

The Impact of Manpower Planning and Development on Distance Learning Education in Nigeria (A study of National Universities Commission)

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Abstract: *This study investigate the impact of manpower planning and development on distance learning education in Nigeria with focus on National Universities Commission. Descriptive survey research method was deployed for the purpose of this study. 150 respondents participated in this study. However, only 100 questionnaires were returned and found to be useful for analysis. The instrument for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire titled “Distance Education for Manpower Planning and Development Questionnaire Scale” (DEMPDQS). A 5-point Likert Scale was developed and validated to collect information from the respondents. The data collected was analyzed with basic descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. Mean rating statistic technique was used for the analysis of the research questions. The core findings from the results obtained showed that there is a significant relationship between distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria. That Distance learning education will address the manpower need of the country as mandated in National Universities Commission policy and that Quality of distance learning education will help to minimize human resource wastage in Nigeria. This study recommended that regulatory agencies involve in higher education administration in Nigeria should endeavour to design curriculum that match the skill of graduants of distance learning education with manpower demand of Nigeria industries.*

Keywords: Distance education, Distance Learning Education, Manpower Planning, Manpower Development, National Universities Commission.

1. INTRODUCTION

Distance education according to Unachukwu (2009) is an organized course of study in which the teachers are not physically present, but teach the learners through correspondence, radio, television, computer or combination of two or more of the processes. FRN (2004) defined distance education as a mode of teaching in which students are taught using different means such as radio, television, and video tapes. Uche in Gbosi (2003) viewed distance education as a re-education provided by an educational organization at any level to cater for the learner and teachers who are physically separated, though often complemented by face-to-face teaching or tutorials. From the foregoing definitions, distance education is the process whereby learners of all categories irrespective of gender, location and status and age are made to have access to education through variety of means such as radio, television, video tapes or the combination of all. It is also a process where learners are not in face-to-face contacts with the teacher, but meet on appointed time to exchange views and their

academic problems solved. Distance education is improving human access to learning across the globe through diverse channels of advance technology. Access to increase learning is improving quality and standard of life in human society.

Manpower, also known as human resources, can be defined as the bulk of labour available for any particular kind of work. In more specific terms “it is the bulk of human beings with the relevant skills, energies, talents, knowledge and attitudes that can be committed towards the production of goods and services” (Gbosi, 2003: 3). In most developing countries, human resource development is tied to education because it is seen as the path leading to development and developed country status. The ultimate aim is to achieve economic advancement through the provision of relevant education and hence the production of the right combination of people. People is considered the greatest asset of Nations development and critical to advance technology

development in a country. Every society is faced with a peculiar problem and people are the instrument that would be used to address the problem. The ability of people to solve society problems is tied to investment on education particularly distance education. Majority of Nigeria public service workers ability to gain access to university education were achieved through distance learning education.

Manpower planning and development denotes a process of education and training through which human resources available in a country are enabled to acquire relevant skills for optimal performance and subsequent improved productivity. As a process, such recurrent form of education and training could be at the instance of governments, employers of labour or associations or still, at the discretion of individual workers who perceive the need for further training in order to remain relevant on the job. The role of distance education in planning and developing the nation manpower resources needs cannot be underestimated. In Nigeria, an individual, at any stage of life after basic education, can choose between continuing full time studies, combining work with study, or embarking on full time employment without excluding the prospects of resuming studies later on (FRN, 2004). As such, tertiary institutions are encouraged to run various kinds of part-time programmes. The National Policy on Education also encourages private participation in the provision of formal and non-formal education. All of these efforts are directed at providing adequate and relevant human resources to facilitate the economic advancement of Nigeria.

National socio-economic development is largely dependent upon a country's ability to effectively develop and utilize its human resources. Such development is better realized through implementation of plans, policies and programmes that are informed by relevant, reliable, timely and organized information on major aspects of the labour market. An organized labour market information system would enable a realistic appraisal of key aspects of the country's labour market at any point in time and also inform monitoring and evaluation through keeping close tabs on the relevant economic performance indices. Follow up this way would help

to bridge the gap between quality of education and manpower of the country. Distance learning education is considered a pivotal of manpower planning and development in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper is aimed at investigating distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria with focus on National Universities Commission. Manpower planning and development as a function of management is highly indispensable in the achievement of organizational objectives. There is need to plan for the various resources such as human, material and time, etc, in order to achieve stated objectives. It should be noted that it is the function of the personnel to combine the various resources in an appropriate manner in order to actualize the objectives of the organization. More importantly, the work environment is hugely dependent on human factor. Human input is a prerequisite for proper operation and services. For instance, the office computers, plants, automated equipment, office gadgetries, electronic machines, and every other relevant facility found in a modern firm are unproductive except if human effort and direction is carefully applied.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The human resource (manpower) is considered the most critical aspect of educational survival when adequate supply of materials and financial resources that will bring about the desired productivity is available in the institution. The importance of manpower planning and development in an organization cannot be over emphasized. In spite of its apparent merit, there are still many employers particularly in the education industry who do not commit sufficient funds to the development of their employees. They consider staff development as a waste of meagre resources because of the high cost involved. However, educational institutions plan meticulously for their investment in physical and capital resources and these plans are reviewed with utmost attention while the institution pay less attention to human capital investment in which the capital and equipment provided will be in vain if there is no human resource to manage them. There is speculation that educational institutions do not consider the necessity for a well-defined and sustained training and development for staff in order to upgrade their performance. Majority of Nigeria

work force is composed of employee without university education. Distance learning education affords working class students to engage in university education and training. There is mismatch of education requirement and labour market requirement need for graduate employees to occupy certain job position in Nigeria. This lack of studies to advise the Nigerian University System on the graduate needs of the labour market has frequently led to a mismatch between competencies demanded by industry and those acquired by the products of the universities. This is also responsible in part for high unemployment and underemployment among graduates despite ironic shortages in some of the science and technology disciplines. Nigeria education systems has fail to address skills demands of the workplace and thereby shortchange their clientele who invest time and other resources in skills that do not offer them optimal advantage on the labour market. Industry has therefore often had to engage in costly extended training of fresh graduate employees to bring them up to speed with the skill levels required for effective performance. This situation creates inefficiencies in industry and adversely affects global competitiveness. It also necessitates utilization of expatriate labour and thereby promotes capital flight. There is virtually little research work on the impact of manpower planning and development on distance learning education in Nigeria. Therefore, this study is set out to carry a research on the relationship between distance learning, manpower planning and development in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the relationship between distance learning education, manpower planning and development in Nigeria with focus on National Universities Commission. Other objectives are as follows;

- Discover whether there is a significant relationship between distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria.
- Determine whether distance learning education is addressing the manpower need of the country as mandated in National Universities Commission policy.

- Assess whether there is a significant relationship between distance learning education quality and human resources wastage in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research question were sought so as to provide solutions to the problems of the study.

1. Is there a significant relationship between distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria?
2. Will distance learning education address the manpower need of the country as mandated in National Universities Commission policy?
3. Will quality of distance learning education minimize human resource wastage in Nigeria?

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study examined distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria with National Universities Commission as a case study. The study was conducted in National Universities Commission head office in Abuja.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE WORK

Manpower Planning

Adeoye (2002) opined that MP is the supply and demand of human resources in accordance to the manpower requirements within the organisation with the aim of developing a well tailored manpower development programmes to enhance the satisfaction of the employees. Since this is the first stage in planning for MD in any organisation, therefore, MP is not only a question of what sort of people should be recruited today, but also what needs to be done to fit the existing employees into the future situation so as to avoid having a surplus of some skills and a shortage of others as well as reducing the intent of turnover.

Manpower Development

Manpower Development could also be tagged as training and development of employees which is the acquisition of new skills, and knowledge to bring about proficiency and the potency of such an

employee of an establishment (Okotoni & Erero, 2005). Rao & Narayana (1987) was of the view that Manpower Development is an attempt to bring a change in an individual's attitude and behavior by improving their knowledge, skills and job performance so as to achieve a better fit with the system as well as accomplishing the goals of the organization and that of the individual. They contended that manpower is just an aspect of organizational development which is broader. Training and development is a mode of tilting or a process of altering employees' behavior and attitudes in a way that increases the probability of goal attainment. There are various types of training programmes; some last only a few hours, others last for months. Some are fairly superficial; others are extensive in coverage (Hodgelts & Luthans, 2009).

Distance Learning Education and Manpower Planning and Development in Nigeria

Olumukoro (2005) stressed that for Nigeria to catch up technologically with the advanced countries that enjoy buoyant economy, she must have workers that are well trained and well motivated to work towards her developmental goal. Workers education, according to Igbo (2008) covers the aspect of distance education that is the fastest growing part of the Nigeria education system. It provides education that helps workers to maintain their employment status and tackle the challenges of stunning advancement in all disciplines as well as provides up-to-date information in one's special field. Igbo (2008) highlighted the methods of workers' education as consulting services, questions and answers, campus visits with demonstrations, field trips, conferences, seminars, workshops and symposiums all of which aim at up-dating or topping up the knowledge, skills, expertise and work ethics of a country's labour force. Distance learning education is a non contact programme which supports the idea that time and space should not be a constraint to learning. It is basically the type of education without restrictions where the facilitator is often not physically present with the learners, which makes the learning dependent on other types of communication between the learner and the teacher, other than the regular face-to-face experienced in the regular and children type of education. In fact, this type of learning has

enabled individuals who for reasons of social, economic, academic or other hindrances could not utilize the earlier educational opportunities available to them as youngsters, but now have another chance to amend their situations by studying for and obtaining the desired degrees and qualifications mainly on part-time basis.

Distance learning education programme contributes to development of knowledge/skills of Nigerian workers. In modern Nigeria, continuing education which distance education is part of covers remedial education and training provided by universities to various grades of workers, school dropouts and those who missed earlier opportunities to attend formal education system for their elementary education or qualification. Through the various state and federal universities in the country, high quality manpower resources have been developed and continue to be developed through research and training programmes. For example, the University Of Ibadan Department Of Distance Education runs Certificate, Diploma and Degree programmes up to Ph.D. This programme prepares graduates already with NCE for Bachelor's degree (B.Ed) in Education, thereby developing high quality manpower for the teaching profession. Other Universities established in different parts of Nigeria such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Zaria, Ile-Ife, Benin, Calabar, etc. have equally contributed greatly to the development of high quality manpower through their various extension programmes, all offering part-time degree courses in education and other professional courses in Accounting, Business Administration, Banking, Finance and so on. Specifically, the Distance Learning Institute (DLI) of the University of Lagos and the Centre for Distance Learning and Continuing Education (CDLCE) of the University of Abuja provide opportunities for those who, though they already have the regular university education, may be interested in acquiring new knowledge and some specialized skills in other areas outside their initial areas of specialization.

Another illuminating example is the Correspondence Teaching In-Service Programme of Ahmadu Bello University which runs three basic programmes namely: Adult Education, Field Extension Services and Distance Teaching, all of which aim at higher education and training of manpower in the

corresponding fields of study. Furthermore, occasional seminars and workshops are organized by various institutions for workers in both private and public sectors to enable them keep abreast of developments in their various fields.

Basically, manpower planning and development involves applying the planning process to human resources in the organization. The need to invest massively in manpower planning and development in recent time cannot be over emphasized if the achievement of organizational objectives is to be realized. No wonder, Armstrong (2010) argues that the role of human resource planning and development in the achievement of organizational objectives is an art and science in its own right. According to Ake (2001), the development of indigenous manpower to serve as the propelling force for national growth and development is no doubt a key to Nigeria's socio-economic and political development. This is quite indispensable considering the argument of the concept of transfer of technology as a propelling force for the development of the developing countries of which Nigeria is one (Ake 2001). However, it is important to state that the lack of adequate emphasis on manpower planning and development as a tool for development in Nigeria on the part of government as well as the organized private sector could not be far-fetched from the lack of understanding of both the concept and methods for manpower planning and development in a postcolonial Nigerian State in which the process of manpower planning and development for national growth was distorted by colonialism with its attendant negative orientation that was injected into political leadership (Ekpo 2009). Thus, manpower planning and development became an elitist design that was geared to favour capitalist mode of production in which labour was relegated to the background among the factors of production (Omodia, 2009).

Bearing in mind that organization is not the building or equipment, it is the personnel that make up the organization, therefore, there is need to plan for, and develop the right quality and quantity of personnel that will take an organization to its peak. In essence, there is need to plan for and develop effective and efficient personnel that will handle both operating and managerial functions to achieve the objectives of

the organization effectively and economically. Yet, for any organization to achieve a reasonable degree of success, it must not be plagued with excess or inadequate manpower. Here lies the importance of manpower planning. Excess or stock-pile employees can pose a serious problem for organizations. For instance, it can become a serious drain on profit.

In addition, manpower planning and development involves capacity building as well as harnessing a nation's or state's human capital which constitutes a sine-qua-non for national development. The umbilical relationship between manpower planning and development is clear. The former forecast demand for, and analyzes the supply of the right skills, professions, qualities, quantities and effectiveness while the later draws on these projections in estimating training and development needs of manpower for approved programmes. One major point that comes out forcefully from this nexus is that, it is through manpower planning that personnel management functions are actualized. For example, training and development programmes cannot be positively and successfully undertaken if the manpower forecasts are faulty or deficient. Yet, the interface between manpower planning and development can manifest in political stability in the country or state. Arguably, a country that fails to adequately develop and harness her manpower would be doing so at the expense of her socioeconomic and political stability. It is along this line of thought that Omodia (2004) stressed the dysfunctional use of the nation's human resource among the youths in propelling political instability. The birth and implementation of distance learning education in Nigerian Universities by the Federal Government was designed to address manpower planning and development needs of the country. The Federal Government admission policy on education allow favourable admission conditions to candidates from ministries, department and agencies of federal government of Nigeria. This policy itself was formulated to help plan and develop the human resources need of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey as the design. The population of the study consists of 150 staff of National Universities Commission. Stratified simple

random sampling technique was used to select staff for participation. The basis of stratification is based on those who have acquired university education through any mode of distance education programme. The instrument for data collection is a researcher self-structured questionnaire tagged “Distance Education for Manpower Planning and Development Questionnaire Scale” (DEMPDQS). The instrument is made up of two parts. Part A and B. Part “A” of the instrument contains the biodata of the respondents while part “B” contains 15 items in respect to the three research questions. Three experts, two from Educational Administration and Management and one from Test and Measurement all from Federal University of Ekiti (FUOYE) were used to determine the face validity of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using the test re-test method. The instrument was administered on 100 Junior Staff and 50 Senior Staff of the Commission. The same instrument was administered on the same respondents after two weeks interval. Thereafter, the two tests were correlated using Cormbach Alpha internal consistency co-efficient and it yielded 0.85 co-efficient, indicating high reliability. The reliability co-efficient was higher than Ogbazi and Okpala’s

(1994) criterion of 0.60 acceptable for good instruments.

The instrument was a 4-point rating scale questionnaire with option of Very High Extent (VHE) High Extent (HE), Less Extent (LE) and Very Less Extent (VLE) weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. It was administered to the respondents with the help of three trained research assistants due to vastness of the area of the study. 150 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, but only 100 copies were returned and used for the study. Data Collected from the 100 respondents were analysed using mean (x) and standard deviations to answer the three research questions. Any mean score from 2.5 and above was adjudged very high extent and high extent while any mean from 2.4 and below was adjudged to be to a less extent and very less extent.

4. RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

This section outlines the analysis of data collected from the respondents through questionnaires. The information or data gathered from the respondents were used to calculate descriptive statistics of the data as frequency count and percentages. While the hypotheses formulated to guide the study were tested using mean rating statistical method.

Research Question 1: Is there a significant relationship between distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria?

Table 4.1: Mean Rating

of Distance Learning Education and Manpower Planning & Development in Nigeria

Variables	Mean	S.D	Decision
Distance Learning Education	3.28	0.73	VHE
Manpower Planning & Development	4.01	0.02	VHE
Total Grand Mean	3.645		

Table 4.1 revealed that the mean ratings in all the items of the two variables are above the midpoint of 2.50 based on the decision rule. The result of the grand mean 3.645 shows that there is a significant relationship between distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria.

Findings above is strongly supported by Chukwuma (2001) assertion that findings Human resource development according to Chukwuma (2001) is the efficient allocation of resources for augmenting the productive capabilities of the individual through education and training.

Research Question 2

Will distance learning education address the manpower need of the country as mandated in National Universities Commission policy?

Table 4.2: Mean Rating of Distance Learning Education and Manpower Need of the Country

Variables	Mean	S.D	Decision
Distance Learning Education	3.77	0.76	VHE
Manpower Need of the Country	3.88	0.94	VHE
Total Grand Mean	3.825		

Table 4.2 revealed that the mean ratings in all the items of the two variables are above the midpoint of 2.50 based on the decision rule. The result of the grand mean 3.825 shows that Distance learning education will address the manpower need of the country as mandated in National Universities

Research question 3

Will quality of distance learning education minimize human resource wastage in Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Mean Rating of Distance Learning Education Quality and Human Resources Wastage

Variables	Mean	S.D	Decision
Distance Learning Education Quality	3.36	0.91	VHE
Human Resources wastage	3.71	0.82	VHE
Total Grand Mean	3.535		

Table 4.3 revealed that the mean ratings in all the items of the two variables are above the midpoint of 2.50 based on the decision rule. The result of the grand mean 3.535 shows that the Quality of distance learning education will help to minimize human resource wastage in Nigeria. Findings above is strongly supported by Onah (2003) assertion that

Commission policy. Findings above is strongly supported by Olaniyan & Ojo (2008) enumeration that one of the core objectives of Manpower Development is with the view to address the manpower need of Nigeria.

manpower development is connected with the selection and release of staff for manpower development programmes. The process of selecting trainees is affected by non merit criteria such as political / ethnic balancing and the geographical spread of training opportunities that may result to human resources waste in Nigeria. Thus, some

officers selected may not cope with the demands of the administrative training course programmes.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the relationship between distance learning education, manpower planning and development in Nigeria with focus on National Universities Commission. The findings result revealed that there is a significant relationship between distance learning education and manpower planning and development in Nigeria. It was found that Distance learning education will address the manpower need of the country as mandated in National Universities Commission policy. These results were further validated by most of the respondent who indicate that the Quality of distance learning education will help to minimize human resource wastage in Nigeria.

Based on the discovering observe from this study, we recommend as follows;

1. Effective Administration of Distance Learning Education in Nigeria Universities and Polytechnics. There should be proper monitoring of all the internal elements that influence academic standards at the institutions of higher learning that run distance learning education programme

2. The Regulatory Agencies (NUC and NBTE) should bridge the gap between the manpower demand of industries and Distance Learning Education Graduants by designing curriculum that match the skill of graduants of distance learning education with manpower demand of Nigeria industries.

3. **Adequate Public Financing;** Tertiary institutions that run distance learning education programme should be adequately funded by Nigeria Government.

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