

# EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**MOTIVATING THE NIGERIAN  
ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC  
STAFF FOR SUSTAINABLE HIGHER  
EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FOR POLICY  
OPTIONS**

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**UDC:** 371.1; **JEL Classifications:** A13, M54.

**Key words:** Higher education, human resources, management, motivation, staff.

**Abstract:** The deteriorating economic environment over the last decade, due in part to declining commodity prices and oil price and exchange rate fluctuations, has shrunk national budgets. Simultaneously, high levels of demographic growth rates have swollen the ranks of the university-age population. Pressures to expand higher education at all levels persist. However, additional public resources for the sector are not likely to become available in the near future. A very critical challenge in an environment of rising demand and declining resources is the proper management of staff basically in the context of motivation.

ISSN: 1804-0527 (online) 1804-0519 (print)

Vol.7(1), PP. 62-65

## Introduction

During the 20th century, formal higher education has expanded very rapidly all over the world. Investment in human resource development has been considered to be a powerful metaphor for a healthy competition in the new world order for various reasons thus an increasing private demand for higher education. The view that education is a fundamental human right contributed to the rapid expansion. Special economic, social and political power attached to the positions given to graduates of higher education, attracted more and more students (Nosike and Okonkwo, 1992).

There are economic and political reasons for the expansion of higher education. For all the countries, a university has been a symbol of national or regional prestige and this, too, has been responsible for the increasing number of universities around the world. In Nigeria since independence, various governments have spent substantial portion of their national budgets to develop education. Investments in this magnitude have been justified at all times as a means of producing rapidly the skilled manpower required for national development (Ukeje, 1989; Essien, 1975; Ashby, 1964).

## Management of human resources

Human resources management is a complex issue in development. Of all the resources necessary to manage any institution, effectively and efficiently none is as critically important as human resources. This is why human resources are said to be the life blood of an institution. Beautiful plans can be conceived, plausible objectives set, excellent structures put up, realistic rules,

regulations and policies made, but if the human beings who will use them to give effect to the plausible ideas are not properly managed, the other resources will be as good as useless.

Getting people under control to do work as to produce the desired results is a very complex affair, especially with regard to institutional administration particularly at the level of higher education. The complexity arises from the fact that in higher education during a period of economic crisis the engine of production is human, the components is human, the product is human and the consumption is also typified by human.

The above observation makes management roles of planning, organizing, controlling and directing the affairs of members of an institutional organization a very difficult task. It is several times more difficult to manage the sophisticated human beings who work in tertiary education institutions.

There are many factors that can facilitate staff management in a period of economic crisis. They are legion. However, for the benefit of this paper, let us do reasonable justice in examining the issues of motivation in the context of managing higher education particularly in a developing country.

## Motivation and human development

Humans are the most complex and enigmatic being on earth. Development is humanocentric (Nosike, 1995). Etymologically, the term "motivation" is derived from the latin verb ('Moveo', 'Movere', 'Movi', 'Motum') meaning "to move". Motivation according to Encyclopedia Britannica (xii) refers to the causes of behaviour, i.e. whatever it is the individual that incites

action. The use of hungry animals in most psychological experiments leading to theories suggest the issue of motivation as being very important to development variables such as learning, behaviour modification, etc.

A motive is a factor which leads a worker to one thing rather another. Motivation activates behaviour and gives it direction. There is differentiation among people in doing a job as a result of variation, in motivation. Part of this differentiation stems from a number of diversities such as environment, family background, age, sex, ability, training, knowledge, tact, industry, understanding, and experience. There is a correlation between these numerated variables and motivation (Nosike, 1995; Parker et al., 1977; Devine, et al., 1979; Graham, 1989).

### The human relations movement

The Human Relations Movement emerged during the 1930s. This movement criticized the neglect of human element by the Scientific Management Movement led by Frederick Taylor (top management hierarchy) and his followers including Henri Fayol (bottom management hierarchy). Mary Parker Follet led the Human Relations Movement. Follet and her colleagues strongly held the view that man is central to management. This school sees the central problem of any enterprise as building and maintaining of dynamic yet harmonious human relations.

In other words, the movement emphasized mostly on the psychological aspects of management. It is therefore not surprising that most adherents were/are social scientists especially psychologists, and sociologists. Human Relations movement has had great impact on management practice. It made management aware of workers as human beings, rather than as cogs in the machinery of institutions.

### Perspectives on staff management

Traditionally, the best way judged for directing and controlling staff and getting them to carry out the job was through threat shouting and ordering about. Douglas McGregory suggested that the underlying assumptions about human beings should be changed. These assumptions about human behaviour he calls "Theory X". This theory states;

- The average person has an inherent dislike for work and avoids it if he can;
- Because of this dislike for work, most people must be forced, controlled directed and threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort towards the achievement of organizational objectives;
- The average person prefers to be directed and wished to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition and wants security above all.

Basically, under the traditional way of staff management, work is conceived as intrinsically odious and only force could help get it done. But this style of staff management is out of fashion with modern management thinking (Oraemesi, 1988).

A more modern dimension to staff management referred to by McGregor (1962) as "Theory Y": it sees work as natural as play and as a possible source of satisfaction, as well as a source of punishment dependable of course on the degree and magnitude of motivation and

also commitment. McGregor believes that enlightened management should embrace an opposing list of assumptions in "Theory Y" which states:

- That expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest;
- Man will exercise self-direction and control in the service of objectives to which he is committed;
- Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with achievement;
- The average person learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept, but to seek responsibility;
- The capacity to exercise ingenuity and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely distributed in the population.

### Need, motivation and staff management

It is very difficult to examine objectively a motivation without understanding the concept of need and also taking into consideration the relationship between them in staff management. Suffice it to note that it is the satisfaction of need that gives rise and sustains motivation. Hirst and Peters (1970) made a careful distinction between 'need' and 'want'. If a person wants something in general, he/she knows what he/she wants, and all other things being equal, takes steps to attain it. On the contrary, if the person merely needs something, he/she may not be sufficiently aware of the need, and will not necessarily take steps to attain it.

In other words, wants are always motivational, whereas needs are only sometimes (Okafor, 1991). In both cases, eliciting motivation in staff management in managing higher education during a period of economic crisis should be made through the satisfaction of the various needs in the workers both as an individual and as a group. The more the need is transformed into want, the greater the chance of sustaining motivation.

Under the humanistic theory of motivation, Maslow (1970) put forward an interesting hierarchy of human needs. Maslow contends that human is a wanting animal, as soon as one of his needs is satisfied another appears in its place; and that these needs are organized in a serves of levels, according to their importance, hierarchy called *Maslow Hierarchy of Human Needs*. Beginning with the lowest level needs, those five-tier hierarchies of needs in human beings are:

- Physiological needs including such basic things as food, water, shelter and protection;
- Safety needs including protection against danger thereat, deprivation and security;
- Belongingness and love needs including the need to belong, to be accepted, to be given affection;
- Ego needs including need for psychology of recognition, status, and appreciation of one's self and feeling of importance;
- Self-Actualization needs including the need for self-fulfillment, self-development, and job satisfaction.

### Functional approach to staff management

Needs are varied: individual needs, task needs, and group needs. The most obvious group need is to achieve

the common task. Administrators of Nigerian higher educational institutions in a period of structural policy reform must realize that to achieve the common objective, they have to work along with members of staff as a team. Unless there is cohesion, the common objective of properly managing higher education will not be achieved however skilled and professionally qualified the individuals may be.

Dr. John Adair in 1968 referred to the above observation as Functional Approach showing how people and the work they do interact. In embracing the functional approach of staff management, we must not lose sight of the Scalar Theory of organizational management in running the affairs of our tertiary institutions. In this situation, every staff in the institutions finds its appropriate place in the organizational hierarchy. In this case, the grading of duties is not according to different function but according to degrees of authority and corresponding responsibility. This framework would contribute to the process of co-ordination, through which the supreme co-ordination authority becomes effective throughout the entire structure.

### **The integration model and staff management**

Under the principle of hierarchy, authority as a matter of direction and control, runs step by step whether upwards or downwards (Singh, 1981). The whole system is linked in a chain and the activities of all are thereby properly coordinated. In the management of higher education, administrators should understand the importance of integration in managerial style as a means of staff management through motivation.

In the terminology of public administration with particular reference to higher education, administration, integration means grouping of all services, whose operations fall in the same general field and which should consequently maintain intimate working relations with each other, into departments presided over by officers, having a general oversight of them all and entrusted with the duty of seeing that they work harmoniously towards the attainment of the common end.

Under the integration model of administering institutions of higher learning, the various units of the system maintain their distinctive character and perform work in their respective fields. The essential point is that all members of staff should be grouped effectively as to bring them into close relationship with one another. By this grouping they become the several parts of the same machine. Under this system the line of authority runs unbroken from the chief executive, through various levels to all the parts of the system so that all are connected and linked together.

Integration system facilitates coordination as it removes the possibility of overlapping of functions and activities. If in any institution of higher learning proper grouping of services is not maintained, as we are presently witnessing in our universities and colleges, administration gets chaotic. There is inefficiency of work and waste of the already limited resources. The integration model makes the chief executive to perform his budgetary functions in a better way. He knows the work, program and picture of resources of all the departments, so he can easily frame the budget.

In addition, integration enables the educational administrator to control and supervise the organization effectively. It keeps the span of control within proper limits by limiting the number of persons to be controlled and directed and gives more time to the executive for the consideration of important executive problems. It makes the authority and responsibility of every one very clear and leads to better cooperation among the different units of the system.

### **Towards staff motivation**

Member of staff in spite of efforts at motivation can decide not to comply with in system. This leads us to the examination an important variable in staff management discipline. First recall the traditional relations between the leader and follower, authority and obedience; we shall be in a better position to appreciate a broader perception of the issue of discipline in managing staff motivation in higher educational system.

A narrower conceptualization of discipline will reduce it to mean punishment. We shall therefore like to point out that discipline conveys the notion of submission to rules or some kind of order (Okafor and Quist, 1988). This submission to rules is crucial to proper management of staff in any organization or establishment like in the higher education system, especially under a period of economic crises.

If we consider discipline in our context as having to do with the willingness of the staff to act according to the rules of the game, we need to point out that discipline can either be self-imposed (autonomous) or imposed by others (heteronomous). Discipline is usually to be self-imposed if conforming to rules or standards is accepted by the individual as either constitutive of or as a means to doing something that he wants to do or think desirable. Self-imposed discipline is more desirable as a propeller of staff motivation, especially within the framework of higher education. It makes administration and management smoother and more pleasurable.

On the other hand, the acceptance of discipline springing up from other people's desires, whether those of the chief Executive of the higher institution or any of the heads of unit, is a manifestation of externally-imposed discipline which is most often out of fear of punishment.

In the management of staff motivation in higher education system, the school administrator (Vice-chancellors, Provost, Rector, Principal, etc.) should opt for self-imposed rather than other-imposed discipline. This approach is more conducive to the maintenance of staff motivation as a mechanism in staff management. The gross absence of self-imposed discipline among our chief executives of higher institutions resulting to financial mismanagement, nepotism, and other fraudulent practices have continued to worsen the plight of higher education in Nigeria. How can one preach discipline and be not disciplined. Of course, that does not and can not make good leadership in an economy and society like Nigeria.

The Nigerian higher educational administrators and managers must be good motivational managers. The administrator may emphasize competition, cooperation, bargaining, level of aspiration, interest, rewards and punishment etc. No matter the motivational style used, the administrator must realize that each staff or category of

staff at any moment may have one or more of a long list of motives that could be intrinsic or extrinsic.

A good staff manager in the higher education system needs to be eclectic in motivational management and should use the techniques of reinforcement, tasks to staff, discipline, transparency and functionalism.

### Conclusion

Management processes, in the strategic management framework, refer to all the actions taken by managers to motivate and mobilize their human resources (Paul, 1982). Included under this category (Khandwalla, 1977) are such variables as leadership and supervision, decision making processes, management information systems, staff motivation, participation and rewards, record-keeping, logistics, and work flows. The relationship between the higher educational manager (Chief Executive) and staff is an obvious one and needs proper motivational approach to a period of economic crisis.

If our higher education is not producing the right type of qualitative graduates, our tertiary education administrators can partly be blamed. Any blame on staff must be cautious, otherwise it is erroneous. Career satisfaction, occupational status and job performance of members of staff of tertiary (higher) education is a function of motivation and it is partly the lack of proper motivation that testifies the exodus of academic and non-academic staff as well as strikes. The implication of this phenomenon is dysfunctionalism.

By way of conclusion, let it be stressed that managing higher education is not possible without the motivation of staff. In administering higher institutions therefore, heads of higher institutions should realize that the path to lasting peace and progress in persuasion, bargaining, cooperation and if you like dialogue rather than threat and factionalism.

Motivation is generated through the satisfaction of the various needs in man and discipline conceived more positively as self-directed. If discipline is to reign in the institutions of higher learning, the required motivation of staff must be upheld. While motivations enhance discipline, the sustainability of motivation is helped by discipline. The motivation of staff is a strategy of staff management which is indispensable for managing higher education in any given economy more importantly in a period of economic crisis.

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