

## **MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC STAFF EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

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**Abstract:** The relationship between human resource management and academic staff effectiveness of public universities in Ekiti State was assessed in this study, which is a descriptive research design of the survey type. Academic staff in universities made up the study population, while the sample comprised 252 respondents selected using proportionate stratified and random sampling techniques. The instruments used were the Managing Human Resource Questionnaire and Academic Staff Effectiveness Questionnaire. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study revealed a significant relationship between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness. Significant relationships between recruitment, workforce training, staff well-being, and academic staff effectiveness were revealed. Based on the findings from this study, the management of a university must adhere to the rules, laws, and regulations of the university system regarding its management of human resources.

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**Keywords:** Effectiveness, Human resources, Management, Recruitment, Workforce

### **1.0 Introduction**

Education is believed and accepted to be the bedrock for every development that occurs in the society and is viewed in Nigeria as an instrument for national development and socio-economic change. Management of human resources, which involves organization and mobilization for the achievement of identified objectives, is considered an important field of study in any organization, including schools, and a top priority for every organization (Vishwas, 2016). Nzokurum and Awah (2017) stated that the pace at which a university education and training system transmits knowledgeable skills directly affects the pace of development and is thus relevant in the provision of needed manpower for the acceleration of socioeconomic development of a nation.

Effectiveness is the capability of producing a desired result or the ability to produce desired output, which according to the dictionary means producing a desired result. Academic staff effectiveness refers to how lecturers in universities perform their multiple responsibilities in terms of teaching the students, level and standard of research conducted, and community services rendered by the staff. The issue of effectiveness in the educational system has been receiving a great attention in society in recent times. Stakeholders of education, especially

parents, as well as the entire society are clamoring for effectiveness in the university educational system, which may be because of the perceived poor-quality products of universities produced annually.

Effectiveness of academic staff is a key factor in the success of any university. In achieving staff effectiveness, indicators such as quality teaching, quality research output, and community services must be observed. Researchers observed that some academic staff in universities are perceived not to be as effective as expected in conducting teaching, research, and community services. It seems that some academic staff of universities no longer place priority on their primary assignment, which is teaching, perhaps because of irregular attendance to lectures. Some have been accused of non-utilization of relevant materials for teaching, some no longer deliver lectures in an interesting manner, some appear not to have good mastery of the subject matter, and some seem not to have the skills of class management during lectures. Akomolafe and Adegun (2005) noted that class management is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. It appears that some academic staff does not adequately prepare and present up-to-date and relevant ideas and facts to students. Quality teaching makes it possible for students to achieve their stated educational objectives. This was supported by the idea of Daso (2013), who found that there was a significant relationship between teachers' method of teaching, their attitude, and students' achievement.

Academic staff should constantly obtain adequate and current information through publications and research findings before good teaching can occur. Devin (2020) defined research as a detailed study of a specific problem, concern, or issue using scientific methods. Research provides up-to-date information needed for the growth and development of a society and is thus considered one of the major determinants of academic staff effectiveness. The number of publications on the credit of an academic staff member is a standard being used to measure his/her effectiveness. However, researchers observed a decline in the level of research being conducted in universities. Some have been accused of irregular attendance at conferences, and they find it difficult to break new ground in their research endeavors. There have been reported cases of plagiarism by some academic staff.

Community service as one of the elements of academic staff effectiveness in universities seems to be poor. These services may be provided to families, faculties, universities, and the nation at large. The organization and management of community services appear to be very poor in Nigerian universities. Many academic staff seem not to be concerned with conducting public enlightenment programs on contemporary social issues. Alsaaty and Morris (2015) indicated that the involvement of parents and the community in school activities is undeniably important for the success of the educational process and its progress. The observed academic staff ineffectiveness in the area of teaching, research, and community services in state public universities might be predicated on many factors, including lack of motivation, poor work environment, non-payment of salaries and allowances as and when due, and poor human resource management. It appears that poor human resource management could be the major factor responsible for the observed academic staff ineffectiveness.

Heathfield (2020) defined human resource management as a focus on the recruitment, management, and provision of direction and guidance for employees of an organization to maximize performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives. Resource management enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to achieving organizational goals and objectives. It addresses employee concerns such as benefits, pay, new employee orientation, rewarding employees for good performance, promotion, safety, solving conflicts, evaluating individual performance, career development programs, creating a positive work environment, pension plans, and training. Chukwuma (2015) posited that human resource management deals with human-related issues

such as hiring, performance management, compensation, safety, organization development, wellness, motivation, communication, administration, and training. It is a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people, workplace culture, and its environment (Heathfield, 2020).

Managing human resources in recruitment and selection processes ensures the involvement of competent and qualified workers. Recruitment, as defined by Flippo (2019), entails the search for prospective employees and their motivation to apply for jobs in the organization. Werther and Davis (2019) also defined recruitment as the discovery of potential applicants to fill actual or anticipated organizational vacancies. In human resource management, recruitment involves a timely and cost-effective search and hiring of the best and most qualified candidate for a job opening (Martin, 2016). However, it appears that the process of recruitment is always being influenced by Nigerian environmental factors such as political pressure, who you know, among others. According to Martin (2016), effective recruitment means that an employee is the best possible candidate with all the required skills, talents, and qualifications for the job. Thus, the university's recruitment and selection process has a major influence on academic staff effectiveness and requires urgent attention. Otoo et al. (2018) emphasized that recruitment and selection are an integral part of human resource planning and are of great importance to every organization's development.

Human resources pertaining to staff well-being and health care seem not to be taken seriously and, as defined by Kabene et al. (2006), are different kinds of clinical and non-clinical staff responsible for public and individual health interventions. Academic staff appears not to be adequately insured against educational risks and not given the opportunity to select among different benefit plans. Employee well-being seems to pay off in the university. In a condition where staff welfare is jeopardized, it may result in staff ineffectiveness because welfare motivates staff that could improve their performances.

Workforce training and development is another important focus in human resource management. Training uses systematic and planned instruction activities and a formal process to promote learning, impart knowledge, and help people acquire the necessary skills to perform their jobs satisfactorily (Armstrong, 2009). Training and development constitute the diverse programs designed to enhance the job performance of employees and organizational productivity (Vishwas, 2016). Sila (2014) stated that employees should be adequately trained to upgrade their knowledge and skills and enable them to remain competitive and productive in the organization. Training contributes primarily to achievement goals as well as helps employees be up-to-date and meet modern methods of teaching. It is essential that human resources personnel consider the workforce in terms of skills categories and training levels. According to Bharthvajan (2019), training and growth programs enhance workplace performance, update worker knowledge and enhance personal skills. Academic staff in the university may undergo in-service training such as seminars, conferences, and workshops to meet particular university's present and future needs. Training programs are a problem that have been ignored in school organizations. Bharthvajan (2019) noted that training enhances the workforce's capacity to achieve organizational goals. The researcher observed that academic staff in universities do not regularly attend most seminars/workshops/conferences organized by professional bodies to meet present needs. Their inability to attend might be due to the non-availability of grants by the management of institutions. The inability of academic staff to attend seminars/workshops/conferences very often seems to have a negative impact on their effectiveness. A well-designed and well-implemented training process seems to help employees build confidence and feel more

empowered. This idea was supported by Onyango and Wanyoike (2014), who stated that a well-trained employee will need less supervision and be well acquainted with the job they do.

The level of economic development of a country is perceived to have a direct connection with staff effectiveness. Kabene et al. (2006) posited that a strong positive correlation exists between a country's level of economic development and its number of human resources. Countries with higher gross domestic product (GDP) per capita spend more on university education than countries with lower GDP, which can invariably result in staff ineffectiveness. Availability of talented candidates is an important issue in an economy to which an enterprise (University) belongs, and Martin (2016) posited that an enterprise operating in an underdeveloped economy may find difficulty in reaching out to candidates with the talents and required skills.

### *1.1 Purpose of the study*

Examining the relationship between human resources management and the effectiveness of academic staff in universities in Ekiti State is the basis of this study. The study examined the relationship between each of the components of human resource management, such as recruitment, staff well-being, workforce training and development, and academic staff effectiveness, in order to make suggestions for better improvement.

### *1.2 Research Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were developed for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness.
2. There is no significant relationship between recruitment and academic staff effectiveness.
3. There is no significant relationship between staff well-being and academic staff effectiveness.
4. There is no significant relationship between workforce training and development and academic staff effectiveness.

## **2.0 Methodology**

Survey research was adopted to investigate the relationship between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness in public universities. The study population included all teaching staff of public universities in Ekiti State. These universities are Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, and Federal University Oye-Ekiti. The population comprises 755 academic staff in Ekiti State University, while Federal University Oye has 505 academic staff, bringing the overall population to 1260

The sample comprised 252 academic staff from two universities in Ekiti State. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed for sample selection. One hundred and fifty-one (151) and one hundred and one (101) academic staff, which formed 20% of the population, were selected from Ekiti State University and Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, respectively.

Data for the study were collected using two self-designed instruments titled "Managing Human Resources Questionnaire" (MHRQ) and "Academic Staff Effectiveness Questionnaire" (ASEQ), which were validated by experts in the Educational Management and Tests and Measurement departments at Ekiti State University. The test-retest method was used to establish reliability, and coefficients of 0.75 and 0.79 were obtained for MHR and ASE, respectively. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## **3.0 Results**

The results of the data analysis are presented as follows:

3.1 Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness.

**Table 1: Correlation between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Management of Human Resources	252	30.95	5.10	0.312*	0.195
Academic Staff Effectiveness	252	64.14	5.51		

\*p < 0.05

Table 1 reveals that r-cal (0.312) was greater than r-tab (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that a significant relationship exists between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness.

3.2 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between recruitment and academic staff effectiveness.

**Table 2: Correlation between recruitment and academic staff effectiveness**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r cal	r tab
Recruitment	252	23.41	5.62	0.659*	0.195
Academic Staff Effectiveness	252	64.14	5.51		

\*p < 0.05

The results in table 2 show that there was a significant relationship between recruitment and academic staff effectiveness because the r-cal value (0.659) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was thus rejected.

3.3 Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between staff well-being and academic staff effectiveness.

**Table 3: Correlation between staff well-being and academic staff effectiveness.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Staff well-being	252	30.71	5.18	0.541*	0.188
Academic Staff Effectiveness	252	62.16	5.61		

\*p < 0.05

Table 3 reveals that the r-cal value of (0.541) was greater than the r-tab (0.188) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This establishes a significant relationship between staff well-being and academic staff effectiveness.

3.4 Hypothesis 4

There is no significant relationship between workforce training and development and academic staff effectiveness.

**Table 4: Correlation between workforce training and development and academic staff effectiveness**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Workforce training and development	252	24.63	5.41	0.541*	0.195
Academic Staff Effectiveness	252	54.20	5.51		

\*p < 0.05

Table 4 shows a significant relationship between workforce training and development and academic staff effectiveness. The  $r$ -cal value (0.541) was greater than  $r$ -tab (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

#### **4.0 Discussion**

A significant relationship existed between the management of human resources and academic staff effectiveness, which implies that the management of human resources shared by employers will influence the effectiveness of academic staff. The findings corroborated that of Heathfield (2020), who stated that human resource management enhances an effective and productive contribution of employees to direct the organization in the accomplishment of its goals and objectives. The significant relationship observed between recruitment and academic staff effectiveness implies that if the qualified and right personnel are recruited, staff effectiveness would be at a higher level. This was supported by the findings of Berry et al. (2011), who found that the recruitment of qualified and professional teachers has a significant influence on learning outcomes. Thus, there is a conscious effort by institutions and educational agencies to recruit qualified personnel in the educational process.

Workforce training and development improves the morale of employees, assures them of job security and satisfaction, and when all these are available to employees, they will not be effective in their duties. Thus, the significant relationship observed between workforce training and development and academic staff effectiveness corroborated the findings of Onyango and Wanyoike (2014) that the more training an employee receives, the less likely they are of committing occupational accidents and the more proficient the employee becomes. In the same vein, Bharthvajan (2019) showed the notion that training is a parameter to enhance the workforce's capacity to achieve organizational goals.

The study further revealed a significant relationship between staff well-being and academic staff effectiveness, which is in accordance with Krekel et al. (2019) and Edmans (2011, 2012), suggesting a strong positive correlation between employee well-being, productivity, and firm performance. It could be inferred from this that staff well-being brings up more commitment on the part of employees and therefore improves their effectiveness. In conditions where staff welfare is jeopardized, staff ineffectiveness may exist because welfare motivates staff and improves their performances.

#### **Conclusion**

It can be concluded from this study that human resource management has an impact on academic staff effectiveness in universities. The more human resources are properly managed, the more effective academic staff will be. A strong positive relationship exists between human resource management variables such as recruitment, staff well-being, workforce training and development, and academic staff effectiveness among universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. These variables have a great impact on the effectiveness of academic staff in universities and require urgent attention from the human resources units of the universities.

#### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are given on the basis of the findings of this study:

1. The management of universities must adhere to the rules, laws, and regulations of the university system regarding human resource management.
2. Management should emphasize workforce training and development. Moreover, training and development needs should be constantly evaluated by management.

3. There is a need to ensure that recruitment exercise is carried out through due process to employ the best and right personnel.
4. Priority should be given to staff well-being and should not be overlooked

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