

Strategic Human Resource Practices for Sustainable Goal Achievement in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria

Amoramo, John Davis

Department of Educational Management
University of Calabar, Calabar- Nigeria

Ekpe, Osim James

Department of Management Sciences
Cross River University of Technology,
Calabar-Nigeria

Abstract

The study aimed at determining the impact of strategic human resource practices on sustainable educational goal achievement in Colleges of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. Three research questions were posed to guide the study. The study adopted survey research design. The population of this study was all academic staff of Colleges of Education in Cross River State with a population of 570. Stratified and simple random techniques were adopted to select the sample. A sample of 389 respondents were generously derived using Taro Yamane (1967) sample determination technique. An organized questionnaire titled: Strategic Human Resource Practices and Sustainable Educational Goal Achievement Questionnaire (SHRPSEGAQ) was used to elicit views from respondents. The instrument was made up of 19 items designed on a 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument by yielding coefficients that ranged from .88 to .94 for the sub-scales. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions. Results of the study revealed that sustainable goals of Collages of Education according to the National Policy on Education are not achieved in Cross River State, general strategic human resource practices do not exist in Collages of Education in Cross River State and strategic human resource practices do not impact on achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Strategic human resource practices should be strictly followed in order to enhance institutional efficiency in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Keywords: *Colleges of Education, Strategic Human Resource Practices, Sustainable Goal Achievement*

Introduction

College of Education is one of the instruments for improving the social life of a nation. The worth of national development rest basically on the character of human being. The fundamental goal of education, especially college of education, is the improvement of this character: to develop and advance knowledge, and to provide and train capable, responsible, enlightened individuals and qualified specialists and professionals, without whom no country can advance socially, culturally, economically, or politically (Teir & Zhang, 2016). Achieving better educational goals require successful, effective and efficient exploit of human resources and competencies in order to create and sustain competitive

position locally and globally. Collaborating, World Bank as cited in Mutahi and Busienei (2015) stated that Colleges of Education are labour intensive establishments, hence, their service delivery hinges on strategic human resource practices.

Armstrong (2009) defined strategic human resource practice as a coherent approach to the management of an educational most valued assets such as, the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives. Collaborating, Wright and Boswell (2002) viewed strategic human resource practices as a set of organizational activities that aims at managing a pool of human capital and ensuring that this capital is employed towards the achievement of organizational objectives.

Hossein-Khan (2018) stressed that Strategic human resource practices aim at attracting, developing, rewarding, and retaining employees for the benefit of both the employees as individuals and the organization as a whole. Hence, the best outcome of the strategic human resource practices is when the leadership of an educational establishment perform strategic human resource management in order to understand their goals and then create strategies that align with those objectives, as well as those of the organization. As a result, a clear positive change can be visible while complying with the organizational goal as strategic human resource management practices supports in achieving these goals.

Farazmand (2007) opined that organizations are becoming aware and focusing on making effective human resource strategies which may increase goal achievement in different spheres such as productivity, quality, and financial performance. Dessler and Varkkey (2011) also presumed that the paradigm shift in strategic human resource practices from the corporate sector to the education sector is as a result of speedy globalization in knowledge and education, increased competition in the education market, condensed budget for the education sector and changing economic slump.

For Marvel (2011), human resource strategies are the best ways to inspire the workers and ensure maximum productivity. The way of improving the productivity of the employees is the development of several types of financial and non-financial aid, such as bonuses and appreciation.

The goals of Colleges of Education also known as teacher education according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) are to: produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers; encourage further the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers; aid teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large as well as their commitment to national goals; provide teachers with the intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment and making them suitable for changing situations; and enhance teachers' commitment to their teaching profession. For Agwu and Dorgu as cited in Amadioha and Akor (2020), the main goal of Colleges of Education is to expose intended teachers to the activities of teaching which they are expected to perform with effectiveness in the classroom upon graduation from the programme.

Guest as cited in Quansah (2013) described the following as strategic human resource best practices: Selection and the careful use of selection tests to identify those with potential to make contribution; training, and in particular a recognition that training is an ongoing activity; job design to ensure flexibility, commitment and motivation, including steps to ensure that employees have the responsibility and autonomy fully to use their knowledge and skills; communication to ensure that a two-way process keeps everyone fully informed; and employer shares ownership programmes to increase employees' awareness of the implications of their actions on the financial performance of the firm.

Redman and Mathews (1998) in a study also identified some human resource management packages as key practices that sustained an organizational prospect: Careful recruitment and selection such as total quality recruitment, zero defects recruitment; training and learning; extensive remuneration systems, for example, bonuses for staff willing to be

multi-skilled; team working and flexible job design; employee's involvement; performance appraisal with links to contingent reward systems. Nevertheless, Quansah (2013) opined that the best known strategic human resource practices which was produced by Pfeffer in 1998 are: Selective hiring; employment security; self-managed teams; high compensation contingent on performance; extensive training; reduction in status differences and information sharing.

Ahmad and Schroeder (2003) found a positive influence of strategic human resource management practices (information sharing, extensive training, selective hiring, compensation and incentives, status differences, employment security, and decentralization and use of teams) on organisational goal achievement and performance as operational performance (quality, cost reduction, flexibility, deliverability and commitment). In furtherance of this assertion, Sang (2005) also discovered a positive influence of human resource management practices (namely, human resource planning, staffing, incentives, appraisal, training, team work, employee participation, status difference, and employment security) on organization performance.

Khan (2010) conducted a study in Pakistan to investigate the effect of human resource management practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, and employee relations on organizational performance (product cost, product quality, market share, performance relative to competitors and organization's performance relative to industry average) and found a significant positive relationship between these practices and firm performance in twenty oil and gas companies. In one study of one hundred respondents of Graphic Communications Group, Ghana, Boohene and Asuinura (2011) stressed that strategic human resource practices, specifically, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, compensation, training and development have positive impact on organizational goal achievement. For instance, performance appraisal increases employees' commitment and satisfaction since employees are given the chance to discuss their work performance against set targets.

A recent study conducted by Soomro, Gilal and Jatoy (2011) found that human resource practices (training, selection, career planning, employee participation, job definition, performance appraisal and compensation) correlated positively with the employee performance. Also affirming this is a study conducted by Nayaab, Hamid, Naseer and Iqbal (2011) whose result indicated that human resource management practices like training, employee participation in decision making was found significantly related with banks' performance.

Hashmi (2014) opined that strategic human resource practices essentially stimulate the productivity, performance and efficiency of the workers for the achievement of organizational objectives and progress. He further stated that if strategic human resource practices are strategized: such as compensation, pay, reward, benefits and policies within organisations are well thought out beforehand and applied effectively, it will help in the promotion and development of the commitment and performance of the employees. Self-directed and self-committed employees are considered an asset to an organization as such attributes among employees foster the productivity of the organization at large and help in sustaining it for a longer period. In the same vein, Imran, Majeed, and Ayub (2015) stressed that human resource if not treated fairly can affect the productivity and sustainable goal achievement of any organization including educational establishments.

Research questions

Specifically, the following research questions are posed to guide the study:

1. To what extent do the sustainable goals of Collages of Education according to the National Policy on Education achieved in Cross River State?
2. To what extent do the general strategic human resource practices exist in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria?
3. To what extent do strategic human resource practices impact on the achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. The survey research design was used to certainly, enhance the researcher to make more reliable conclusions on strategic human resource practices and its impact on sustainable goal attainment in Colleges of Education in Cross River State. The survey design is important because of the representative nature of the sample of the population for the study. The population of this study is made up of all academic staff of Colleges of Education in Cross River State with a population of 570. The data showed that Federal College of Education, Obudu has 360 academic staff while Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa has 210 academic staff (Directorates of Academic Planning: Federal College of Education, Obudu & Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa, 2021). Stratified sampling technique was used in grouping the academic staff of the institutions into two strata and simple random technique was further adopted in order to give every element in the population an equal opportunity to be selected so as to avoid biasness. A sample of 389 respondents were generously derived using Taro Yamane (1967) sample size determination technique. An organized questionnaire titled: Strategic Human Resource Practices and Sustainable Educational Goal Achievement Questionnaire (SHRPSEGAQ) was used to elicit views from respondents. The instrument was made up of 19 items designed on a 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weight 4, 3, 2, and 1 for all the positively worded items. Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument by yielding coefficients that ranged from .88 to .94 for the sub-scales. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions, while decisions were based on the criterion mean of 2.50.

Results

The results for the test of research questions are presented below.

Research question 1: To what extent do the sustainable goals of Collages of Education according to the National Policy on Education achieved in Cross River State? To test this research question, mean scores and standard deviation were used. The results are presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Mean rating of the research respondents on the achievement of sustainable goals of Collages of Education in Cross River State according to the National Policy on Education

S/N	Goals of Collages of Education	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
1.	Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers.	2.20	.34	D
2.	Encourages the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers.	2.05	.51	D
3.	Aid teachers fit into social life of the community.	2.17	.59	D
4.	Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment.	2.42	.27	D
5.	Expose intended teachers to the activities of teaching which they are expected to perform upon their graduation from the programme.	2.11	.77	D
	Overall Mean & Std. dev.	2.19	.22	D

Criterion mean = 2.50

Results on Table 1 showed that the mean of all the items are less than the criterion mean of 2.50 with standard deviation of .22, depicting that highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers are not produced; spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers is not encouraged; teachers are not aided to fit into social life of the community, teachers are not provided with the intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment; and intended teachers are not exposed to the activities of teaching which they are expected to perform upon their graduation from the programme. Comparatively, item 4 has the highest mean of 2.42 and standard deviation of .27 while the lowest is item 2 with the mean of 2.05 and standard deviation of .51. However, since the calculated mean is less than the criterion mean, it implies that the sustainable goals of Collages of Education according to the National Policy on Education are not achieved in Cross River State.

Research question 2: To what extent do the general strategic human resource practices exist in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria? To test this research question, mean scores and standard deviation were used. The results are presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Mean rating of the research respondents on the general strategic human resource practices existing in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria

S/N	General Strategic Human Resource Practices	Mean	Std Dev.	Remark
1.	Employment policy encourages employee's job security.	2.45	.22	D
2.	Recruitment of staff is based on merit.	1.87	.13	SD
3.	Compensation is based on performance.	2.33	.20	D
4.	Training and development is on merit	2.36	.33	D
5.	Employee's decision making is encouraging.	3.21	.11	SA
6.	There is strong team spirit as a result of employee-supervisor cordial relationship.	2.47	.52	D
7.	Duties and responsibilities are clearly defined.	2.55	.14	A
8.	I am satisfied with my jobs.	2.12	.37	D
	Overall Mean & Std. dev.	2.42	.25	D

Criterion mean = 2.50

From Table 2, item 5 has the highest mean of 3.21 with standard deviation of .11 followed by item 7 with a mean of 2.55 and standard deviation of .14 which were above the criterion mean of 2.50, meaning that employee's decision making is encouraging as well as their duties and responsibilities being clearly defined in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. While items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 were less than 2.50 accepted mean. This denoted that employment policy does not encourage employee's job security, recruitment of staff is not based on merit, compensation is not based on performance, training and development is not on merit, there is no strong team spirit as a result of employee-supervisor cordial relationship, and employees are not satisfied with their jobs. Also, item 2 has the least mean score, indicating that recruitment of staff is not based on merit. Therefore, since the cumulative mean of 2.42 is less than the criterion mean, there is an agreement among the respondents that general strategic human resource practices do not exist in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research question 3: To what extent do strategic human resource practices impact on the achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria? To test this research question, mean scores and standard deviation were used. The results are presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Mean rating of the research respondents on the impact of strategic human resource practices on the achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria

S/N	Impact of strategic human resource practices on the achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria	Mean	Std dev.	Remark
1.	Enhancement of workers' productivity.	2.43	.24	D
2.	Enhancement of workers' commitment.	2.25	.19	D
3.	Promotion of efficiency.	2.33	.12	D
4.	Sustainable goal achievement	2.37	.20	D
5.	Increase in employee's job satisfaction	2.59	.13	A
6.	Enhancement of standardization.	2.44	.09	D
	Overall mean & Std. dev.	2.40	.18	D

Criterion mean = 2.50

In Table 3, the mean rating of the respondents for item 5 was more than the criterion mean of 2.50 and its standard deviation was .13, implying that increase in employee's job satisfaction is enhanced by strategic human resource practices. However, items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 scored below the mean of 2.50 benchmark and standard deviation of less than 1.00, implying that workers' productivity, workers' commitment, promotion of efficiency, sustainable goal achievement and enhancement of standardization were not enhanced by strategic human resource practices. Hence, given the overall mean of 2.40 which is less than the criterion means of 2.50, there is an agreement among the respondents that strategic human resource practices do not impact on achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Discussion of findings

Results of research question one revealed that the sustainable goals of Collages of Education according to the National Policy on Education are not achieved in Cross River State. This finding is at variance with the view of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) which stated that the goals of Colleges of Education are to: produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers; encourage further the spirit of inquiry and creativity in teachers; aid teachers fit into social life of the community and society at large as well as their commitment to national goals; provide teachers with the intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment and making them suitable for changing situations; and enhance teachers' commitment to their teaching profession. This result also differed from the opinion of Agwu and Dorgu as cited in Amadioha and Akor (2020), who stressed that the main goal of Colleges of Education is to expose intended teachers to the activities of teaching which they are expected to perform with effectiveness in the classroom upon graduation from the programme.

The answer of research question two showed that general strategic human resource practices do not exist in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. This result is different from the findings of Redman and Mathews (1998) whose study identified some human resource management packages as key practices that sustained an organizational prospect: Careful recruitment and selection such as total quality recruitment, zero defects recruitment; training and learning; extensive remuneration systems, for example, bonuses for staff willing to be multi-skilled; team working and flexible job design; employee involvement; performance appraisal with links to contingent reward systems. The study also contrasted Quansah (2013) who opined that the best known strategic human resource practices which were produced by Pfeffer in 1998 are: Selective hiring; employment security; self-managed teams; high compensation contingent on performance; extensive training; reduction in status differences and information sharing.

Findings of research question three disclosed that strategic human resource practices do not impact on achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. This result differed significantly from Khan (2010) who conducted a study in Pakistan to investigate the effect of human resource management practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, and employee relations on organisational performance (product cost, product quality, market share, performance relative to competitors and organization's performance relative to industry average) and found a significant positive relationship between these practices and firm performance in twenty oil and gas companies. In one study of one hundred respondents of Graphic Communications Group, Ghana. The outcome of this survey defied the opinion of Boohene and Asuinura (2011) who stressed that strategic human resource practices, specifically, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, compensation, training and development have positive impact on organizational goal achievement. For instance, performance appraisal increases employees' commitment and satisfaction since employees are given the chance to discuss their work performance against set targets.

Conclusions

Results of the study revealed that sustainable goals of Collages of Education according to the National Policy on Education are not achieved in Cross River State, general strategic human resource practices do not exist in Collages of Education in Cross River State and strategic human resource practices do not impact on achievement of sustainable educational goals in Collages of Education in Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, Strategic

human resource practices if strictly followed will enable the collages of education in Cross River State to meet her educational and economic goals such as educational cost minimization, increase in the number of students, increase in the quality of students, innovation in teaching methods, and improvement in the productive capacity of teachers.

Recommendations

Therefore, on the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The sustainable goals of Colleges of Education such as production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers and provision of teachers with the intellectual and professional backgrounds adequate for their assignment should be made a priority by both the Federal and State Governments.
2. Strategic human resource practices such as selective hiring; employment security; self-managed teams; high compensation contingent on performance; extensive training; reduction in status differences and information sharing should be enhanced by the institution's management in order to boost the morale of their personnel.
3. Strategic human resource practices should be strictly followed in order to enhance institutional efficiency.

References

- Ahmad, O., & Schroeder, R. (2003). The impact of human resource management practices on operational performance: Recognizing country and industry differences. *Journal of Operations Management*, 21, 19-43.
- Amadioha, S. W., & Akor, V. O. (2020). Scaling-up educational intervention in teacher education for effective curriculum implementation for sustainable national development. *Journal of Educational Realities*, 10(1), 104-133.
- Armstrong, M. (2009). *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, (11th ed.). Caledon: Palgrave.
- Boohene R., & Asuinura, E. (2011). The effect of human resource management practices on corporate performance: A study of graphic communications group limited. *International Business Research Journal*, 4(1), 266-272.
- Dessler, G., & Varkkey, B. (2011). *Human resource management (12th ed.)*. New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley.
- Farazmand, A. (2007). *Strategic public personnel administration*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National Policy on Education*. Yaba: National Educational Research and Development Council Press.
- Hashmi, K. (2014). Human resource management strategies and teachers' efficiency within schools: A correlational study. *The IAFOR Journal of Education*, 2(1), 65-87.
- Hosseini-Khan, M. Y. (2018). Strategic human resource practices and its impact on performance towards achieving organizational goals. *Business Ethics and Leadership*, 2(2), 66-73.
- Imran, R., Majeed, M., & Ayub, A. (2015). Impact of organizational justice, job security and job satisfaction on organizational productivity. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management*, 3(9), 840-845.
- Khan, M. (2010). Effects of human resource management practices on organizational performance: An empirical study of oil and gas industry in Pakistan. *European Journal of Economics and Financial Administrative Science*, 24, 157-175.

- Marvel, M. (2011). Human capital and search-based discovery: A study of high-tech entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37(2), 403-419.
- Mutahi, N., & Busienei, J. R. (2015). Effect of human resource management practices on performance of Public Universities in Kenya. *International journal of economics, commerce and management*, 3(10), 696-735.
- Nayaab, H. H., Hamid, M., Naseer, F., & Iqbal, M. (2011). The Impact of HRM practices on the organizational performance: The study of banking sector in Okara, Punjab Pakistan. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(3), 661-672.
- Quansah, N. (2013). *The impact of human resource management practices on organisational performance: The case study of some selected rural banks*. A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Managerial Science, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Knust) in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Business Administration.
- Redman, T. and Matthews, B. (1998). Service quality and human resource management: A review and research agenda. *Personnel Review*, 27(1), 57-77.
- Sang, C. (2005). *Relationship between human resource management practices and the perception of organizational performance, roles of management style, social capital, and culture: Comparison between manufacturing firms in Cambodia and Taiwan*. Unpublished Master Thesis. National Cheng Kung University, Tainan-Taiwan.
- Soomro, R. B., Gilal, R. G., & Jatoi, M. M. (2011). Examining the impact of human resources management practices on employee's performance: A case study of Pakistani commercial banking sector. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 3(1), 865-878.
- Teir, R. A. S., & Zhang, R. (2016). The current practices of human resource management in higher education institutions in Palestine. *Journal of Human Resources Management and Labour Studies*, 4(1), 65-83.
- Wright, P., & Boswell, W. (2002). Desegregating human resource management: A review and synthesis of micro and macro human resource management research. *Journal of Management*, 28(3), 247-276.