

**UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS PERCEPTION ON THE PROBLEMS INHIBITING
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE IN THE UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS
STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study investigated problems inhibiting human resource management in administration of Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. One research question and a corresponding hypothesis guided the study. The population consisted of two universities, eleven principal officers and 201 administrative officers (six principal officers and 145 administrative officers from the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) and five principal officers and 56 administrative officers from Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) totalling 212 participants). A sample of 200 participants (11 principal officers and 189 administrative officers) were selected through stratified random sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire containing nine items validated and with reliability index of 0.85. The data collected from 190 respondents (10 principal officers and 180 administrative officers) were decoded into statistical package for social science (SPSS) version, 2.0. The research question was answered with percentages while the t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed among others that inadequate staff and lack of facilities to work with are the main problems inhibiting management of human resource in the universities in Rivers State. It was concluded that inadequacies in the universities' needs are the commonest problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of Universities in Rivers State. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it was recommended that Government should live up to its expectations in provision of staff and facilities to end the present problems in the management of human resource in the Universities in Rivers State.

Keywords: University Administrators, Problems Inhibiting, Effective Management, Human Resource

Introduction

Effective human resource management is vital for universities, impacting education quality, research and overall performance. Management is the strategic coordination of resources to maximize productivity. It entails collaborating with people to accomplish shared goals and objectives through effective planning, organization and leadership. Thus, in definition this suggests that management is a continuous and dynamic process involving the coordination and utilization of organizational resources (Ofor-Douglas, 2024a).

Management is a process that enables individuals to collectively achieve organizational goals that they would not be able to accomplish alone by efficiently utilizing an organization available resources- both human and material- management facilitates the achievement of predetermined objectives (Argon, 2021). Notably, effective management in educational institutions is measured not only by the manager's performance but also by the outcomes achieved by their team. University effectiveness is evaluated based on factors such as staff availability, utilization, motivation and staff development as well as creating a conducive environment that fosters willing and productive work among students and staff.

Suffice to say here that, a university is a frontier of ware house made up of academicians of great reputes of town and gown who impact and transfer knowledge to students through teaching and learning, research and community services for the nation development (Ofor-Douglas, 2024a). Simultaneously, university education is education received after an individual has passed through the primary and secondary school levels of education. It provides not only the high-level skills necessary for every labour market but also the training essential for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanities, entrepreneurs, scientists, social scientists, and a myriad of other personnel. It is these trained individuals who develop the capacity and analytical skills that derive local economies, support civil society, teach children, lead effective government, and make important decisions which affect entire societies (Ofor-Douglas, 2023b). Nevertheless, university education is education that an individual attains to achieve after completing his/her basic primary and secondary education. It is a higher degree of formal education that offers education in professional courses which an individual would require in his/her goal to contribute to the development of the society (Ofor-Douglas 2024d). It is worth emphasizing that, the essence of quality university education is to improve resourcefulness as well as provide a working and learning for staff and students (Ofor-Douglas, 2022).

The administrators of Nigerian universities must thus adapt to the current trend of innovation in society and the world to be up to date in knowledge and skills to achieve the goals and objectives of university education and sustainable development (Ofor-Douglas,2023a). The success and efficiency of an organization, whether private or public largely depend on the availability, effective utilization and management of its human resource. Achieving organization objectives requires securing the active cooperation and participation of the workforce.

University administrators must address challenges like poor working conditions, staffing issues, funding constraints, recruitment and retention difficulties to optimize staff performance and wellbeing. For the university administrators in Nigerian universities to achieve such laudable goals and objectives, the university administrators need some managerial skills and intellectual capacities to face and resolve challenges within the organization (Ofor-Douglas, 2022a). By implementing strategies like competitive remuneration, development programs, performance evaluation and employee engagement, administrators can create a supportive work environment that benefits staff, students and the institution.

Management must work with employees and must, therefore, develop programmes and policies that will enable it to obtain the best results from the employees. Each employee comes to work as an individual, with personal aspirations, biases and preference. Each has a peculiar need for attention, recognition and understanding. To motivate employees to put in their best efforts to ensure that organizational or institutional goals are met, their personal needs have to be understood and attended to. Going further, effective human resource management practices in the areas of orientation, training, performances appraisal, motivation, delegation of duties are positive areas of improving lecturers job commitment in the school system (Onah, 2022). A well - rounded organization excels when all aspects are effectively managed. Human resource in the university system refers to the principal officers of the university, administrative officers, academic and non-academic staff and students. The success of any educational programme depends, to a considerable extent, on the availability of skilled manpower of all grades and types in the entire school populace. Thus, all the activities of any school system are initiated and determined by the persons who make up the institution. School plants, offices, machines and other material resources are unproductive without the direction of human efforts (Likert, 1967).

Human resource management strives for a balance between efficiency and fairness, focusing on developing a cohesive team that leverages each individual's strengths to drive institutional success, while also providing equitable working conditions that foster job satisfaction. Supporting this statement, it can be said that human resource management has been used to describe the aspect of management that deals with recruitment, employment, training, redeployment, transfer, safety

and departure of employees from an institution. It is that part of management which is concerned with people at work and with their relationships within an institution (OforDouglas, 2008).

Clearly related to these views, Storey (2016) explained that human resource management is a specialized approach to managing employees that targets competitive advantage by strategically developing workers with high commitment and capability through a mix of cultural, structural and personal techniques. Obviously, human resource management is efforts made by the educational sector in the recruitment, training, maintenance of staff (lecturers) for educational goals (Ofor-Douglas, 2021). Concurrently, as explained by Ofor-Douglas (2021), the primary task of human resource management is to ensure that the organization human resource is utilized and managed effectively

Notably, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2004) expressed their opinion that, human resource management is policies, practices and systems that influence employee's behaviour, attitudes and performance. It essentially involves analysing work and designing jobs, attracting potential employees (recruiting), choosing employees (selection), teaching employees how to perform their jobs and preparing them for the future (training and development), evaluating their performance (performance management), rewarding employees (compensation), creating a positive work environment (employee relations) and supporting the organization's strategy (human resource planning and change management).

It is worthy to note that, efficient human resource management ensures that systematic steps are used to recruit, train, develop and commit employees and show them the ladder by which they can attain their desired goals. Training is essential for employees in any organization. With a decline on the training and retraining the employees' level of productivity is very low because the world is a global village and there is a level of technology the staff employees must be acquainted with. In the light of this, employers that are not regularly trained to tend to perform poorly to standards. It is important to invest in staff for productivity to soar high. To avoid poor quality performance and have unsatisfied customers, training and retraining should be done year in year out (Ofor-Douglas, 2021). Furthermore, failure to do this can lead to loss of productivity, lateness, high turnover rate of employees, excessive complaints, an increased accident rate and management problems (Dyer, 1982; Drucker, 1969; Nwachukwu, 1998; Nwafor, 1998, 2012; Peretomode, 2005).

Suleman (2015) emphasized that corruption in conjunction with economic and political mismanagement has led to instability and gross abuse of power, decaying infrastructure, inadequate staffing, poor and failing education standards, the disappearance of grants, trust funds, loans and of entire project without a trace. On this note, Ololube (2016) cited in Ofor-Douglas, (2019) highlighted that grant monies provided by the NUC and NBTE and meant for capital projects are either stolen (wholly or partially) or diverted to other projects. In agreement, Yawe, Ivagher and Ijov (2015) noted that this is why the political interference in higher education institution of learning in Nigeria has degenerated so much that credibility is completely eroded, as principal officers of higher institutions such as Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Provost, Rectors and Registrars among others are appointed on the basis of political affiliations, sectionalism, nepotism, tribalism as well as religious beliefs.

Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria have for years been facing various problems in an attempt to achieve effective administration of educational resources for the realization of the goals of higher education in Nigeria. Hence the need to study the problems of human resource management in Universities cannot be over-emphasized. This is because higher educational institutions produce the necessary and required manpower needed for the advancement and development of the society. Therefore, proper attention has to be given to university education in order to supply the potent raw materials for the actualization of the required manpower. For this to be actualized, the management must ensure adequate provision of human resource, their utilization and management. Human resource plays an indisputable role in maintaining and promoting quality education in the university system. It contributes largely to the tone of the university. The school plant is vital and complementing to human resource in determining the quality of education in every university.

Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria are involved in the management of human resource. In spite of its importance, there are still problems associated with the procedure of recruitment of qualified applicants, the level of utilization of recruited staff and efficient management of human resource in general in the administration of the Universities. Effective human resource management in Nigerian universities is aimed at recruitment, development and retaining of qualified academic and non-academic staff to ensure high quality education, research and institutional development. The human resource management objectives are stated below

- Attraction and retaining of skilled personnel through fair recruitment, motivation and career development
- Enhancement of staff performance via training, appraisal and capacity building
- Promotion of industrial harmony by addressing staff welfare, grievances and fostering
- Good labour relations.
- Supporting institutional goals – aligning HR practices with university mission in
- Teaching, research and community service.

The importance of human resource management is highlighted below:

- **Improved academic standards**

Administrators prioritize academic standards to ensure students receive high quality education, equipping them with necessary knowledge and skills. With this in place the focus will be on academic standards to promote student success, retention and graduation rates. Furthermore, maintaining high academic standards help universities meet accreditation requirements and uphold their reputation. This goes on to foster and encourage a culture of academic rigor, innovation and continuous improvement.

- **Institutional stability**

Stability fosters a predictable environment, allowing administrators to plan and implement human resource strategies effectively. This tends to mitigate risks in a way that potential human resource related risks are anticipated and addressed. In an educational environment that strives on stability, employee morale is boosted, there is job satisfaction and productivity leading to better performance and outcome. In essence, stability enables effective resource allocation, ensuring human resource initiative receive necessary support.

- **Capacity development**

Regular training equips staff with modern skills. Capacity development is vital for university administrators to tackle human resource management challenges. It equips staff with essential skills, knowledge and competencies, improving performance, productivity and efficiency. By investing in staff development administrators can bridge gaps and enhance employee morale, and develop effective HR strategies to align with university goals, foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement and drive institutional success. Capacity development initiatives include training, mentorship, coaching and education opportunities. By prioritizing capacity development, administrators can enhance HR management, drive innovation, and achieve strategic objectives, ultimately leading to institutional access.

- **Accountability and efficiency**

Structured HR systems encourage transparency and productivity. University administrators must prioritize accountability and efficiency in human resource management to drive performance, transparency and compliance. This involves setting clear expectations and monitoring progress, streamlining processes to reduce bureaucracy, fostering a culture of accountability and leveraging data for informed decision making. By doing so, administrators can enhance institutional reputation, boost staff morale and achieve strategic objectives. In the end, accountability and efficiency enable universities to optimize resources, manage risks and achieve their goals.

Empirical Review

Abule and Egop (2025) carried out a study on the relationship between Human Resource Management Practices and Lecturer Job Performance in State Owned Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The objectives were, to investigate the effects of Human Resource Management Practices and Lecturer Job Performance in State Owned Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. A total of three objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses were empirically formulated for the study. The researcher used the descriptive survey design for the study. The population of this study consists of One Thousand nine hundred and thirteen (1913) academic Staff of the State-Owned University in Rivers. The sample size for this study is 330 determined using Taro Yamani formula. Simple random sampling technique was employed for the study. The information for the research work was collected from primary and secondary sources.

The primary source was mainly through questionnaire. The secondary sources involved review of document and literature on Human Resource Management Practices. The validity of the instrument was ascertained through presenting the instrument to the experts who assessed the suitability of the instrument for measuring the variables under study. To determine the reliability of the instrument, the instrument was presented to group of staff in the organizations. Cronbach Alpha was then used to determine the reliability index which gave a value of 0.7. Three Hundred and thirty (330) copies of questionnaires were administered to Academic staff and 316 were retrieved for analysis of the study. Data generated were analysed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spear Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with aid of Statistical Packaging for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings reveal that Human Resource Management Practices have a positive effect on Lecturer Job Performance in State Owned Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, conclusion was made and recommendations made amongst others that Universities should establish a well-structured performance evaluation system that fairly assesses lecturers based on teaching effectiveness, research output, and student engagement. Constructive feedback should be provided to help lecturers improve. Universities should conduct workshops and seminars on research writing, proposal development, data analysis, and publication ethics to enhance the research capacity of academic staff. Meanwhile, Eyina and Orlu (2021) carried out a study on staff performance in Nigerian universities and found out that there has been a great source of concern to the government and stakeholders in education. Despite improved academic and professional qualification of staff and massive government investment in educational sectors, the university education system has failed to produce people who can contribute in solving the problems of the 21st-century society.

It is against this backdrop that this study was undertaken to examine the impact of staff development strategies on employees' job effectiveness in Rivers State universities. The scope of the study covered the two state-owned universities, namely, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, from 2015-2020. The study was guided with four research objectives and four corresponding research questions. The research adopted the Human Capital theory. A descriptive research design was employed for the study. The population of this study consisted of 2700 teaching and non-teaching staff in Rivers State universities. A sample size of 350 was used for the study through the aid of the Taro Yamane formula. Data were obtained through primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources were obtained from journal publications, textbooks and university bulletins, while primary data were obtained from the researchers' observation and study's questionnaire titled 'Staff Development Strategies for Effective Job Performance Questionnaire (SDSEJPQ)'. Data collected from the respondents were analysed using Percentages, Means and Standard Deviations. Some of the findings revealed that staff training on ICT, coaching, in-service training, and staff induction enhanced staff effective in Rivers State universities; there is no substitute for human resource development and training since it enhances job effectiveness and efficiency in the educational system. In fact, it would be unproductive to select the best employees with high qualifications without training them adequately because it will hinder the university from

meeting its educational goals. The study performance recommended, among other things, that the universities leaderships should strengthen staff training on ICT, coaching, in service training, and staff induction by formulating a robust policy to enhance employee development. This will enable the staff to handle challenges and become more competent in solving complicated office tasks that may arise.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study would be:

1. To identify the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State.

Research question

1. What are the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of Universities in Rivers State?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the opinions of Principal Officers and Administrative Officers of the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) and their colleagues at the University of Science and Technology (UST) on the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State.

Methodology

Research design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This is because the study sought for the facts and opinions of the respondents.

Population

The population of this study comprised of two Universities, 11 principal officers and 201 administrative officers with 6 principal officers and 145 administrative officers from the University of Port Harcourt, 5 principal officers and 56 administrative officers from Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt totaling 212 respondents.

Sample and sampling technique

A total of 11 principal officers and 201 administrative officers totaling 212 respondents representing the entire small population were used for the study. Out of the 212 respondents, 6 principal officers and 145 administrative officers were from Uniport while 5 principal officers and 56 administrative officers were from RSUST respectively.

The researchers adopted stratified random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

A structured 9-items modified 4-point Likert rating scale was used for data collection: (Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point) respectively.

Validity

The instrument was subjective to face and content validation by three experts, two from the University of Port Harcourt and one from Rivers State University of Science and Technology respectively.

Reliability

The instrument was administered to ten (10) administrative officers who were not

part of the study. Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument, reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained.

Administration of instrument

The researcher with the help of two trained research assistants administered the 212 copies of questionnaire to the respondents and retrieved 190 copies at agreed dates and time within an interval of two weeks (10 copies from the principal officers and 180 copies from the administrative officers) respectively.

Method of data analysis

The research question was answered using descriptive statistics of frequencies and percentages. Any item in which the respondents have a percentage score of 50 and above is regarded as agreed, while items with percentage scores less than 50 are regarded as disagreed. The only null hypothesis stated for the study was tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results below.

Results of the research question and test of hypothesis are presented in Tables

Research question

What are the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of Universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Percentages of Respondents on the Problems Inhibiting Effective Management of Human Resource in the Administration of Universities in Rivers State.

8/No		SA (4)	%	A (3)	%	D (2)	%	SD (1)	%	Total	%
1.	Inadequate staffing	60	35.90	116	55.13	10	6.41	4	2.56	190	100
2.	Low skills amongst staff	44	25.64	108	50.00	22	14.10	16	10.26	190	100
3.	Lack of facilities to work with	64	38.46	104	47.44	16	10.26	6	3.85	190	100
4.	Supervision	34	19.23	82	33.34	50	3.85	24	15.38	190	100
5.	Poor human relations	40	23.08	90	38.46	34	15.38	26	16.67	190	100
6.	Power interference	55	25.64	65	29.48	44	16.67	26	16.67	190	100
7.	Politics with the institution.	57	28.21	82	38.46	28	15.38	24	15.38	190	100
8.	Low participation in decision making	26	16.67	78	35.90	56	19.23	30	19.23	190	100
9.	Lack of research grants	56	28.21	82	38.46	24	17.95	28	17.95	190	100
Combined response		436	26.78	807	40.74	284	16.61	184	15.87	1710	100
Percentage (%)		67.52				32.48				100	

Note:

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

SOURCE: Field Survey, August, 2008

In table 1, "Strongly Agree" (SA) and "Agree" (A) were combined to be "Agree", "Disagree" (D) and "Strongly Disagree" (SD) were combined to be "Disagree". From the investigations on the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State, 67.52% of the administrators agreed with all the situations as the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State.

Also, the questionnaire items (1-9) that were individually considered supported the respondents' level of agreement. Inadequate staff has 91.03%, low skills among staff, 75.64%; Lack of facilities to work with, 85.90%; supervision, 52.57%; poor human relations, 61.54%; power interference, 55.12%; politics with the institution, 66.67%; low participation in decision making, 52.57% and lack of research grants, 66.67%, had percentages above 50% indicating agreement. **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of Administrative Officers of University of Port Harcourt and Rivers State University of Science and

Technology, Port Harcourt on problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in Administration of Universities in Rivers State.

Table 1: T-test Analysis of the Difference between the opinions of Principal officers of university of Port Harcourt and university of science and technology on the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State.

S/No.	Respondents	N	\bar{x}	SD	T-cal	T-crit	Level of sig	Decision
1.	Principal Officers	5	26.20	7.40	0.81	2.31	0.05	Accept H_{04}
2.	Principal Officers	5	24.60	8.29				

Note: $DF = 8$ $\alpha = 0.05$

LEGEND: $\frac{N}{x}$ = Number of Respondents

\bar{x} = Mean

SD = Standard Deviation

T-cal = Calculated r-value

T-crit = Critical r-value

Table 1 was also based on the analysis of data collected from 5 Principal officers of UNIPORT and 5 Principal officers of UST as shown using t-test analysis. At 2 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance, 't' - calculated value is 0.81 while 't'-critical is 2.31. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the opinions of Principal Officers of University of Port Harcourt and University of Science and Technology on the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State is accepted since the calculated 't'-value of 0.81 is less than critical 't'-value of 2.31. This infers also that there is no significant difference between the opinions of Principal Officers of University of Port Harcourt and the University of Science and Technology on the problems inhibiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State.

Discussion of Finding

The results of this finding revealed that principal and administrative officers are facing a lot of problems inhibiting effective management of Human resource in administration of Universities in Rivers State. The problems include: inadequate staffing, low skills amongst staff, lack of facilitate to work with, supervision, poor human relations, politics with the institution, little or no participation in decision making and lack of research grants. This perhaps is as a result of the fact that the management of universities do not have a human resource department which is supposed to shoulder responsibility on the problems. These findings supported George and Thomas (2003) who concluded that the human resource in education is of mixed grid (students and workers) whose management seems to be difficult because of the nature of membership. In addition, Ornathis and Jackson (1979) stressed that the human resource of the University system have been grossly faulty as almost all the administrators are still contending with large numbers of staff and students. Okorie (2007) and Uche (2010) agreed that the commonest problem of human resource management is lack of strategies for human

resource management planning, moral and ethical problems as well as the problem of funding.

In Table 1, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that there is no significant difference between the opinions of mean score of principal officers of University of Port Harcourt and University of Science and Technology on the problems inhabiting effective management of human resource in the administration of universities in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the commonest problem of university administrators in the management of human resource is that universities in Rivers State are facing inadequacies in almost all their needs.

Recommendation

The following recommendation was made based on the findings and conclusion of the study:

1. Efforts should be made by the university authorities to solve the identified problems in the management of human resource in the universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

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