

DECISION MAKING AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The survival of every organisation depends largely on the nature of human resource at its disposal. Human Resource Management (HRM) is thus critical to the efficient and effective management of organisations such as universities. This study investigated decision making and human resource management in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 1047 administrative staff and executive members of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU) and Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) from 13 public universities in South-South, Nigeria of which 289 were respondents sampled. The instrument for data collection was; Decision Making and Human Resource Management Rating Scale (DMHRMRS). Data collected was analysed using Chi-square test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that decision making significantly influences recruitment and compensation staff at a high extent in public universities. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that Ministry of Education through governing councils and management of universities should develop and adhere to strategies of recruitment and compensation of qualified and competent staff for effective and efficient teaching and research in universities.

Keywords: Decision Making; Human Resource Management; Recruitment and Compensation

Introduction

The survival of organisations depends largely on the nature of human resource at its disposal. Human Resource Management (HRM) is thus critical to the efficient and effective management of organisations such as universities. Human resource entails the human beings used to manage an organisation or institution to achieve the set objectives of the organisation. In an educational institution, human resource are the people who assist in the implementation of the school curriculum and the extra-curricular activities geared towards making learners acquire the overall goals of education (Okoro, 2016). The study, in line with the view of Okoro links human resource as the practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying and managing employees in an organisation. The term human resource was first used in the early 1900s, and then more widely in the 1960s to describe the people who work for the organisation, in aggregate (Rouse, 2019) Gire and Iyough (2018) view human resource management as the provision, utilisation and maintenance of staff, eminent in planning for, attracting, developing and retaining staff for organisational productivity. The task of managing human resource involves decision making at various levels.

Decision making regarding human resource management could determine the success or failure of an organisation. Universities, like every organisation, can attain their goals through relevant decisions to adhere to stipulated guidelines regarding management of human resource who are likened to; academic or non-academic staff of public universities in the area of study. A decision can be defined as a course of action purposely chosen from a set of alternatives to achieve organisational goals. Decision making is a continuous and indispensable component of managing any university. Gaurav (2011) defines decision making as the selection of a course of action from two or more alternatives in order to achieve a specific objective or to solve a specific problem. Decision making is involved in every aspect of life, especially in organisational as well as non-organisational contexts. In both contexts, human behaviour is affected by the outcome of the decisions.

The task of human resource management has some common aspects that are applicable in management of university (Boddewyn, 2018). Some of these aspects are; decision making, programming, communicating, controlling and appraising. Each of these aspects has its own set of activities that could lead to the achievement of objectives of university management. However, decision making is the principal activity that guides actions towards the overall success of the university. Gire and Iyough (2018) attest that decision making is a huge responsibility not only against the organisation itself, but against staff and other stakeholders in the organisation. Decision making is the source of organisations' effectiveness.

Human Resource management (HRM) tasks are majorly concern with the administrative activities such as recruitment, reward systems and promotion. Human resource management in the university involves both staff and students which are stakeholders. However, in this study Human Resource Management (HRM) is focused on staff only. This is because they are regarded as strategic planners of university activities. It also involves how decision making in public universities by bodies visitors, governing council, senate and management at all level of faculties, directors, departments and units influence areas like staff recruitment and staff compensation. This could lead to the overall success of university education in public universities in South- South Nigeria.

Recruitment is the process of searching for the candidates for employment and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organisation. Staff recruitment entails the practice of recruiting the best qualified candidate for a job opening in a timely and cost effective manner. Mohammed (2018) views recruitment as a process of accumulating human resources with the required skills and efficiencies for vacant positions in the organisation. Mayhew (2018) suggests various ways to find suitable applicants that may be employed by universities to employ staff as advertising locally, nationally and beyond. Other ways are: conducting interview; screening; conducting reference checks and final selection at designated times to recruit and select relevant staff for the organisation such as universities. Recruitment of staff in university lies in decisions made by relevant management bodies of such university. It is worthy of note that after recruitment, human resource management determines the compensation of the recruited staff.

Compensation is range of financial benefits and non financial benefits giving to individuals. It plays in the form of wages and salaries and also insurance level free travelling is also included. These rewards include monthly salaries, bonuses, profit sharing, overtime pay, recognition rewards and sales commission (Nazir, 2010). Compensation is a crucial aspect that has to be practiced with an unbiased decision making process. It could influence staff job performance towards the organisational goals. Agusioma, Gommans and Kihiko (2014) point out that a balance, fair and competitive compensation system affects labour turnover. The study in line with this view assumes that if management of universities make decisions towards staff compensation in the aspects of prompt payment of salaries, provision of commensurate allowances to staff, salary increment, provision of fringe benefits and provision of financial security after retirement, the goals of university education could be achieved through staff job performance.

University is the citadel of learning, the fountain of intellectual development and centre for the production of leaders of tomorrow. The major function of a university is the provision of knowledge and value for the younger generation. However, this very important function may be hampered when human resource in the university is not properly managed (Nwankwo, 2010). The objectives of university education include contributing to national development through relevant manpower training as well as the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper values for the development of intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate the local and external environments. The extent to which these objectives can be achieved depends greatly on management of available human resources, which includes the academic and non-academic staff within the university system (Akpan, 2012).

There are two types of public universities operating in South-South, Nigeria, public universities under the management of Federal and State governments. However, the management of these universities are in hands of Visitor, Governing Council, Vice Chancellors and Deputies, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments and Heads of Units. Others are academic and non-academic staff under the auspices of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU); Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), each of these bodies protect the interests of its rank and file members. The efficiency and effectiveness of universities like any other organisation, as stated by Vermeeren, Steijn, Tummers, Lankhaar, Poerstamper and van Beck (2014), lies in the performance and commitment of its staff to deliver on its mandate; however, management of universities seem to be constantly faced with a challenge of making right

decisions to recruit and compensate staff appropriately to ensure the effective university education. This study thus, investigated the extent of influence decision making has on human resource management in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Decision making in the universities regarding human resource management generates concern by education stakeholders in Nigeria; Universities in South-South Nigeria are not an exception. Stakeholders; especially staff of universities are concerned over the likely influence of decision making on human resource management in public universities. Prominent among these concerns is the alleged sentiments in staff recruitment which undermine due process in recruiting qualified candidates in Universities and dissatisfaction of staff regarding compensation. The researcher's observation indicated that the quality of university education in South-South Nigeria appear to be relatively poor over time. This warranted an empirical investigation hence the study hoped that the effectiveness of HRM in the universities is a yardstick for the overall success of university education. The researchers' problem posed in question form is; to what extent does decision making influence human resource management in public universities in South- South, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which decision making influence human resource management in public universities in South-South Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which decision making influence staff recruitment in public universities in South - South Nigeria.
2. ascertain the extent to which decision making influence staff compensation in public universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does decision making influence staff recruitment in public universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. To what extent does decision making influence staff compensation in public universities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Decision making has no significant influence on staff recruitment in public universities in South-South Nigeria.
2. Decision making does not significantly influence staff compensation in public universities.

Research Method

This study employed descriptive survey research design. According to Emaikwu (2015) descriptive survey design is one in which a group of people or items are studied in their natural setting by collecting, analysing and interpreting data from people considered to be a representative sample of the entire population. The population of this study comprised 1,047 administrative staff and executive members of Academic Staff Union of

Universities, Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities and Non-Academic Staff Union from public universities in South-South, Nigeria. The rationale for the use of these groups is because they enabled the researcher have a better picture of the influence of decision making on HRM in public universities in South-South Nigeria. The numbers of universities considered in the study were 13 public universities (National Universities Commission, 2019). The sample of this study consisted of 289 staff. This agrees with Taro Yamane (1967) formula for sample determination from a given population. The instrument for data collection was a rating scale titled: Decision Making and Human Resource Management Rating Scale (DMHRMRS). The instrument was divided into sections A and B. Section A dealt with instruction and section B elicited information on the two variables of the study. The questionnaire contained 10 items in two clusters, that is, five items per cluster. Cluster A contained items 1-5 which sought information on the influence of decision making on staff recruitment while; Cluster B contained items 6-10, which gathered information on the influence of decision making on staff compensation. The instrument was structured on 5-point rating scale with graded responses of Very High Extent (VHE)=5, High Extent (HE)=4, Moderate Extent (M.E)=3, Low Extent (LE)=2 and Very Low Extent (VLE)=1. This scale was flexible and appropriate for measuring the variables of the study. The researcher personally reached out to some sampled universities. To ensure high rate of return, the researcher employed the services of two research assistants who were staff of the universities in the area of study. The choice of the research assistants was based on their state of origin or domicile. These research assistants were briefed by the researcher to ensure that they understand some technical terms used in the rating scale to carry out the assignment. The research assistants were attached to three sampled universities while the researcher covered three universities. The direct delivery and retrieval method was adopted in the administration and retrieval of the rating scale administered to the respondents. This was to help minimise non-responses and mistakes from the respondents as well as to enable the researcher and research assistants to thoroughly explain the purpose, significance and confidentiality of all information gathered. This aided non loss of copies of the instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The decision was based on the real limit of numbers. The six null hypotheses for the study were tested using chi-square test of goodness-of-fit at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was in a situation whereby the probability value of 0.05 alpha level was greater than the calculated value; the null hypotheses were not rejected. On the other hand, if the calculated probability was greater than the set alpha value of 0.05 the null hypotheses were rejected. The choice of chi-square test of goodness of fit was premised on its ability to measure extent of influence decision making has on human resource management in public universities in the area of study

Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent does decision making influence staff recruitment in public universities in South-South Nigeria?

Table 1:
Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Influence of Decision Making on Staff Recruitment in Public Universities in South-South Nigeria

Item No	Item Description	N	VHE	HE	ME	LE	VLE	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Reviewed hiring needs by Human Resource Management department.	289	85	97	100	4	3	3.89	0.88	HE
2.	Advertising vacancy widely enough to attract qualified applicants	289	91	65	70	52	11	3.60	1.21	HE
3.	Short listing of applicants from a pull of applications submitted.	289	112	94	59	8	16	3.96	1.10	HE
4.	Interviewing of shortlisted candidates against the criteria set out in specification for the vacancy.	289	29	56	18	100	86	2.45	1.36	LE
5.	Hiring of qualified applicants by the university board based on qualification and merit.	289	35	47	67	102	38	2.79	1.22	ME
Cluster Mean/SD								3.34	1.15	HE

Note: Very High Extent (VHE) =4.50-5.00, High Extent (HE) = 3.50-4.49, Moderate Extent (ME) =2.50-2.99, Low Extent (LE) = 1.49-2.49, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.00-1.49, Cluster Mean=3.00 and SD=0.00.

Table 1 indicates the mean scores of items 1-5 as 3.89, 3.60, 3.96, 2.45 and 2.79 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.88, 1.21, 1.10, 1.36 and 1.22 respectively. All the items are above the cut-off point of 3.00, except item 4 which is rated below the cut-off point of 3.00. This implies that the respondents reported that to a high extent, universities reviewed hiring needs by human resource management department and they advertised vacancies widely enough to attract qualified applicants. They said that to a high extent, their universities usually short listed applicants from a pull of applications submitted. The respondents however said that to a low extent their universities interviewed shortlisted candidates against the criteria set out in specification for the vacancies. The respondents

reported that to a moderate extent their universities hire qualified applicants through the university board based on qualification and merit. The cluster mean of 3.34 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.15 is high. The implication is that decision making to high extent influences staff recruitment in public universities in South-South, Nigeria

Research Question 2: To what extent does decision making influence staff compensation in public universities?

Table 2:

Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Influence of Decision Making on Staff Compensation in Public Universities in South-South Nigeria

Item No	Item Description	N	VHE	HE	ME	LE	VLE	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6.	Prompt payment of monthly staff salaries.	289	40	53	69	36	91	2.71	1.43	ME
7.	Provision of commensurate allowances to staff.	289	82	72	45	60	30	3.40	1.36	HE
8.	Salary increment to staff for each year of additional experience on the relevant level.	289	112	89	51	21	16	3.90	1.16	HE
9.	Provision of fringe benefits to staff based on their skills, training and level of education.	289	6	78	31	73	101	2.36	1.27	LE
10.	Opportunity to save for financial security in retirement.	289	67	76	31	81	34	3.21	1.38	HE
Cluster Mean/SD								3.12	1.32	HE

Note: Very High Extent (VHE) =4.50-5.00, High Extent (HE) = 3.50-4.49, Moderate Extent (ME) =2.50-2.99, Low Extent (LE) = 1.49-2.49, Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.00-1.49, Cluster Mean=3.00 and SD=0.00.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of items 6-10 as 2.71, 3.40, 3.90, 2.36 and 3.21 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.43, 1.36, 1.16, 1.27 and 1.38 respectively. All the items are above cut-off point of 2.50 except item 9. This means that the respondents said that to a moderate extent, decision making influences staff compensation in universities through prompt payment of monthly staff salaries and to a high extent decision making influence the provision of commensurate allowances to staff and salary increment to staff for each year of additional experience on the relevant level and opportunity to save for financial security in retirement. However, the respondents reported that to low extents decision influences provision of fringe benefits to staff based on their skills, training and level of education in

universities. The cluster mean of 3.12 with corresponding standard deviation of 1.32 is high. This implies that decision making to high extent influences compensation in public universities.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Decision making has no significant influence on staff recruitment in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 3:

Chi-square test on Influence of Decision Making on Staff Recruitment in Public Universities in South -South Nigeria

Responses	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
VHE	85	57.8	27.2
HE	97	57.8	39.2
ME	100	57.8	42.2
LE	4	57.8	-53.8
VLE	3	57.8	-54.8
Total	289		
Chi-square	172.23 ^a		
DF	4		
Asymp. Sig.	0.00		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 57.8.

Table 3 indicates that chi-square=172.23^a, df=4; P=.00<0.05. Since probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that decision making has no significant influence on staff recruitment in public universities in South-South Nigeria is therefore, rejected. This implies that to a high extent, decision making has significant influence on staff recruitment in public universities in South -South Nigeria.

Hypothesis2: Decision making does not significantly influence staff compensation in public universities.

Table 4:

Chi-square test on Influence of Decision making on Staff Compensation in Public Universities

Responses	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
VHE	40	57.8	-17.8
HE	53	57.8	-4.8
ME	69	57.8	11.3
LE	36	57.8	21.8
VLE	91	57.8	33.2
Total	289		
Chi-square	35.34 ^a		
DF	4		
Asymp. Sig.	0.00		

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- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 57.8.

Table 4 shows that $\chi^2=35.34^a$, $df=4$; $P=0.00 < 0.05$. Since probability value of 0.00 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that decision making does not significantly influence staff compensation in public universities in South-South Nigeria is therefore, rejected. This implies that to a high extent, decision making significantly influences staff compensation in public universities.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of the analysis of the two research questions and testing of the two hypotheses posited for this study, the following findings are organised and discussed for ease of understanding.

The first finding indicated that decision making has positive significant influence on staff recruitment in public universities in South-South Nigeria. This finding agrees with Oaya, Ogbu and Remilekun (2017) who found that the use of recruitment agency and internal employee recommendation in the recruitment process enables organisation to recruit committed and productive employees while the recruitment through the influence of host community leads to organisational inefficiency. This study also agrees with Kanu (2015) who reported that there was a significant relationship between recruitment and profits. This implies that by recruiting the right candidates, there is greater propensity for the employees to perform to meet the objectives of the enterprise. This also means that managers need to focus on the right strategies for recruitment of staff, to improve organisational goals in which case; of university education. Studies cited here in line with the present study dwelt on organisational settings.

The second finding showed that decision making significantly influence staff compensation in public universities. This result conform with that of Uwizeye and Muryungi (2017) who found that compensation had a positive correlation with employees' performance. This result agrees with Mphil, Ramzan, Zubair, Ali and Arslan (2014) who found that salaries, rewards and incentives as well as indirect compensation had positive impacts on employees' performance. The implication is that university goal attainment is prominent when benefits are availed to human resource judiciously. Findings of the study indicated positive significant influence of decision making on staff recruitment and staff compensation in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Conclusion

Decision making is vital to the smooth management of human resource of any organisation like university. The success of university depends on the decisions of those in position of authority to stipulate and adhere to guidelines in human resource management. When good decisions are made in the university, the university could excel in all areas. However, when poor decisions are made it also affects the effective management of the university. Based on the data collected and analysed, the study concluded that decision making has positive significant influence on staff recruitment and staff compensation in public universities in South-South Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study it is recommended that; Ministry of Education through governing councils and management of universities should develop and adhere to strategies of recruitment and compensation of qualified and competent staff for effective and efficient teaching and research in universities.

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