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TRAINING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING AS DETERMINANTS OF STAFF JOB PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC POLYTECHNICS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated training and succession planning as determinants of staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study, while two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The instruments that were used for data collection were questionnaires titled "Human Resource Capacity Building Strategies Questionnaire (HRCBSQ)" and Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (SJPQ). The questionnaires were structured on a four-point rating scale with response modes of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The questionnaires were validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Trial testing was carried out on30 staff in Plateau State Polytechnic Jos, Nigeria. The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach Alpha reliability and the result yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86for HRCBSQ and 0.92 for SJPQ. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the two research questions and test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that there is a significant positive relationship between human resources capacity building strategies such as training and succession planning in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria. The study concludes that effective human resource capacity building strategies enhance staff job performance. Therefore, the study recommended among others that the management of public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria should institutionalize continuous professional development programmes by organizing regular workshops, seminars, conferences and mentoring sessions for both academic and non-academic staff. Governing Councils of public polytechnics should design and implement structured succession planning frameworks that identify and mentor potential leaders within the system.

Keywords: Human resource capacity building strategies, training, succession planning, staff job performance

Introduction

The target of any corporate organization is to achieve high performance which will help to meet up with its objectives. To this end, staff job performance is central to the attainment of organizational goals and long-term competitiveness of educational institutions, including polytechnics (Adeyeye & Erwat, 2024). However, public polytechnics globally and particularly in Nigeria, continue to experience low staff job performance due to factors such as inadequate incentives, poor communication and limited career development opportunities, which negatively affect service delivery and institutional growth (Dartey-Baah, 2020). In Benue State, challenges in staff performance related to instructional delivery, student management, academic record keeping and guidance services appear to hinder the effectiveness and quality of public polytechnics. This aligns with the assertion that no organization can successfully achieve its objectives without improved staff job performance (Bell & Bashar, 2024).

Staff job performance refers to the extent to which employees effectively and efficiently execute assigned duties in line with organizational standards and resource utilization (Eze, 2020), as well as the overall value contributed by employees over time (Motowildo & Schmidt, 2017). In public polytechnics, this encompasses both academic and non-academic responsibilities such as teaching, research, administration, and community service (Idris, 2024). Polytechnics play a vital role in manpower training, skills acquisition, and national development through technical and vocational education, offering National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014; National Board for Technical Education, 2021). In Benue State, public polytechnics are designed to equip individuals with practical, vocational and functional technical skills necessary for socioeconomic development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

Also, in Benue State of Nigeria, the public polytechnics are established to provide technical education and produce highly technical skilled for individuals to solve scientific and technological challenges facing Benue State and Nigeria at large. For this objective to be achieved, staff must be able to perform their duties maximally (Uwaifo, 2016). Thus, the importance of job staff performance cannot be overemphasized in public polytechnics for the achievement of their objectives. While staff job performance is essential in achieving organizational objectives Armstrong and Taylor (2024) maintain that one of the ways in which staff job performance can be improved and sustained is through administrators' application of human resource capacity building strategies.

Human resource capacity building strategies involves strategic initiatives such as training and development, mentorship programmes and continuous learning opportunities for enhancing an organization's workforce capabilities (Yawe & Ivahger, 2016).Application of human resources capacity building strategies is defined as the use of tactics, techniques or approaches put in place to encourage human resources of the school improve their skills, competencies and expertise in achieving job objectives (Aya-Okorie, 2016).According Adeyeye and Erwat (2024), in public polytechnics, human resources capacity building strategies which seem to affect staff job performance are training and succession planning.

Training is one of the human resources capacity building strategies that could be applied by polytechnic administrators. Armstrong (2021) defines training as the process of equipping staff with the necessary skills required to perform their jobs satisfactorily. Training of the human resources could be informed of short courses, conferences, seminars and workshops that prepare the human resources to face the wide array of tasks in polytechnics. However, it seems that many staff in public polytechnics lack relevant skills and competencies to effectively perform their duties. Eze-Thecla (2016) in their study revealed that staff training such as seminars and mentoring have a significant positive impact on teachers' productivity to a great extent. Hervie and Winful (2018) also reported that training has a significant positive impact on teachers' performance. This situation seems to negatively affect staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria. Oguntimehin and Olowojoba (2022) argue that training is essential for human resources capacity building for improved job performance as it also enables organizations to maintain succession planning.

Succession planning is a strategic process within organizations aimed at identifying and developing employees to fill key leadership positions as they become available (Njoku & Okoli,2020).This approach ensures business continuity by preparing internal candidates to seamlessly transition into critical roles, thereby maintaining operational stability and preserving institutional knowledge (Iwu, 2020).In public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria, the challenge of succession planning seems to affect staff job performance. According to Onwuka, Ekwulugo, Dibua and Ezeanyim (2017), succession management has a significant positive relationship with organizational survival in selected transport companies in Onitsha, Nigeria. Ekeziel and Onuoha (2023) in a related study also found a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of succession planning and the measures of performance in transport companies in Rivers State. With application of succession planning strategy, public polytechnics in Benue State may mitigate risks associated with leadership transitions and ensure long-term achievement of business objectives through enhanced employee engagement. It is based on the above background that the present study sought to investigate training and succession planning as determinants staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

It is fundamental to state that staff job performance could be high if organizations value human resource capacity building and apply appropriate strategies in building human resources' skills, competencies, expertise. However, report by Odagba (2016) indicates that public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria, are experiencing low staff job performance despite the implementation of various human resource strategies such as training, succession planning, employee engagement, performance recognition and supervision. The ineffectiveness observed in staff job performance such as managing student course registration, preparing lectures, delivering instruction, maintaining academic records, providing guidance and counselling services and processing student admission applications may result from various issues related to the application of human resource capacity-building strategies. The researcher observed that some staff members lack the requisite skills and competencies, indicating that existing training programmes may be insufficient. This observation aligns with the findings of Ugbomhe and Ogie (2018), who reported reluctance among top executives to mentor and prepare potential successors for leadership roles, resulting in capacity gaps when key positions become vacant may be as a result of ineffective succession planning in Nigerian polytechnics. Against this backdrop, the present study investigated training and succession planning as determinants of staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate training and succession planning and as determinants of staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria.
2. ascertain the relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory by Becker Gary (1964). The theory posits that investment in education, training skills acquisition and health enhances the productive capacity of individuals in much the same way that investment in physical capital improves production output. The theory assumes that individuals and organizations incur costs in training and development with the expectation of future returns in the form of increased productivity, efficiency and earnings. In relation to a study on training and succession planning as determinants of staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria, the theory provides a strong theoretical foundation by explaining that systematic investments in staff development strategies such as in-service training, workshops, professional development programmes and further education are likely to improve employees' knowledge, competencies and technical skills, which in turn enhance their job performance, institutional effectiveness, and overall organizational productivity. Thus, Human Capital Theory justifies examining the extent to training and succession planning contribute to improved staff performance outcomes in public polytechnics.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 3,648 (2,218 academic staff and 1,430 non-academic staff) staff in four public polytechnics in Benue State (Establishment Units of Public Polytechnics in Benue State, 2025). The sample size consists 365 or 10% of 3,648 staff in four public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria. This is considered adequate since it is in line with Nworgwu (2015) who recommend that where the population is more than 1000, 5% and above is considered suitable as sample for a study. The instrument used for data collection was two researcher's structured questionnaires titled "Human Resource Capacity Building Strategies Questionnaire (HRCBSQ)" and Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (SJPQ) were used for data collection. The HRCBSQ was made up of 10 items, while the SJPQ also contained 10 items. The instrument was structured on four-point rating scale of Strong Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (1)=1. Face and content validity of the questionnaire was carried out by three research experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and it yielded reliability coefficients of 0.84for HRCBSQ and 0.86 for SJPQ. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for answering research questions was that if r value is 0.00−0.19, there is a very weak relationship. If it is 0.20−0.39, there is a weak relationship. If it is 0.40−0.59, there is a moderate relationship. If it is 0.60−0.79, there is a strong relationship and if it is 0.80−1.00, there is a very strong relationship. For the test of hypotheses if P-value is greater than alpha value (0.05), there is positive significant relationship, therefore the null hypothesis would not be rejected (Creswell& Creswell, 2018). However, if it is otherwise, there is negative relationship and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria?

Table 1: *Correlation between Training Strategy and Staff Job Performance in Public Polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria*

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*r*	Decision
Training Strategy	365	2.95	0.99		
				0.53	Moderate Positive Relationship
Staff Job Performance	365	2.77	1.04		

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Work, 2026

The result presented in table 1 indicates that the mean score for training strategy (M = 2.95) is slightly higher than that of staff job performance (M = 2.77). The correlation coefficient (r = 0.53) reveals a moderate positive relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics?

Table 2: *Correlation between Succession Planning Strategy and Staff Job Performance in Public Polytechnics*

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*r*	Decision
Succession Planning Strategy	365	3.05	0.86		
				0.92	Very Strong Positive Relationship
Staff Job Performance	365	2.73	1.10		

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Work, 2026

The result presented in table 2 indicates that the mean score for succession planning strategy (M = 3.05) is slightly higher than that of staff job performance (M = 2.73). The correlation coefficient (r = 0.92) reveals a very strong positive relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria.

Table 3: *Test of Significant Correlation of School Training Strategy and Staff Job Performance in Public Polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria*

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*r*	*P*	Decision
Training Strategy	365	2.95	0.99			
				0.53	0.000	Moderate Significant Positive Relationship
Staff Job Performance	365	2.77	1.04			

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Work, 2026

The result in Table 3 shows that $r = 0.53$; $p < 0.05$. Since the calculated p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria was rejected. This implies that there is moderate significant positive relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics.

Table 4: *Test of Significant Correlation of School Succession Planning Strategy and Staff Job Performance in Public Polytechnics*

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	*SD*	*r*	*P*	Decision
Succession Planning Strategy	365	3.05	0.86	0.92	0.000	Very Strong Significant Positive Relationship
Staff Job Performance	365	2.73	1.10			

* Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Work, 2026

The result in Table 4 shows that $r = 0.92$; $p < 0.05$. Since the calculated p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics was rejected. This implies that there is very strong significant positive relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that there is a moderate significant positive relationship between training strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria. The findings agreed with those of Eze-Thecla (2016) whose study revealed that staff training such as seminars and mentoring have a significant positive impact on teachers' productivity to a great extent. The findings further agreed with that of Hervie and Winful (2018), who reported that training has a significant positive impact on teachers' performance. These findings suggested that training enhances employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes, thereby improving their efficiency, creativity and commitment to institutional goals. This aligns the assumption of the Human Capital theory which upheld that education and training is an investment in human capital which brings about improved return on investment. The return on investment could be achieved in high staff productivity in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria.

The second finding of the study revealed that there is a very strong significant positive relationship between succession planning strategy and staff job performance in public polytechnics. The finding aligned with those of Onwuka, Ekwulugo, Dibua and Ezeanyim (2017), whose study revealed that succession management has a significant positive relationship with organizational survival in selected transport companies in Onitsha, Nigeria. The finding also agreed with those of Ekeziel and Onuoha (2023), whose study showed a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of succession planning and the measures of performance in transport companies in Rivers State. These findings suggested that succession planning promotes continuity in leadership, reduces uncertainty in organizational transitions and boosts employee morale by providing clear career advancement pathways. This aligns with Human Capital theory idea that training the human capital of the organization promotes succession planning by developing and building capacities of the staff for future leadership roles and improved job performance. This can be applicable in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a positive significant relationship of training and succession planning with staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria. This means that the more training is given to staff and

succession planning is carried out to groom future leaders to take up vacant job positions among staff, the more staff job performance in public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management of public polytechnics in Benue State, Nigeria should institutionalize continuous professional development programmes by organizing regular workshops, seminars, conferences and mentoring sessions for both academic and non-academic staff.
2. Governing Councils of public polytechnics should design and implement structured succession planning frameworks that identify and mentor potential leaders within the system.

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