

APPLICATION OF MANPOWER PLANNING APPROACH ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES OBJECTIVES IN NORTHWEST ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The research entitled Application of Manpower planning Approach on Implementation of Federal Universities Objectives in Northwest Zone Nigeria. The study raised two (2) objectives, which are, to Assess the application of manpower planning approach on equipping students with the in-depth knowledge and technology needed by the global economy in Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria; Assess the application of manpower planning approach on the actualization of students' critical thinking skills in Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria; Research questions and hypotheses were set according to the stated objectives. A descriptive survey research design was adopted to collect data from the respondents. The population of the study comprised all the eight thousand (8000) teaching staff and academic planning officers of eight (8) Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria. Three hundred and seventy 370 respondents were randomly selected. The instrument used for the collection of data was questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts. The data were analyzed and interpreted through the use of independent t-test. The findings of the study revealed that; the students of federal universities North-West Zone, Nigeria often lack the specific technological competencies and knowledge required by global economy. This was supported by the P-value 0.025 which is less than 0.05; the students are not adequately encouraged to practice the knowledge of critical thinking skills in Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria. This was supported by the P-value 0.729 which is greater than 0.05; It was therefore recommended that, the students of federal universities, North-west zone Nigeria should be encouraged to acquire specific technological competencies and knowledge through practical industry-based training. The students of federal universities, North-west zone Nigeria should be encouraged to practice the knowledge of critical thinking skills through integrating the problem-solving and analytical skills in to coursework.

Key Words: Manpower Planning Approach, University Objectives

Introduction

Universities are instrumental in driving economic development, social progress, and innovation in any region and their ability to achieve their objectives heavily relies on the quality, quantity, and deployment of their workforce. In Nigeria, the Northwest Zone, comprising states such as Kano, Jigawa, Katsina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Kebbi and Sokoto, has seen significant growth in the number of universities in recent years. The alignment of these universities' programmes with their strategic objectives of producing well trained human resources is a critical concern. Approaches to educational planning involve developing policies and strategies to ensure the effective delivery of education to meet the societal, economic, and cultural needs.

Concept of Manpower Planning Approach

This approach to educational planning is based on the manpower need of a country, it involves planning education to produce all sort of manpower that are required to man different sectors

of the economy, as such the planning is basically concerned with the types quality of manpower required by the economic sectors. Salihu (2019) states in this relation that manpower planning approach entails integrating educational planning with the overall economic plan, basically, education and economy have two directional relationships in the sense that the two are in need of each other. In this regard, it is observed that the important role that education can play in economic growth has continued over time with the quest for technological and scientific development, but the type of training to be imparted must be those required by the economy.

Concept of Educational Planning

Educational planning because of the vital position it occupies in the management and administration of the venture has been given a great number of interpretations by many scholars and writers to the extent that one can hardly arrive at a single universally accepted definition of educational planning. This notwithstanding, the following will serve as examples of effort made by educational management scholars to define the concept of educational planning.

Okah (2011) views educational planning as a process of analyzing the educational needs of the society to be able to make economically viable allocation of the available scarce resources for the education of their children. In another perspective, Agi (2009) admitted that educational planning is a process of preparing a set of decisions about the educational enterprise in such a way that the goals and purposes of education will be sufficiently realized in future with the available resources. Educational planning therefore is a process of making adequate preparation for the utilization of the available educational resources to achieve educational goals.

Concept of Manpower/Human Resource Planning

Human resource planning basically involves the identification of the organizations' future manpower needs; the various manpower resources within the organization which are expected to meet the demand, ascertain the nature of the relationships between manpower supply and demand and designing ways by which surplus personnel, are reduced to attract the much-needed personnel, bearing in mind, the general labour market. Whenever a boss needed more hands and made arrangements for them to be taken on, or a superintendent recognized the need for an addition crew or shift to start the next week, crude labour force planning was taking place (Ejiogu 2012).

Concept of University Education

The word "University" is; derived from Latin word, meaning "Community of Lecturers and Scholars". It was originally used to describe "Association of Students" and "lecturers with collective legal rights usually guaranteed by charters issued by princes, prelates or the towns in which they were located". A solid education system is one of the pillars of a successful society. Any society that seeks to thrive must first, invest in its human capital, as it is the individual that makes up the society and the primary aim of education is to improve the individual. It is for this reason that many economic and social analysts have picked our education as the force that drives civilization and national development. A study of every society that has thrived, from the Greek's to the Roman's will prove this assertion correct. The university system is the idea of academic freedom, defined as the freedom of lecturers and students to express their ideas in school without religious, political or institutional restrictions. It is the freedom of the faculty to research and lecture according to their interests and freedom granted to academic institutions to determine their professional standards (Nisula & Olander, 2023).

Role of University Education in Sustaining the Economic Development in Nigeria

The University education is a veritable tool for the realization of national development in Nigeria; universities play a dominant role in development of cultural heritage of citizens and promotion of basic research and innovation as well as the transition of knowledge, skills and training of the human minds. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) categorically stated that the goals of University Education are to: Intensify and diversify its programmes for development of high and manpower in the development of within the context of the needs of the nation.

Universities in Nigeria also have critical role to play in implementing and driving sustainable development initiatives through their institutional objectives, policies and practices (Blessinger, 2018). This implies equipping students with the requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to create a sustainable future. As a knowledge producer, the core mission of universities and higher education in general cuts across all learning domains since it is through good quality education that people are equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to tackle sustainable future (Akari, 2019; UNESCO, 2017).

Objectives of the Study

This research was set to:

1. Assess the application of manpower planning approach on equipping students with the in-depth knowledge and technology needed by the global economy in Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria
2. Assess the application of manpower planning approach on the actualization of students' critical thinking skills in Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the opinions of teaching staff and academic planning officers on the application of manpower planning approach for equipping students with the in-depth knowledge and technology needed by the global economy in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the application of manpower planning approach on the actualization of students' critical thinking skills in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprised all the eight thousand (8,000) staff of all the eight (8) conventional universities in the North-western Zone of Nigeria, which made up of seven thousand eight hundred and twenty seven (7,827) Teaching staff, and one hundred and seventy three academic planning officers (173) of the eight (8) Federal Universities in the Zone respectively. The sample size for the study was three hundred and seventy (370), which comprised three hundred and sixty two teaching staff (362) and eight academic planning officers. Self-developed questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection which was designed by the researcher based on the issues raised in the objectives, the instrument was validated by three research experts, and the pilot testing was conducted in Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State; which is one of the Federal Universities in North West Zone Nigeria. The reliability index of 0.798 was obtained, indicating that the research instrument is highly reliable.

Furthermore, descriptive statistics, frequency and simple percentage was used for analysis of demographic data of the respondents, while weighted mean of 3.0 was used for analysis of responses of the respondents to the research questions. Furthermore, independent t-test statistical tool was used at 0.05 level of significant for testing the research hypotheses.

Results

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the application of manpower planning approach for equipping students with the in-depth knowledge and technology needed by the global economy in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria

Table 1: Summary of t-test on the Opinions of Respondents on the Application of Manpower planning Approach for Equipping Students with the In- depth Knowledge and Technology Needed by the Global Economy in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Df	P
Teaching staff	362	26.92	4.618			
				3.614	368	0.025
Academic planning officers	8	30.63	2.615			

Table 1 shows t-cal value (3.614) at the degree of freedom (368) and at 0.05 level of significance. The observed level of significance P-value (0.025) is less than 0.05 implying that there is a significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the application of manpower planning approach for equipping students with the in-depth knowledge and technology needed by the global economy in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the application of manpower planning approach on the actualization of students' critical thinking skills in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Table 1: Summary of t-test on the Opinions of Respondents on the Application of Manpower planning Approach on the Actualization of Students' Critical Thinking Skills in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	P
Teaching staff	362	25.69	5.479			
				368	0.715	0.729
Academic planning officers	8	25.00	7.329			

Table 14 shows t-cal value (0.715) at the degree of freedom 368 and at 0.05 level of significant. The observed level of significance P-value (0.729) is greater than 0.05. This means that there is no significant difference in the opinion of teaching staff and academic planning officers on the application of manpower planning approach on the actualization of students' critical thinking skills in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. There for, the null hypothesis is retained.

Summary of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that;

1. The students of federal universities North-West Zone, Nigeria often lack the specific technological competencies and knowledge required by global economy. This was supported by the P-value 0.025 which is less than 0.05
2. The students are not adequately encouraged to practice the knowledge of critical thinking skills in Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria. This was supported by the P-value 0.729 which is greater than 0.05

Discussions of the Findings

This study was able to establish that; teaching staff and academic planning officers opined that the students are not adequately equipped with the knowledge and technology required by the global economy in federal universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria. This was support by the aggregate mean of 2.87 on table 5.

It was revealed that students are not effectively tailored to meet specific knowledge requirements. Similarly, the students are not sufficiently trained to tackle complex problems effectively. In additionally, both of the respondents accepted that students cannot demonstrate creativity in their field of studies. However, the study was also revealed the students' deficiency in technical expertise in different areas of learning. The hypothesis relating to this was rejected with the P-value (0.025) implying that there is a significant difference in the opinions of respondents on the application of manpower planning approach for equipping students with the in-depth knowledge and technology needed by the global economy in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria.

This study was able to establish that; the teaching staff and academic planning officers opined that the Federal Universities of North-Western Zone of Nigeria universities are not always encouraging critical thinking skills among students. It was revealed that students are often cannot analyze facts and make logical conclusion. Similarly, the training of students to make concrete interpretation of facts and make generalization is not effective. In addition, the findings indicate that there is inconsistency in producing graduates who can tactically detect real global economic challenges and make sound judgment. Moreover, it was evident that there

is a challenge in training graduates to acquire the spirit of curiosity at different levels of study. Furthermore, the study indicated a gap in training graduates who can make a divergent thinking in solving real life problems. In the same vein, the universities face a lot of challenges in equipping students with the skills to assess the credibility, validity, and relevance of information. This was supported by the aggregate mean of 2.53. The hypothesis relating to this was retained with P-value 0.729, meaning that there is no significant difference in the opinion of teaching staff and academic planning officers on the application of manpower planning approach on the actualization of students' critical thinking skills in Federal Universities in North-West Zone, Nigeria.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that:

There is a significant gap in students' preparedness in federal universities in Nigeria's North-West zone for the demands of the global economy. The study also reveals students' deficiencies in knowledge acquisition, and critical thinking skills in Federal University North-west zone Nigeria

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. The students of federal universities, North-west zone Nigeria should be encouraged to acquire specific technological competencies and knowledge through practical industry-based training
2. The students of federal universities, North-west zone Nigeria should be encouraged to practice the knowledge of critical thinking skills through integrating the problem-solving and analytical skills in to coursework.

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