



## Human Resources Management Strategies for Enhancing Academic Staff Job Productivity in Universities in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study investigated human resources management strategies for enhancing academic staff job productivity in Universities in Bayelsa State. Three research questions were developed for this study. A descriptive survey research design was selected for the investigation. The study's population consisted of 2,141 academic staff members from all three universities with faculties in education, arts, and social sciences. Using a simple random sampling method, a sample of 428 academic staff was drawn. Data collection utilized a 15-item questionnaire designed by the researchers, named the "Human Resources Management Strategies and Academic Staff Job Productivity Questionnaire (HRMSASJPQ)," which was formatted on a four-point Likert scale: Very Highly Utilized, Highly Utilized, Lowly Utilized, and Very Lowly Utilized. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was found using Cronbach's Alpha. The gathered data were analyzed employing mean scores and standard deviations. The study's results indicated that effectively utilizing motivational, collaborative decision-making, and staff development strategies in human resource management significantly boosts academic staff job productivity in the universities of Bayelsa State. A conclusion was drawn. Among other recommendations, it was suggested that the government and education stakeholders should ensure that funding is readily accessible to support academic staff in attending conferences, workshops, and other development programs to enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, ultimately leading to increased job productivity.

**Keywords:** Human resources, management strategies and academic staff job productivity.

### Introduction

Organizational productivity refers to an organization's ability to enhance output while reducing resource expenditures. Productivity serves as a metric for evaluating how effectively resources are assembled and utilized within an organization to achieve specific outcomes. According to Nwachukwu (2016), productivity includes factors such as input, punctuality and promptness, minimizing waste in all its forms, justifying one's compensation, improving various life aspects, and producing increasingly greater quantities of higher quality. Oredein (2006) noted that boosting an organization's productivity necessitates creating and sustaining an environment that fosters individual development through motivation, careful planning, and retraining, enabling individuals to fully contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives. An increase in organizational productivity occurs within an environment influenced by elements such as peace, love, values, motivation, supervision, strategic planning, and training, as employed by management.

In educational institutions, like universities, which are designed to instill the appropriate knowledge, attitudes, skills, and optimal life practices for individuals to successfully integrate into society, an increase in productivity can be measured by the rise in the number of qualified graduates (student output) entering the community and achieving self-sufficiency. According to Onyene (2008), the current focus of education is to produce individuals who are intelligent, knowledgeable,

and are hopeful leaders for the future. The productivity of university institutions can be derived from the efforts of various human resources within the academic system. Peretomode (2008), Armstrong (2006), and Ogba and Igu (2012) argue that human resources are proactive agents who gather capital, utilize natural resources, and establish social, educational, economic, and political organizations that contribute to a nation's overall development. These individuals employ their skills, qualities, and capabilities to manage other resources in the production process in pursuit of organized objectives.

Human resources within the university framework refer to the personnel associated with that institution. This group includes Vice Chancellors (V.C), Deputy Vice Chancellors (D.V.C), Registrars, Directors, Deans, Heads of Department (HODs), academic and non-academic staff, as well as students. In this study, V.Cs, D.V.Cs, Registrars, Directors, Deans of faculties, and HODs are considered to be in the management tier. However, special emphasis will be placed on the HODs as management staff overseeing both academic and non-academic personnel at the departmental level. The academic staff at universities refers to the educators tasked with imparting knowledge, skills, and attitudes to university students to help them achieve their goals.

The responsibilities of academic staff also encompass community service and research endeavors. The productivity of academic staff is related to enhancing the overall outputs of their activities within the classroom, including knowledge transmission, work punctuality, teaching proficiency, monitoring student academic performance through assessments, assignments, and examinations, timely submission of exam grades, effective classroom management, and maintaining discipline. Iyede (2001) highlighted that productive staff requires crucial inputs such as proper monitoring and evaluating students through effective lesson planning and delivery, giving regular feedback on student performance, maintaining accurate records, and ensuring appropriate student discipline to achieve educational objectives successfully. It is essential that academic staff, as a vital component of university human resources, be effectively managed so they can excel in their responsibilities, which will, in turn, produce favorable outcomes. Human resources within the university framework play a significant role in implementing educational programs aimed at achieving set goals. Education is seen as an exceptional tool for national development, as stated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN) in its National Policy on Education (NPE) (FGN, 2014); thus, the human resources required to execute the educational curriculum effectively require proper management to contribute positively to the overall productivity of educational institutions.

Management involves planning, organizing, coordinating, and directing human and material resources to achieve goals (Ugochukwu and Adiele, 2015). The management of human resources in educational settings is a fundamental aspect of the educational framework. According to Leigha, Nanighe, Epelle, and Matthew (2023), human resource management encompasses the recruitment of personnel and coordination of their performances to enhance organizational productivity. Ogba and Igu (2012) describe human resource management as a driving force in achieving educational objectives. Consequently, human resource management strategies can be defined as the methods utilized by those in leadership positions (administrators) to plan, motivate, coordinate, organize, direct, develop, and make control decisions regarding the organization's personnel to realize institutional goals. This study examines the application of motivation, collaborative decision-making, and staff development in managing human resources to improve academic staff productivity.

The application of motivational strategies in managing human resources pertains to the perceptions, techniques, and actions employed by administrators to encourage staff to perform at their highest level, thereby enhancing school productivity. Motivation, as defined by Akinwumiju and Agabi (2008), refers to the readiness to invest effort in achieving the goals of the organization by its staff members. Akosubo-Ogori (2021) suggested that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of organizational staff involve providing elements that are likely to enhance job satisfaction, enrichment, and overall organizational productivity. The effective use of motivational strategies, which include clear communication, timely salary payments, recognition, awards, praise, appreciation, and promotions when appropriate, is likely to boost production and is highly sought after. A study by Ogbonnaya, Ahamefula, and Oguh (2017) on the effective management of tertiary education for sustainable national development, conducted at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education in Owerri with a sample of 116 lecturers, indicated that insufficient lecturer motivation posed a challenge in managing tertiary educational institutions. It is essential to promote a workforce that is highly motivated, conscientious, and possesses a professional, intellectual, and knowledgeable background in their respective fields of study.

Implementing collaborative decision-making strategies can be viewed as a management approach aimed at enhancing institutional productivity. The National Policy on Education (2014) correctly highlighted the importance of cooperation among school administrators, government, and the community in school management. Collaborative decision-making provides a platform that acknowledges the input of various education stakeholders. This strategy ensures that the school administrator does not unilaterally make decisions affecting all aspects; rather, it involves the active participation of academic staff in matters related to their job productivity. Such decisions may involve scheduling lectures, exams,

faculty welfare, and holidays. Engaging in collaborative efforts, particularly in school decision-making, fosters cooperation among personnel towards achieving collective goals (Amadi, 2016).

Collaborative decision-making helps school administrators generate innovative ideas for resource allocation and effective oversight of the teaching and learning process (Onyene, 2008). Through collaborative decision-making, it is the duty of administrators to manage the school, assert authority over staff, and achieve satisfactory school productivity. This process allows administrators to create strong bidirectional communication channels. Subordinates are also given the chance to feel included. Administrators can engage with educational stakeholders and school personnel regarding funding for instructional materials and the implementation of educational programs aimed at achieving goals.

Collaborative decisions are frequently made in universities during departmental and faculty board meetings, among others. In these meetings, decisions are made and shared with members on various matters regarding departmental and faculty advancement, including the scheduling of lectures, deadlines for marking and submitting exam scripts, and issues related to the welfare of academic staff are also addressed. Nwagwu (2004) suggested that organizations lacking participatory decision-making are prone to conflicts. Such conflicts hinder the organization's progress.

Decision-making involves selecting the best alternative to address a problem. This process includes identifying the problem, outlining possible solutions, and making a choice among those options (Ugochukwu and Adiele, 2015). Decisions made within a university impact both staff and students directly and indirectly. In the university context, many decisions are structured. They are repetitive, well-defined, and governed by established rules and procedures (Leigha et al., 2023). The collaborative decision-making strategies used in the management of human resources follow several steps:

1. Identifying and defining the problem or complex issue;
2. Analyzing the problem in the context of current circumstances;
3. Establishing standards to address the issue;
4. Choosing a course of action and evaluating their consequences, then selecting the best course of action;
5. Implementing the chosen action while keeping others informed, monitoring progress; and
6. Assessing the outcomes to evaluate the decision's viability (Leigha et al., 2023, p. 70).

Collaboration in decision-making, as noted by Okorie (2012), provides employees with a sense of belonging, which encourages them to invest more effort into their tasks, ultimately enhancing productivity. Nwagwu (2004) highlighted that collaborative decision-making boosts employee morale and enthusiasm. According to Okorie (2012), there are several types of collaborative decision-making in human resource management, including consultation, where members' advice and opinions are sought on various matters, and delegation, where an individual is granted the authority to act on behalf of a superior and make decisions for their benefit.

Implementing staff development strategies in human resource management involves all of the administrator's efforts to retrain academic staff, enabling them to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to enhance their productivity in their roles. Training, as explained by Obasi and Asodike (2007), includes investing in staff to develop skills and competencies that empower them to improve their performance and fully leverage their natural abilities towards achieving organizational goals. The application of development strategies in human resource management is a deliberate plan established by management aimed at achieving enhanced skills, knowledge, attitudes, and proficiency in utilizing tools and modern technologies to boost overall productivity within the university system. Professional development for academic staff equips them with valuable traits for efficiency and a positive mindset (Ogundele, 2001). Human resource development strategies are manifested through training initiatives like conferences, workshops, seminars, peer mentorship programs, and symposia. Obunadike (2007) stated that staff development programs allow academic staff to gain the necessary experience to meet educational objectives. In a study conducted by Akosubo-Ogori (2021) evaluating human resource development programs for teacher productivity in public secondary schools of Bayelsa state, a sample of 220 teachers was examined. The findings revealed no significant difference between male and female teachers in relation to the availability of human resource development programs aimed at enhancing productivity in these schools. It was concluded that programs such as in-service training and capacity-building should be promoted, as they are essential for boosting productivity. Administrators have a responsibility to provide guidance and support to academic staff regarding the importance of retraining programs. According to Obasi and Asodike (2007), training employees equips them with the desirable knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for improved job performance and increased organizational productivity.

Universities across Nigeria, particularly in Bayelsa State, aim to produce a skilled workforce to contribute to national development. However, it seems that a significant number of graduates remain underqualified, unemployed, and wandering the streets. The researchers note that the shortcomings in the university education system, which have led to these issues, may stem from problems related to human resource management, contributing to the decline in educational

quality. Ineffective human resource management can result in decreased organizational productivity, highlighting the necessity for universities to adopt various strategies in managing human resources that will boost organizational efficacy, particularly in the job performance of academic staff. Despite the efforts made by the Bayelsa State government and other education stakeholders, the challenges associated with human resource management persist, underscoring the need to explore the use of motivational techniques, inclusive decision-making, and staff development strategies to improve the productivity of academic personnel in Bayelsa State universities.

### Statement of the problem

University institutions are meant to produce high level manpower for self reliance and to compete favorably in the labour market. However, this laudable objective is hardly realized. Much blame seems to have been pointing fingers to the inefficient management of the human resources responsible for the interpretation of the curriculum. The researchers observe that these personnel are hardly highly motivated or encouraged to attend development programmes or fully incorporated to partake in decision that concern them. Academic staff promotions seem to be unduly delayed, promotion arrears are hardly paid, grants to attend conferences and seminars are hardly received among other challenges. These, may have resulted in poor commitment to work and consequently poor productivity. In as much as education stakeholders have been involved in one way or the other to curb these challenges, a lot more still need to be done especially by school administrators towards increased academic staff job productivity hence the question is: What are the human resources management strategies for enhancing academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate human resources management strategies for enhancing academic job perform for universities in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the aims to:

1. Determine the extent to which utilizing motivational strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State;
2. Examine the extent to which collaborative decision-making strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State; and
3. Determine the extent to which staff development strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State.

### Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study.

1. To what extent do utilizing motivational strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?
2. To what extent do collaborative decision-making strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?
3. To what extent do staff development strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?

### Methodology

The research utilized a descriptive survey research design. The study's population comprised 1,830 academic staff from Niger Delta University, University of Africa in Turu-Orua, and Federal University in Otuoke, specifically from the Faculties of Education, Arts, and Social Sciences. A sample of 428 academic staff, including 200 males and 228 females, was selected from a total population of 2,141 academic staff using a simple random sampling method. The tool employed for the research was a 15-item questionnaire created by the researchers, titled "Human Resources Management Strategies and Academic Staff Job Productivity Questionnaire" (HRMSASJPQ), which was designed on a 4-point Likert scale: Very Highly Utilized (VHU) = 4, Highly Utilized (HU) = 3, Lowly Utilized (LU) = 2, and Very Lowly Utilized (VLU) = 1. The validity of the instrument was confirmed by two experts in educational management and measurement and evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations at Niger Delta University, Amassoma, Bayelsa State. The internal consistency of the items was assessed using Cronbach Alpha, which involved a pilot study conducted with 20 academic staff who were not included in the final sample. A reliability coefficient of 0.81 was achieved, which was deemed sufficient for the study. The researchers, assisted by two research aides, distributed the questionnaire to the participants. Mean and standard deviation analyses were conducted to address the research questions. The data analysis criteria utilized a benchmark mean of 2.50: if the research question responses exceeded 2.50, they were interpreted as highly utilized; conversely, if the responses fell below 2.50, they were considered lowly utilized.

### Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do utilizing motivational strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of male and female respondents on utilizing motivation strategies in the management of human resources for enhancing academic staff job productivity.**

S/NO	Utilizing motivation strategies in the management of human resources	Male		Female		X <sup>2</sup>	DECISION
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
1	Recognize lecturers who have done well increases their morale for more tasking jobs	2.71	0.86	2.87	0.81	2.79	HU
2	Organize end-of –academic session gets together activities to give academic staff a sense of belonging improves the zeal for greater productivity	2.81	0.97	3.02	0.72	2.91	HU
3	Encourage academic staff to be part of academic staff cooperatives to ease certain financial challenges that may have negative effect on their job productivity	2.94	0.93	3.01	0.89	2.98	HU
4	Co-ordinate awards giving to deserving academic staff puts them on a greater track for increased productivity	2.95	1.00	3.40	0.82	3.17	HU
5	Co-ordinate staff appraisals for staff who are due for promotion, encourages staff to be more comfortable with greater commitment towards productivity	2.84	0.91	2.72	0.81	2.78	HU
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>2.93</b>	

Source: Fieldwork 2024

The result on table 1 revealed that all the items had mean scores above the criteria mean of 2.50. They aggregate mean scores of 2.85 and 3.01 for male and female respondents respectively are also above the criterion mean value of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.93 was also above the mean value of 2.50. This is an indication that respondents regarded highly the utilization of motivation strategies in the management of human resources for enhancing academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do collaborative decision-making strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of male and female respondents on utilizing collaborative decision-making strategies in the management of human resources for enhancing academic staff job productivity.**

S/NO	Utilizing collaborative decision making in the management of human resources	Male		Female		X <sup>2</sup>	Decision
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
6	Encourage staff to take part in decisions that get them more involved in the discharge of their duties	2.65	0.99	2.88	0.71	2.77	HU
7	Creates the atmosphere for collaboration decision make that lead to timely job accomplishment	2.52	1.00	2.80	0.76	2.66	HU
8	Ensures participating decision making which increases staff morale for increased job productivity	2.72	0.93	2.96	0.74	2.84	HU
9	Creates a sense of belonging through delegating authority to make informed decisions	2.92	0.93	3.16	0.81	3.04	HU
10	Establish a two-way communication channel through collaboration decision	2.81	0.89	2.80	0.74	2.80	HU

	making, for effective innovative ideas for better academic staff productivity						
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>2.92</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>2.82</b>	

Source: fieldwork 2024

The result on table 2 revealed that all the items had mean scores above the criteria mean of 2.50. They aggregate mean scores of 2.72 and 2.92 for male and female respondents respectively are also above the mean value of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.82 was also above the mean value of 2.50. This is an indication that respondents regarded highly the utilization of collaborative decision-making strategies in the management of human resources for enhancing academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent do staff development strategies in the management of human resources enhance academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of male and female respondents on utilizing staff development strategies in the management of human resources for enhancing academic staff job productivity.**

S/NO	Utilizing staff developmental strategies in the management of human resources	Male		Female		X <sup>2</sup>	DECISION
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
11	Organize workshops from time to time to help academic staff improve their pedagogical skills	2.89	0.96	2.85	0.86	2.87	HU
12	Encourage academic staff to attend seminars so as to be abreast with current issues in education	2.84	0.82	2.72	0.84	2.78	HU
13	Encourage academic staff to attend conferences in order to improve on their knowledge and skills to performs their jobs better	2.82	0.91	3.06	0.86	2.94	HU
14	Organize in-service training to improve on academic staff productivity	2.76	0.92	2.40	0.64	2.58	HU
15	Encourage staff to attend symposia for increased productivity.	2.94	0.93	3.02	0.90	2.98	HU
	<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>2.83</b>	

Source: field work 2024

The result on table 3 revealed that all the items had mean scores above the criteria mean of 2.50. They aggregate mean scores of 2.85 and 2.81 for male and female respondents respectively are also above the mean value of 2.50. The grand mean of 2.83 was also above the mean value of 2.50. This is an indication that respondents regarded highly the utilization of staff development strategies in the management of human resources for enhancing academic staff job productivity in universities in Bayelsa State.

## Discussion

The findings from the study, as illustrated in Table I, indicate that each of the five items has a mean score exceeding the criterion mean value of 2.50 established for this research. Specifically, items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate that the use of motivational strategies such as recognizing work accomplishments, organizing end-of-academic session social events, and managing academic staff awards and promotions significantly boosts job productivity among staff in Bayelsa State universities. This is likely due to the numerous challenges that academic staff encounter while fulfilling their duties, which necessitates high levels of motivation to improve productivity within the university system. Undoubtedly, these findings align with the research conducted by Ogbonnaya, Ahamefula, and Oguh (2017), who discovered that motivation is a crucial factor driving organizational productivity and must be prioritized.

Likewise, the results displayed in Table 2 indicate that all five items represented by serial numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10, designed to respond to the second research question, have mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50 established in this study. The average mean score of 2.72 for male respondents and 2.92 for female respondents further reinforces the consensus among respondents that collaborative decision-making strategies, such as involving academic staff in decisions that affect them, creating an environment for them to express their opinions, and providing opportunities for

them to make informed decisions on behalf of management, are essential in enhancing job productivity among academic staff in universities in Bayelsa State. This is likely because when staff members participate in decisions regarding their welfare, they tend to be more committed to those choices, which positively impacts their job productivity. This aligns with findings from Leigha et al. (2023), which noted that regardless of the level of dependency, employees value leaders who include them in the decision-making process. Additionally, Onyene (2008) found that employees who engage in decision-making align their actions with the agreed-upon outcomes.

The results of this study, as presented in Table 3, reveal that all five items numbered 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 have mean scores above the criterion mean value of 2.50 set earlier for the study. This indicates strong agreement among respondents regarding the use of development strategies, such as conferences, workshops, and seminars, to manage human resources effectively and enhance academic staff performance in universities in Bayelsa State. This is likely due to the reality that if lecturers do not participate in development programs, their expertise will inevitably become outdated. Therefore, they must stay updated with current advancements to boost their productivity levels within the university environment. This study supports the findings of Akosubo-Ogori (2021), who determined that participation in development programs is essential for academic staff to remain productive in the education sector.

### Conclusion:

University education is created to have programs that address the manpower need of the nation hence the need for high level manpower production. To update the standard and level of university education gave rise to need for proper management of human resources in the university. Utilizing motivational strategies collaborative decision-making strategies and staff development strategies in the management of human resources is paramount to enhance academic staff job productivity in Bayelsa State. This is because the academic staffs are duty bound by virtue of their jobs to transmit knowledge and implement educational curriculum in university of Bayelsa state.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Academic staff should be constantly motivated by recognizing and appreciating them regularly for jobs well done
2. University management cadre should include academic staff in the decision makeup process.
3. Academic staff in universities in Bayelsa state should make themselves available to attend development programs from time to time
4. Government and other stakeholders of education should make funds readily available to assist academic staff to attend conferences, workshops and other development programs in other to update their knowledge, skills and attitudes for increased job productivity.

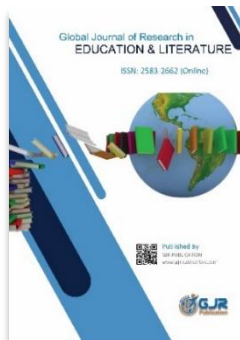
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