actuate both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individual to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (e) promote and encourage scholarship and community service (f) forage and cement national unity and (g) promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The office of today requires human resources who are capable of displaying initiatives, exercising good judgement and making good decisions within the scope of authorities given to them. According to Ekanem et al (2023), success of any educational system, requires among others, accountability into its strategy. It determines clear expectations and creating relationships among administrators and members of staff on the basis of accountability. This implies that head of department is expected to acquire knowledge business subjects and office management in order to effectively and efficiently organise the work and control the performance staff under them. The above discourse shows that head of department (HODs) signify people who possess the mastery of office skills and abilities to assume responsibility with or without direct supervision. The changing nature of business and pressure for results means more responsibility of the head of departments.

Boytzis (2010) defined a skill as the ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behaviour that is functionally related to attaining a performance goal. Similarly, skill according to Osinem (2008) is the expertness, practised ability or proficiency displayed in the performance of a task. Osinem further explained that it is the ability to perform a task acquired through repetition of the operation. Okorie (2000) stated that to possess a skill is the demonstration of acting, thinking or behaving in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice.

Skill is a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience. Although skill depends essentially on learning, it also includes the concepts of efficiency and economy in performance. Hope and Hillary (2020) modern concepts of skills stress the flexibility with which a skilled operator reaches a given end on different occasions according to precise circumstance. However, it must be reiterated that even though basic human capacities are not sufficient to produce skills, they form the necessary basis of their development. According to Adeyemo (2003) skills represent particular ways of using capacities in relation to environmental demands, with human beings and external situation together forming a functional system.

Hornby (2010) defined skill as the ability to do something well. Atakpa (2014) viewed skill as the rapid exhibited through mental and manual repetition of performance of an operation. It is a well-established habit of doing something through acquisition of performance capabilities. Boytzis (2010) stated that skill is the ability to demonstrate a system and sequences of behaviour that is functionally related to attaining a performance goal. Skill can do a lot of great work in the life of every living soul. Hope and Hillary

(2020) added that as water is key essential to human life, so is skill training and acquisition needed in the life of every serious minded human being. Skilled person can survive in any environment.

According to Anioke (2013), in order to achieves the relevance required of skill development for new job of the contemporary office, there is every need to find out the possible hindrance facing the development of such skills. Contemporary office is that the office that has adopted technology into operation. Agomuo (2008) described that new era office as electronic, paperless and virtual in nature, skill development involves a laid down process or activities through which one learns how to perform event. Osinem (2008) stated that skill development involves the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise work or job. The nature of the office must be looked into in depth. It is also of importance to look at the variable such as human resource development through the elimination of the challenges that is confronting them. Agomuo (2005) and Nwosu (2000) pointed out that in the new era offices, technology has brought about change in its nature. Nwosu (2000), further states that the new era office requires workers who are intelligent, skilful, tactful, cheerful, friendly, resourceful, committed, computer literate, and has willingness to work.

Agmuo (2005) contrasting the office of the past with the office of the futures remarked that the typewriter intervention had little changes, but that the office of the future will reflect revolutionary changes with far-reaching implications for fast pace development in the area of technology, automation and the attitudes of the society. Agomuo (2005) noted that the description of the office of the future is not certain with the office. Managerial skills involve those skills needed to the performance of the management functions. Managerial skill entails the mental ability to analyse and diagnose complex situations and broad perspective to contribute to creative problem solving. According to Boyatzis (2010) managerial skills involve the ability to enhance one's power, build a power base and establish the "right" connections in the organisation. The goal of managerial skills is to integrate productive efforts for proper maximization or utilisation of resources and to get optimum output.

Quality according to Ekundaye (2010) is the totality of the features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Bateman (2003) quality indicated that people are more aware than ever that one is judged by the quality of products above all. This implies that when quality is high, acceptance is achieved. Bateman further viewed quality as the excellence of a product, including its attractiveness, absence of defeats, possession of reliability and long term durability. Therefore, quality can be measured in terms of performance, durability, acceptability and sustainability. In the view of Idialu in Uko (2015) quality is the degree of goodness or goodness in a thing. He also stated that quality is education ensures that students possess the knowledge, skills, competencies and understanding that are appropriate to their area of responsibility. The researchers added that the above can only be achieved through educational administrator's quality managerial skills.

Heads of department as chief executive and administrators are expected to oversee the activities of both teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure that they are conform to generally accepted principles and practice of education. To carry out this onerous

responsibility, the heads of department as supervisors should possess the competences, behaviours, traits and ability to enable them do work effectively.

Kotter in Eziuzo (2014) referred to managerial skills of supervision as a body of skills and competences that a supervisor manifests in directing the affairs of an organisation. Similarly, Lewis (1995) described managerial skills of supervision as the competence and strategies through which a supervisor plans, controls and directs the activities of an organisation including the effective use of resources. These resources include people, raw materials, plants and equipment. Categories of managerial skill of supervision include; planning, organisation, controlling, directing, communicating and innovating (Vikal, 2005).

University should open up the vast treasure of the marvels of the human mind, articulate the nation unique voice, assert and affirm the intellectual destiny of a country by journeying through the intellectual, psychological, social, political, spiritual, cultural; artistic, philosophical, moral, economic and material dimensions of people and a nation. The achievement of the goals of the university as a composite development is a composite responsibility of the government, university dons, professional organisation, industrial organisation, parents, students, communities and private individuals

Method

The study adopted survey research design. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to direct the study. The population of the study comprised 298 heads of department in public universities in Cross River State. The instrument for data collection was a researcher's structure questionnaire, constructed on 4-points likert scale. It was validated by two experts from one each from the department of measurement and evaluation and educational management departments, university of Calabar. It was pilot tested on 20 heads of department in Akwa Ibom State. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The instrument was administering with the help of two research assistance. Mean was used to analyse the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Mean ratings between 1.00 – 1.49 were regarded as not efficient mean ratings between 2.50 – 3.49 were regarded as sufficient while mean ratings between 3.501 – 4.00 were regarded as sufficiently. Mean scores of the respondents on the managerial skills of HOD in public universities in Cross River State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to assess head of department quality managerial skills in public universities in Cross River State. Specifically, the study seeks to assess;

1. The managerial skills possessed by head of department in public universities in Cross River State.
2. How efficient the head of department is in the discharge of their managerial skills.

Research questions

1. What managerial skills do head of department possess in public universities in Cross River State?

- In the opinion of male and female head of department, how efficient are the head of department in managerial skills?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Male and female heads of department will not significantly differ in their mean ratings of efficiency in managerial skills.

Presentation/Results

Research question 1:

What managerial skills do head of department possessed in public universities in Cross River State?

S/N	Items	SA	A	S	SD	X	Decision
1	Allocation of resource in the department	60	36	10	19	1.90	Not efficient
2	Directing and monitoring staff	37	190	59	12	2.82	Efficient
3	Coordinating and resolving conflicts in the department	194	58	11	37	3.39	Efficient
4	Setting target in the department	50	21	198	29	2.31	Efficient
5	Initiating improvement in projects in the department	52	51	12	183	1.91	Not Efficient
6	Identifying new area of courses	56	192	28	22	2.93	Efficient
	Average x	2.55					Not efficient

In table 1, the data shows that male and female head of department are effective on items 2,4 and while they are ineffective on items 1 and 5 on the average, they are effective that heads of department in public universities in Cross River State possessed managerial skills mean (x) scores of the respondents on heads of department efficiency in managerial skills.

Table 2: Efficiency of HODs' in managerial skills

S/N	Items	HE	E	LE	NE	x	Decision
7	Exhibiting high leadership quality in the office	50	198	30	20	2.93	Efficient
8	Being enthusiastic in working	34	42	52	170	1.80	Less Efficient
9	Being innovative in accomplishing a given task in the office	12	50	53	183	159	Less Efficient
10	Always strive to complete a given less task	37	12	59	190	1.65	Less efficient
11	Always interested in the progress and development of the department	195	53	29	27	3.42	Efficient
12	Ensuring that each day's task is accomplish	28	194	54	22	2.77	Efficient
	Average x					2.36	

Data in table 2 revealed that the heads of department were efficient in items 5,1 and 6. They are less efficient in items 2, 3 and 4. This implies that the heads of department are less efficient in managerial skills under items 2, 3 and 6.

Hypothesis

Male and female head of department will not significantly differ in their mean rating of efficiency in managerial skills.

Table 3: ANOVA summary of mean ratings of male and female heads of department on the quality managerial skills

Source of variation	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F-cal	F-crit	P
Between groups	0.04	2	.02			
Within groups	7.11	145	.118	4.72		<.05
Total	7.15	147				

Decision: $P < .05$, upheld

Discussion of findings

The result of research question is in table one revealed that male and female heads of department are effective in coordinating, and resolve conflicts in the department (3.39), direct and motivate staff in the department (2.82) set target in the department (2.31) and initiate new ideas in the department (2.95). however, they are less effective on allocation of resources in the department (1.90) and initiate improvement project (1.91) possessing managerial skills in public universities in Cross River State.

In table 2 the result revealed that head of department was efficient in showing interest in the progress of the department (3.42) exhibiting leadership quality in the office (2.93).

Managerial skill of supervision required by head of department for effective office management.

Head of department as guarantors of qualitative education and implementers of educational policies sought to possess some managerial skills of supervision which are vital for their effectiveness in department management.

The finding of the study agrees with the study of Oguejiofor (2013) that performance of managerial functions is potential to achieving the organizational goals but secretary who cannot carry-out functions affected to his office may not likely contribute in realizing the goals or objectives of the organisation.

The findings are in line with Robins and Decenzo started that the ability to work well with people, understand their needs communicate well and motivate others either individually or in group constitutes managerial skills. In support, Boyatzis (2010) stated that the goal of managerial skills is to integrate productive efforts for proper maximization or utilization of resources and to get optimum output.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of this study, it was concluded that heads of department quality managerial skills assessment in public universities in Cross River State is effective and efficient in achieving quality university education development.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and discussion of the study, the following recommendations were:

1. Government should make HODs to acquire more knowledge of managerial skill for effective functioning of the departments.

2. Governing council of university and government should cooperate and collaborate in providing universities with suitable, adequate and up-date HODs retraining and other development packages to enable them embrace challenges in their official duties.

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