

Human Resources Development as a Synergetic Tool in a Challenging Environment

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ABSTRACT

Human resource development encompasses a comprehensive approach to enhance staff with cutting edge skills, knowledge and abilities within a challenging and dynamic context for better performance in service delivery. Hence, provides the opportunities to learn new skills, progress in career, and distribution of resources for employees' tasks and other developmental activities. This particularly becomes important within an academic environment in light of changing and challenging tasks necessitated by changing internal and external business environments. However, the profound ripple-effects of synergy makes HR development a strategic tool for flexibility and adaption. The paper examined and identified the key determinants of HR development: training, education, career progression and succession, coaching, mentoring and performance management at Babcock University towards advocating for harmonization, synergizing and consolidation in the new challenging dispensation. In light of the current statistics, the paper observed that a major financial investment is imperative but the challenges are common and endemic in the face of new skills and technologies required in a university setting, government policies, and finance. Other implications of the model were highlighted and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Human Resources Development, Academic Environment, Human Resources Development Model

1.0 Introduction

The contemporary world of business imposes complexity and uncertainty on how to identify and establish synergy in processes, systems and people. This become more demanding in the domain of HR development as skills that defined success yesterday could trigger failure today. The knowledge of this ever present paradox makes HR development inevitable and strategic in a dynamic world. The fundamental aim of BU HRD is to enhance resources capability in accordance with the belief that human capital is a major source of our competitive advantage. It is therefore germane to know that we ensure the right quality people are available to meet present and future needs. Although challenges exist, our goal is to produce a coherent and comprehensive framework for developing people.

At Babcock University, the development of the workforce is enshrined in the Handbook which guides the process that ensures that workers are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and competences needed to undertake current and future tasks required by this organization. This arises from a clear vision about people's abilities and potentials and operates within the strategic framework on how HRD policies and practices can support the overall achievement of BU's goals.

Our approach over the years have been to develop intellectual capital, promote organizational, team and individual learning by promoting an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary learning culture and environment.

HRD is cost versus business-led in nature and scope. However, individual aspirations and needs have been taken into accounts especially within and outside Babcock environment. From the above mentioned, continuous training, coaching, mentoring and performance management to empower employees' ability to adapt to the fast paced changes in tasks, tools and technologies in order to achieve organizational goals and excellence service delivery have been paramount. BU can facilitate this process of development by planning for it, by allocating organizational resources for the purpose, and by exemplifying an HRD philosophy that values human beings and promotes

their development. However, cost and not policies has been the major challenge over the last five years.

Developing the human resources in HLI is becoming a key challenge worldwide as the world is experiencing frequent changes in skills requirement, industries demands, and technological development according to Ebisine (2015). In addition, the threat that the changing environment of business poses to firm survival particularly in the higher education sector cannot be over-emphasized. The recent government policies and the concomitant reactions have changed the parameters of the environmental indicators. The inability of the government to pay workers' salaries in most of the states of the federation have reduced, in light of the falling oil price and the constant attacks of the oil installations by the militants, which has also reduced the quantity of barrels of oil exported per day and thus the national income. This situation led to reduced states allocations which made most of the states not to be able to meet their monthly expenditure in which the workers' salary is major. This thus affected the academic environment; since majority of these workers have their children in the higher institutions: fees payment is strained and few that intended to send more children to private institutions are barred, yet the number of private higher institutions are increasing further worsening the already peaked competition. In light of the forgoing it is important to analyze the relevance of human resource development as a synergistic tool in ensuring survival and enhanced performance. This study generally identifies the components of human resource development, and specifically points out the vital indicators for survival and enhanced performance and the major interactions are highlighted.

2.0 Concepts and Theoretical Foundation of HRD

The divergent and deconstructive approaches to HRD call for a proper definition of this phenomenon to enable an insightful understanding of the subject matter, although context stimulates various definitions which differ in focus, purpose and goals. Many researchers approached it from the perspective of training and development, career development and organizational development. Vasantham (2015) define it from both the individual and

organizational need as a framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. This focuses on the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities for both personal success and organizational system success. Richard, Swanson, Elwood, Holton (2009) support this view as they refer to HRD as an integrated use of training and development, career development, and organizational development to improve individual and organizational effectiveness. Also, Chalofsky (1992) states that HRD is the practice of increasing the learning capacity of individual, groups, and organizations application of learning-based interventions for the purpose of optimizing human and organizational growth and effectiveness.

Furthermore, Swanson (2009) refers to it as a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving organizational system, work process, team and individual performance. Jones (1981) define HRD as a systematic expansion of people's work-related organizational systems: abilities, focused on the attainment and personal goals. HRD thus includes activities dealing with work design, aptitude, expertise and motivation. On the other hand, Nestorowicz and Park (2015) view HRD as mainly concerned with developing the skills, knowledge and competencies of people and it is people-oriented concept. Nestorowicz et al. (2015) further explain that employees' background, expectations, values etc. vary from person to person. Therefore, each employee should be managed differently based on different principles/approach hence the competencies of human resources are developed through HRD programmes.

Ebisine (2015) contributed by stating that HRD is the strategy or effort made to develop the minds and skills of people. In the same vein, Nadler and Nadler (1989) viewed HRD as an organized learning experience provided by employers within a specified period of time to bring about possibility of performance and improvement and/or personal growth. Despite the numerous definitions, the focus of HRD is on developing the workforce so that the organization and individual employees can accomplish their work goals with reference to service delivery. However, for the purpose of this paper, the definition put forth is derived from Jones (1981), which explains that HRD is systematic expansion of people's work related abilities, focused on the attainment of both organization and personal goals. This definition contradicts some scholars who posit that HRD puts the interests of the organization above the individual benefit and thus turning the organization into the main beneficiary of HRD activities.

This mutual agenda was the basis for the theories adopted: The Humanistic School and Human capital theory of the papers. This is rooted in the assumption that an investment in training and education can contribute to organization and individual; intellectual, social and economic enhancement. This has to do with how people in an organization contribute their knowledge, skills and abilities to enhance organizational capability and the significance of that contribution.

Human Resources Development Practices at Babcock University

There are numerous methods of human resources development. However, the types of HRD used in BU over the past five (5) years are explained and figures presented. The decision about the types of methods are influenced by the number of employees being developed; the contents and the objectives; of developmental and utilization plans; the urgency of development and utilization plans; the facilities and the employee available for the implementation of decided plans; the estimates of the cost of methods, and the expected benefits of the methods.

Educational Training and Development

Education is a life learning process which enables employees acquire knowledge and skills in the core field of study. It is general, broad and gives a holistic picture of life. Training refers to reactive and short term interventions that focus on changing or improving knowledge, skills or attitudes of individuals to perform a particular job or task. These activities mostly comprise skills which are immediately needed and have an immediate benefit, whereas development activities concentrate on new skills and abilities aiming for future job opportunities.

Usually, Training and Development in BU is done through a variety of methods, a few of which are on the job training through delegation and empowerment; off-the job through external short courses, and Post-doctoral fellowships. Other methods include mentoring, coaching and counseling. Coaching refers to activities where employees are treated as partners in achieving both personal and organizational goals, while counselling supports employees to deal with personal problems that could prevent them from achieving organizational goals. Statistics from HR Office with reference to educational training and development (capacity building) and OIE Office from 2011-2015 are encouraging but not without challenges.

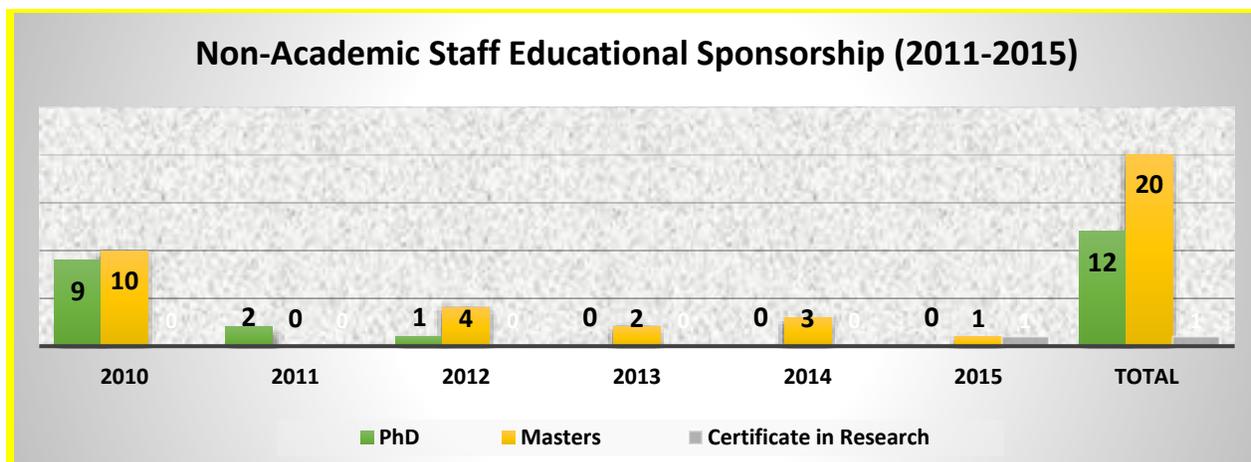
Faculty members educational training and development data indicates that 10 academic members were trained at PhD level in 2011 and 2 staff were trained at Masters Level and 1 MBBS. In the year 2012, the university sponsored 17 PhD faculty members, 14 at Masters Level and MBBS. In addition, 2013 data indicates that 7 faculty members at PhD level and 12 faculty members for Masters Level were trained in order to improve the quality of academic delivery by strengthening the bottom heavy academic staff ratio.

Academic Faculty Data



Source: BUHR, 2016

In 2014, statistical evidences demonstrates that 8 faculty members were trained at PhD level and 4 faculty members for Masters degree and 2 certificate in research. Followed by 16 Academic staff sponsored at PhD degree and 9 staff for Masters degree in 2015. On the aggregate, the University was able to sponsor 58 Academic staff at PhD degrees, 41 at Masters degree, 2 MBBS and 2 certificate in research. At deconstructive analysis of the sponsored persons by department show that Information Technology, Business Administration, Information Resources Management and Political Science got a major attention in the capacity building effort of the University. This resulted from the huge human capital challenged foreseen since 2010.



Source: BUHR, 2016

Report shows that, 9 non-academic staff were sponsored at PhD level and 10 at Masters level in 2010 and 2 PhD in 2011 and no Masters. Followed by 2012, where 1 non-academic member was sponsored at PhD level and 4 at Masters level and the number decreased to 2 Masters degree in year 2013, and in the year 2014, 3 non-academic members were sponsored for Masters degree and 2015 data indicated that one was sponsored. For the entire period of 5 years, a total of 32 non-academic members were sponsored (12 PhD and 20 Masters degree) by the University for future service and quality of work.

With reference to the 12 Non-academic staff sponsored at PhD level, majority emerged from Registry and Bursary and the others were from units considered germane to support the academic staff as the need arises. At the Masters level, 20 non-academic staff were sponsored in that same academic calendar (2011-2015) for the future service and quality of work for the university. It should be noted that PhD training for the non-academic staff was stopped in 2012 to pave way for channeling financial resources in building capacity in the academic staff only until the University funds are robust.

Conferences Sponsorship

The statistical data for Conference Sponsorship for the period 2011-2015 demonstrate that in the year 2011, 26 faculty members were sponsored by the university to attend and participate in International conferences, while 63 faculty staff were sponsored to attend and participate in Local or National conferences. This makes a total of 89 faculty staff were sponsored by the university to participate in conferences. The result for 2012 was higher with 22 faculty members who attended

and participated in International conferences, and 69 faculty members in National (local) conferences. This makes a total of 91 faculty members participated in conferences as a whole in this year and were sponsored by the university.



Source: BUHR, 2016

In the year 2013, 41 faculty attended and participated in International conferences and 173 faculty members attended National conferences with a total number of 214 faculty sponsored for conferences in 2013. In addition, 25 faculty attended and participated in International conferences and 148 faculty members attended National conferences (total 173) sponsored by the university in 2014. In 2015, 50 faculty members attended International conferences and 124 faculty staff members attended and participated in National conferences (total 174) at the university's expense. The conference sponsorship was not limited to Academic staff only as the Non-Academic staff enjoyed the same privilege at Local and International conferences. 5 staff were sponsored for International conference and 36 National conference in 2011. Also, 13 staff were sponsored for International conferences while 55 staff attended National conferences in 2012.



Source: BUHR, 2016

The data further revealed that 3 Non-Academic staff attended International conferences and 56 Local conferences in 2013 while in 2014, 2 were International and 69 National conferences. In 2015, 11 staff were sponsored for International conferences and 49 Local conferences with a total of 299 sponsored conferences from 2011 to 2015.

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL) Academic staff

ILF is a unique, strategic, and intentional programme by BU through the office of institutional effectiveness with the goal of incorporating Christian principles, values and beliefs into teaching and learning in the classroom setting. Through IFL, academic staff are able to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a secured and trustworthy environment. Since students do not have the same intellectual capabilities, the need to be more tactical in approach to teaching and not lecturing cannot be overemphasized. Hence, the program is divided into three modules: Learning from Jesus, The Master Teacher; Cooperative Learning and Biblical Foundation. Statistical data presents that between 2011 and 2015, 152 academic staff graduated from the IFL programme.

Year	Number of Participants
2011	11
2012	9
2013	13
2014	33
2015	86
Total	152

Source: BUOIE, 2016

In 2011, 11 academic staff participated in IFL, in 2012 and 2013, 9 and 13 academic staff participated respectively and in 2014, 33 participated while, in 2015, 86 academic staff participated in IFL programme.

Career Progression and Promotion

This is a formalized HRD programme which consider career track, designed to expand learning and competencies for upward promotion. It involves a comprehensive review of annual performance by the supervisor which provides the basis for key managerial decisions such as allocation of duties and responsibilities, pay, and empowerment. Ultimately, these measures intend to cause a greater efficiency and effectiveness through a fully committed and skilled employees, who perform their work in alignment with the goals of their organization.

Faculty

The statistical evidence demonstrates that academic staff progression and promotion from 2011-2015 recorded a progressive improvement, along the categories of Lecturer II (20), Lecturer I (57), Senior Lecturer (33), Associate Professor (29), and Professor (31). In 2011, 11 faculty members were promoted in the category of lecturer II, 8 faculty members in lecturer I, 1 faculty member in senior lecturer, 4 faculty members in associate professors and 3 faculty members in the category of professors. The statistical data also demonstrate that in 2012, 2 faculty were promoted in the category of lecturer II, 11 in lecturer I, 1 faculty member as senior lecturer, 2 faculty as associate professors and 2 faculty members in the category of professor.

Year	Lecturer II	Lecturer I	Senior Lecturer	Associate Prof.	Professor	190
2011	11	8	1	4	3	
2012	2	11	1	2	2	
2013	9	8	6	12	15	
2014	12	26	14	5	6	
2015	6	4	11	6	5	
Total	40	57	33	29	31	

Source: BUHR, 2016

It is clear that in the year 2013, 9 faculty members were promoted in the category of lecturer II, 8 faculty in the category of lecturer I, 6 faculty members in senior lecturer category, 12 faculty members in the category of associate professors and 15 faculty members in the category of

professors. The data further demonstrates that in 2014, 12 faculty members were promoted in the category of lecturer II, 26 faculty in category of lecturer I, 14 faculty in the category of senior lecturer, 5 faculty in category of associate professors and 6 faculty members in category of professors. The data for 2015 demonstrates that 6 faculty members were promoted in the category of lecturer II, 4 faculty in lecturer I, 11 faculty members in the category of senior lecturer, 6 faculty members in the category of associate professors and 5 faculty members in the category of professors.

Non-Academic Staff

The non-academic staff promotion and progression was declassified into Junior and Senior Cadre with positive progression across the categories. The data of Junior Cadre shows that promotion occurred at Level 3 to Level 7 with Level 3 recording a total of 7 persons promotion, Level 4, 18 individuals, Level 5, 19 workers, Level 6, 17 staff, and Level 7, 16 employees of the University between 2011 and 2015. Analysis of the data by Levels in each year shows that in the year 2011, for junior cadre staff, 2 staff were promoted in category of level 3, 2 staff in category of level 4, 1 staff in category of level 5, 1 staff in category of level 6, and 1 staff was promoted in category of level 7.

Junior Cadre

Year	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	77
2011	2	2	1	1	1	
2012	2	3	1	0	2	
2013	0	7	5	11	11	
2014	1	2	6	3	2	
2015	2	4	6	2	0	
Total	7	18	19	17	16	

Source: BUHR, 2016

It is clearly observed that in the year 2012, 2 staff were promoted in category of level 3, 3 staff in level 4, 1 staff in level 5, no staff was promoted in category of level 6 and 2 staff was promoted in category of level 7. The statistics further demonstrate that in the year 2013, for junior cadre staff, no staff was promoted in category of level 3, 7 staff were promoted in category of level 4, 5 staff in level 5, 11 staff in level 6 and 11 staff in category of level 7. In 2014, 1 staff was promoted in

category of level 3, 2 staff in category of level 4, 6 staff in level 5, 3 staff in level 6 and 2 staff were promoted in category of level 7. The statistics also shows that in 2015, 2 staff were promoted in category of level 3, 4 staff in level 4, 6 staff in level 5, 2 staff in category of level 6 and no staff was promoted in category of level 7.

Senior Cadre

On the aggregate for senior cadre staff promotion from 2011-2015, 56 staff were promoted in category of level 9, 86 staff in level 10, 42 staff in the category of level 12, 12 staff in level 13, and 7 staff in the category of level 14.

Year	Level 9	Level 10	Level 12	Level 13	Level 14	203
2011	3	10	5	0	0	
2012	10	21	4	4	3	
2013	16	18	17	3	3	
2014	10	17	8	5	1	
2015	17	20	8	0	0	
Total	56	86	42	12	7	

Source: BUHR, 2016

The data demonstrates that in 2011, among senior cadre staff, 3 staff were promoted in the category of level 9, 10 staff in level 10, 5 staff in the category of level 12, none was promoted in category of level 13, and level 14. The statistical evidence also shows that in 2012, 10 staff were promoted in the category of level 9, 21 staff in level 10, 4 staff in the category of level 12, 4 staff in the category of level 13, and 3 staff in the category of level 14. It is shown from the statistics that in 2013, 16 staff were promoted in level 9, 18 staff in the category of level 10, 17 staff in level 12, 3 in the category of level 13, and 3 staff in level 14. In 2014, 10 staff were promoted in level 9, 17 staff in the category of level 10, 8 staff in level 12, 5 in the category of level 13, and 1 staff in the category of level 14. As at 2015, 17 staff were promoted to the category of level 9, 20 staff in the category of level 10, 8 staff in category of level 12, none was promoted in category of level 13, and level 14 respectively.

Mentorship and Coaching Activities

S/N	Name	Previous Position in BU	New Appointment
1.	Professor Aina	Provost, College of Management & Social Sciences	VC, Adeleke Univ., Caleb University
2.	Prof Alao	Provost, College of Management & Social Sciences	Adeleke University
3.	Prof Kayode Ogunwenmo	Director, Office of Research & Int'l Cooperation	President, Adventist University of West Africa, Liberia
4.	Prof Samson Nwaomah	Dean, EAH	AUA, Kenya
5.	Dr. (Mrs.) Angela Nwaomah	Principal Asst. Registrar	AUA, Kenya
6.	Prof Chimezie C. Omeonu	DVC, Academics	VC, Proposed Clifford University
7.	Prof Solomon A. Adebola	Dean, BBS/Dir, BCED	Adeleke University
8.	Prof Ademola S. Tayo	Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies	BU
9.	Dr. (Mrs.) Uloma Onuoha	Associate Prof, IRM	Librarian, Adeleke University
10.	Dr. (Mrs.) Bola C. Atulomah	Deputy Librarian	Adeleke University
11.	Dr. Kelvin Onongha	AVP, Student Development	AUA, Kenya
12.	Dr. Elems Ugochukwu	Lecturer I, Religious Studies	Youth Ministry Dir., WAD

The table above presents a brief of the results of mentorship and coaching activities between 2011 and 2015. These academic and non-academic staff were mentored and coached and they are now mentoring and coaching other staff both locally and internationally.

Importance of HRD to Academic Environment

The importance of HRD is to improve the staff technical expertise to enable them perform their jobs efficiently and effectively and also adopt to changes in technological and advancement in science. Thus, it enhances learning, human potential and high performance in work –related system; also increases skills of the individuals, as well as their personal earnings and the manpower needed for economic development. It also promotes competency and efficiency to facilitate and accomplish the achievement of organizational mission, vision, objectives and goals. In the long run, Nestorowicz and Park (2015) explain that the purpose of HRD is twofold; based on the identified three distinct functions of HRD which are Training and Development, Organizational Development, and Career Development. This perfectly illustrate that HRD affects both the development of individuals and organizations. Therefore, on one hand it provides opportunities for employees to improve their skills, on the other hand, it aims for an efficient utilization of human resource in order to meet organizational objectives.

CHALLENGES:

There is no doubt that human is an important part of any organization, but due to rapid changes in the business world, globalization, change in customer taste and habits, new techniques of production, human, in the organization are now facing different kind of problems to cope with the situation in today's business environment. The modern business cannot effectively operate in the business world if the human force are not well equipped with the latest technology and techniques. This is the responsibility of the HR department in collaboration with the line managers to properly train the work force in order to understand the basic need for the human-force to achieve the competitive advantages of business in 21st century. It is imperative therefore, for organizations to prepare their human resources keeping in view the global environment or market place to ensure competitive advantage. However, there are many variables that influence human resource development. Some are listed below:

Economic condition: One of the biggest external influences is the shape of the current Nigerian economy. Not only does it affect the talent pool, but it has affected our ability to hire anyone, recruit more students and increase tuition fee and salary.

New skills and Technology: New technology brings new skills requirements. Ability to continually figure out ways to use new technology more successfully will create sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, the institution needs to be aware of proficiencies and training needs in order to take advantage of the technological initiatives better and quicker than her competitors. Acquisition and utilization of new skills and technology are further hindered by finance, hence challenged beyond our current capacity

Retention of the employees: The goal of BU is usually to decrease employee turnover, thereby decreasing training costs, recruitment costs and loss of talent and organizational knowledge. One of the ways to motivate employees to remain in the organization is to assist in their career development. However, the current exit bring to mind a mixed blessing and lost in terms of the talents and experienced staff that are going for greener pastures.

Workforce Demographics – As BU older generation retires and a new generation enters the workforce, the human resources department is challenged with sourcing new and experienced staff to replace the aging workers.

Regular Promotion: This is advancement from one cadre to another on parity scale (three years for academic and 4years for non-academic) This is based on annual performance evaluation assessed by the HOD/HOU and coordinated by HR. The finances to sustain this activity are limited and at times unavailable.

Lack of Training Management by Line Managers: Training requires cooperation of line manager in selecting training and developmental needs for each staff under their supervision and department/unit in general. This process has not been taken advantage of to its fullest level as expected, except for in-house training occasionally organized by OIE and HR.

Performance Appraisal: Performance appraisal still reflects years of service loyalty to determine promotion much more than performance output and customer feedback.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Now, more than ever before, human resource development is recognized as being critical to the survival and success of organizations. Developing the human resources in HEI is becoming a key challenge in the face of unstable economy. This is because HEI need to adapt to the fast paced changes in tasks, tools and technologies in order to achieve institutional goals and excellent service delivery.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the concepts of human resources development and the challenges in the current business environment and the importance of human resources development. The paper also highlighted various techniques/methods for human resources development such as on-the-job training, apprenticeship, simulation and supplementary training programme. Furthermore, the paper examined the imperatives of human resources development. Therefore, it is recommended that there should be:

1. More regular in-service programmes, workshops, seminars and conferences for both academic and non-academic staff to inform them of new development in their discipline.
2. Establishing of BU inter and trans-disciplinary training to prepare the staff adequately for current or future position. The HRD activities can be aligned with the strategic goals and this will advance staff members competencies and skills to assume tasks aligned with the strategic direction of the university.

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