Assessment of Managerial Skills: A Training Need for Senior Administrators in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed managerial skills as a training need for senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population of 363 respondents from the eight tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The stratified random sample technique was employed to draw the population which also served as the sample size for the study. Data collecting instrument was titled; Assessment of Managerial Skills for Training Need of Senior Administrators Assessment Scale. A reliability index of 0.75 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha after subjecting the instrument to content and face validities by five experts. Data were analysed using the mean and standard deviation for the research question, while the z-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that various managerial skills were obtained from the training of senior administrators. These skills enabled the administrators to make good decision to management and to achieve set goals. The null hypothesis was not rejected. Recommendations were also made amongst them was that management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State should design training programmes for the senior administrators in their institutions.

Keywords: Assessment, Managerial skills, Training need, Administrators

Introduction

Every organisation requires training for effective office administration. Oshiogwe, (2005) noted that for the set goals of an organisation to be achieved effectively, there must be a commensurate training given. To this end, Asare-Bediako, (2002) maintained that employees must be trained and developed to meet their own career needs and the needs of the organisation. This was further collaborated by Ohabunwo’s (1999) assertion that organisations that trained their employees well gave managers and supervisors to confidently delegate authority to their subordinate. Thus, well trained employees make a better and economic use of materials and equipment to minimize wattages.

Accordingly, tertiary institution is a social organisation directed at imparting knowledge and skills for effective functioning of individual in the society. These institutions are usually managed by senior administrators charged with the responsibilities of planning for human
resources needs, recruitment, training and development, promotion and transfer, redundancy and retirement, welfare and safety, wages and salaries administration, collective bargaining and dealings with most aspects of industrial relations. These responsibilities obviously demand an improved knowledge and skills which could only be got through training and development. It is not surprising that Atakpa (2000) noted that managerial training is the development of the administrative personnel skills, knowledge, and attitude to perform to standard required.

Robert (2000) also averred that managerial training for administrative personnel is to give a wider general knowledge of new technique or a broader outlook which include:

a) improve efficiency and moral  
b) introduce new techniques  
c) provide for succession, enabling qualified replacement to be available  
d) raise the standard of unskilled personnel, thus, helping overcome labour shortages  
e) develop supervisors and decrease the amount of supervision needed  
f) lead to a reduction in scrap rate and improve machine utilisation.

A cursory look at the relevance of managerial skills suggests that managerial training given to administrative personnel enhances the needed skills of administration and management for the attainment of the organisation goals. It exposes the senior administrators in developing operative procedures, forms and system practices workflow as well as determining training needs to improve performance, initiating informal measures to correct misconducts, or making recommendations.

Consequently, these functions need to be assessed in order to determine the gap between ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be’. An assessment of training can serve as an effective tool to clarifying problems and identify appropriate intervention or solution. By clearly identifying problems, finite resources can be channeled towards developing and implementing a feasible and applicable solution. With the rapid increase in technological advancement, and the complexity of human and societal nature, senior administrators in tertiary institution demands a commensurate skills adjustment to be able to cope in the administration of the institution. This underscores the fact that the functions, activities of senior administrators have gone more than performing the routine office activities, to more and broader administrative activities. It is against this background that attempt is made to critically assess managerial skills as a training need for senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem
It is generally acknowledged that administrators in any organisation are invaluable asset for the growth and development of the organisation (Asare-Bediako, 2002). Assessment of managerial skills necessary for the training of senior administrators plays a major role in promoting economic growth with equity, benefit individuals, institutions and can make labour markets function better (Atakpa, 2000). However, it seems that most senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State do not have the requisite managerial skills that are required for managing the institutions; hence, the need to assess the managerial skills necessary for the training of senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The researchers tend to fill the gap existing between the senior administrators present level of managerial skills and the required managerial skills needed for effective administration of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
**Objective of the Study**

The aim of this study was to assess managerial skills required for the training need of senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the study is designed to:

- Assess the managerial skills necessary for training of senior administrators in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Research Question**

The research question posed in the study is as follows:

- What are the managerial skills necessary for the training of senior administrators in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

**Hypothesis**

The hypothesis of this study was stated in a null form and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

$H_0$: There is no significance difference between the mean scores of male and female senior administrators on the managerial skills necessary for the training of senior administrators in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. Osuala (2000) stipulated that this design gives a picture of a situation with a full understanding of the phenomena for making a wide range of policy decisions. The study population was three hundred and sixty three (363) senior administrators variously spread across the eight tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The breakdown of the population shows there are Vice Chancellors (3), Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration (3), Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (1), Provosts (6), Deputy Provosts (6), Rector (1), Deputy Rector (1), Registrars (7), Deputy Registrars (55), Bursars (7), Deans (54), Directors (13), Heads of Departments (204), Principal (1) and Vice Principal (1) respectively. The sample size for the study was 363 respondents (100% of the entire population). The stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample. Data collecting instrument was titled, ‘Assessment of Managerial Skills for Training Need of Senior Administrators Assessment Scale’ (AMSTNSAAS). It contains 12 items structured on a 4-point scale of very much necessary(4-points), much necessary (3-points), some what necessary (2) and not necessary (1-point), and was later subjected to content and face validities by the researcher’s supervisors and three other experts in the Department of Educational Management from the University of Port Harcourt. A reliability index of 0.75 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha. Data collected from respondents were analysed using the mean and standard deviation to answer the research question, while the z-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Research Question:**

What are the managerial skills necessary for the training of senior administrators in the tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

**Table 1:** Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the managerial skills for training of senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Response/Score</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ability to meet and uphold institution’s rules and regulations.</td>
<td>VMN 173</td>
<td>MN 90</td>
<td>SN 60</td>
<td>NN 40</td>
<td>363 3.1 0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Make good decisions to management so as to achieve set goals.</td>
<td>115 108</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>363 2.4 1.83</td>
<td>Somewhat Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Recognize and respect the lines of authority and chains of command.</td>
<td>165 100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>363 3.1 0.97</td>
<td>Much Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Delegate functions to subordinates to meet the scheduled period of work.</td>
<td>110 80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>363 2.6 1.11</td>
<td>Somewhat Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ability to convince others to work rather than eye services.</td>
<td>107 95</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>363 2.6 0.81</td>
<td>Somewhat Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Develop and cultivate good sense of tack.</td>
<td>174 98</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>363 3.0 1.07</td>
<td>Much Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Identify and separate awkward problems and taking good alternative course of action.</td>
<td>196 58</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>363 3.1 1.06</td>
<td>Very much Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Plan the future office work to avoid delay in goal attainment.</td>
<td>160 89</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>363 2.9 1.14</td>
<td>Very much Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ability to measure the performance of the department against the standards.</td>
<td>181 74</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>363 3.0 1.07</td>
<td>Much Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Determine good and best methods to action.</td>
<td>106 78</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>363 2.5 1.12</td>
<td>Somewhat Necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Ability to follow-up student’s crisis when</td>
<td>40 60</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>363 1.8 1.04</td>
<td>Not Necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the need arises.

12. Being able to motivate subordinates even when the tasks are not meant for them.

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>140</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>Much Necessary</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Grand Mean**

|   | 2.79 |

The result in table 1 shows that the senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State needed the ability to meet and uphold the institution’s rules and regulations (X=3.11; SD=0.84), make good decisions to management so as to achieve set goals (X=2.49; SD=1.83), recognise and respect the lines of authority and chains of command (X=3.11; SD=0.97). The table reveals that the senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State delegated functions to subordinates to meet or cover the schedule period of work (X=2.62; SD=1.11), needed the ability to convince others to work rather than eye-service (X=2.66; SD=0.81) and can develop and cultivate good sense of tact (X=3.09; SD=1.07). The table also presents that the senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State have the ability to identify and separate awkward problems and taking good alternative course of action (X=3.12; SD=1.06), plan the future office work to avoid delay in goal attainment (X=2.96; SD=1.14) and poses the ability to measure the performance of the department against the standard (X=3.08; SD=1.07). The table further shows that the senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State do not follow up students crises when the need arises (X=1.89; SD=0.04), have the ability to determine good and best methods to actions (X=2.58; SD=1.12) and are able to motivate subordinates even when the task are not meant for them (X=2.28; SD=1.14).

The grand mean (X) for the extent to which the senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State acquired the managerial skills as an aspect of their training needs is 2.79, which is greater than the average point of 2.50. This implies that senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State adequately acquired the managerial skills as an aspect of their training needs to enable them function effectively.

**Hypothesis**: There is no significance difference between the mean scores of male and female senior administrators on the managerial skills for the training of senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State as an aspect of their training needs.

**Table 2**: Z-test comparison of mean scores of male and female senior administrators on managerial skills for the training of senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Z-Calculated</th>
<th>Z-Critical value</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.88*</td>
<td>±1.96</td>
<td>Ho₁ is accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean and standard deviation scores of male and female senior administrators of tertiary institutions in Rivers State on the managerial skills to enable them function effectively are
presented in table 2. The mean and standard deviation for male was (3.45, 0.08) and (3.31, 0.05) for female. Since the calculated z-test was 0.88 and the critical value of the z-test was 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is hereby not rejected. This implies that significant difference was not found in the responses of male and female senior administrators on the managerial skills for the training of senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings
Findings of the study revealed that senior administrators in tertiary institutions in Rivers State are exposed to various managerial skills during their trainings. Respondents affirmed that some of the managerial skills that they acquired during these trainings were skills of sound judgment to management to achieve set goals and the ability to solve inter personal conflicts. Osuala (2000) gave credence to the finding when he noted that specialised skill is necessary by administrators to be able to perform their duties effectively. Nwachukwu (2007) added that the skills are needed for influencing person in an organisation to work in line with organisational goals and objectives.

Conclusion
Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. The achievement of an organisational goals in a competitive society characterized with technological change and great expectation from senior administrators, the acquisition of managerial skills not only seen as a necessity but a sine-quo-non for the realization of the organisational goals. Thus, as a training need, administrators are provided with the nitty-gritty of the organisation in a viewing to achieving greater productivity. Some of the skills acquired by the administrators in institutions in Rivers State are manifested in their ability to meet and uphold institution’s rules and regulations, and in terms of making of sound decisions to achieve set goals.

Recommendations
In view of the above, the following recommendations were made.
1. The management of tertiary institutions in Rivers State should design training programmes for the senior administrators in their institutions.
2. Experts in training from the tertiary institutions should be made to design the content of the training programmes.
3. Promotion of staff should not be made only with the criteria of years spent but also on the areas of skills/performance of the senior administrators.

References

