



# Educational Policies and Academic Staff Capacity Development in Federal Universities in Nigeria

**Effiom Eyo Ekpo**

Institute of Public Policy and Administration  
University of Calabar

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5564-8424>  
[effiomeyoe@gmail.com](mailto:effiomeyoe@gmail.com)

**Emeka Samuel Nnaji**

Department of Educational Management  
University of Calabar

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0023-7166>  
[nnajiemeka88@yahoo.com](mailto:nnajiemeka88@yahoo.com)

**Deborah Bombum Onabe**

Department of Educational Management  
University of Calabar

[deborahonabe17@gmail.com](mailto:deborahonabe17@gmail.com)

**Sylvia Victor Ovat**

Department of Educational Management  
University of Calabar

[sylviaovat@gmail.com](mailto:sylviaovat@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

In education, capacity development has been usually associated with the development of the human competence, the creation and strengthening of educational institutions. For planning and delivery of educational services. Education enables high skillfulness of human resource that enhances input maximization which brings unquantifiable benefits to individuals in the societies. Premised on the above. This study was carried out to investigate educational policies and Academic Staff Capacity Development in Federal Universities in Nigeria, with emphasis on University of Calabar and University of Uyo. To achieve the purpose of this study, two research questions were raised and converted to null hypotheses to guide the study. Related literature were reviewed. Expost facto research design was adopted for the study. Satisfied random sample technique research and sample size of 620 academic staff was used for the study. Educational Policies and Academic Staff Capacity Development Questionnaire (EPASCDQ) was used for Data collection, after being subjected to face validity and reliability coefficient ranged from 0.74 to 0.82. Data collected was analyzed using mean and percentages, a criterion mean of 2.5 was used as a decision rule to test the two null hypotheses. The findings revealed that in-service training and research grant significantly influence academic staff capacity development. The study recommended among others, that government and the management of institution of higher learning should make provision for on the job training and provide research grant to their employees to enable staff intellectual capacity for high productivity.

**Keywords:** Educational Policies, Capacity Development, In-Service Training, Research Grants.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education enhances human capacity development and also the bedrock for every development that takes place in the society. Human capacity building through education is the only viable solution to solve the problem of low productivity and unskillfulness. Individuals as well as institutions and organizations capacity need to be built and boosted to enhance creativity, high productivity and financial independence (Ajewole, 2014; Ekpo et al., 2016).

Constant educational policy changes in Nigeria since independence had made implementation of these policies very cumbersome. In Nigeria, educational policies are often acclaimed as sound but the implementation process of such policies has always been unachievable. Policies are important because they provide direction for responding to issues and matters at stake in every human setting.

Educational policies are very important in all sphere of life as it enhances knowledge for easy and effective management and administration of all life's activities. Academic staff play an important role in the day to day running of higher education institutions. Consequently, academic staff training is a fundamental concern of government and management of institution of higher learning. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014), the National Policy on Education, stated that university education is stipulated to make an optimum contribution to national development by intensifying and diversifying it programmes for the development of high-level manpower within the context of the need of the nation. In addition, all teachers in tertiary institutions shall be required to undergo training in the methods and techniques of teaching (FRN, 2014). This is a benchmark requirement that forms the bedrock of tertiary education policy.

Education enriches and boosts the development of human capabilities. This can be seen as a variety of programmes designed by the management to help improve staff performance. Although, some school systems make distinction between teachers training, staff development and human capacity development (National Professional Development Inclusion, 2008). Woodruff cited in Kwenim (2013) believed that an organization that want to strengthen its relationship with it employees should invest in the development of its employees.

Human Capital Development may be defined as the total stock of knowledge, skills, competencies acquired as a result of developing human which can easily lead to the solving of personal and societal problems that can result to sustainable development or transformation. Specifically, capacity development is the empowerment of individuals or units within a system to strengthen their potentials so as to contribute their quotas immensely to the attainment of the set goal or vision (Michelle, 2005). In the words of World Customs Organization (2011), capacity development is the activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviours of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way. The goals of capacity development are to tackle problem related to policy and methods of development (UNCED, 1992).

Obameta (1984) viewed training as the systematic development of attitude, knowledge and skill behaviour pattern required by an individual in order to adequately perform his task or job. It is also regarded as a series of organized activities conducted within a specified time as designed to bring about behavioural change. The purpose of training is either to introduce a new behaviour or modify an existing one. It comprises all activities which essentially aim at providing skill, knowledge and attitude required for improvement in a particular occupation. Training can be conceived only in terms of acquisition of specific skills by an individuals for the

purpose of performing a particular task. Training is convened with developing an individual's potentials. It is the continuous process of updating knowledge for the effective and efficient performance of certain jobs (Egbula & Ekpo, 2016).

The federal government and some universities management adopts measures by providing facilities that will enable staff on appointment to develop academically in order to function more efficiently in the discharge of their duties within and outside the university system (Wonah et al., 2016). The federal government, donor agencies and some universities management provide research grants to their employees especially the academic staff. This research grants enables the academic staff to carry out researches which will involve huge sum of money.

In educational research, the views about capacity development have become increasingly more complex over the decade. From an early, somewhat limited notion of technical or advance training of the few who would enter the new cadres of educational researchers, capacity development has become a richer and more encompassing concept. Developing capacity in education research has come to mean developing a national pool of research abilities and skills, institutional structures.

Donor agencies and international organization has an active and direct role in shaping current understanding of developing capacity in education in developing countries in the 1980s. The relationship between these organizations and universities management has not been free of difficulties. More often than not, conflicts have emerged between the donors' agendas and priorities and those of the universities in need of strengthening their human capacities. Research grant programs is another effective mechanism for supporting and developing a research capacity in educational sector. This approach is aimed primarily at supporting researchers and thus strengthening national efforts in training the new generation of researchers. This approach has proven to be an important component in capacity development.

### **The Statement of Problem**

Universities are faced with a lot of academic problems ranging from low productivity, ineffectiveness etc. These most times are traceable to staff incompetency in carrying out their assigned task or responsibilities. Academic staff training and provision of research grants therefore become inevitable, as it is the necessary tools for acquiring more skills, knowledge, experience etc. Trained academic staff are believed to be more capable of doing their job, Nigeria has arguably fallen behind its potential to significantly improve on its human development and achieve the millennium development goals. With a human development index of 0.439. The prevailing situation is due partly to challenges of governance and stewardship responsibility (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

Despite the commitment of the Nigerian government and university management to staff capacity development, the performance of academic staff suffers a downward trend.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main reason for this study is to determine if educational policies can influence academic staff capacity development in Federal Universities with emphasis on universities of Calabar and Uyo. The specific objectives of the research were to determine the extent to which:

- In-service training influences the academic staff capacity development.
- Research grants influences the academic staff capacity development.

### **Research Questions**

- To what extent does in-service training influence the academic staff capacity development?
- How do research grants influence the academic staff capacity development?

### **METHODS**

The research adopted ex-post facto. The choice is predicated on the premise that the variables manifestation cannot be manipulated by the researcher.

#### **Population and Sample**

The study population was four thousand and twenty (4,020) academic staff. The sample of the study was obtained using stratified random sampling technique. The sample size for this study was six hundred and twenty (620) academic staff, 372 academic staff from university of Calabar and two hundred and forty eight (248) from university of Uyo (males and females).

#### **Instrument**

The instrument used for data collection was a ten items Questionnaire titled Educational Policies and Academic Staff Capacity Development Questionnaire (EPASCDQ) was used for data collection. The (EPASCDQ) was structured along a 4 Likert scale options: Strongly Agree (SA) with a score of 4, Agree (A) with a score of 3, Disagree (D) with a score of 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a score of 1. The questionnaire was validated and the reliability of (EPASCDQ) was obtained through a trial test. This was done by a trial test group constituted by random selection of 100 academic staff from the population of the study. The questionnaire copies were collected, coded and scored. Reliability ranges of 0.82.

#### **Collection of Data /Analysis**

Questionnaires were administered directly to respondents by the researchers and some research assistances. Respondents were assured of confidentiality. Data analysis was done using mean and percentages. A criterion mean of 2.5 was used as decision rule. Mean responses greater than or equal to 2.5 was taken as agree while those with 2.49 and below were disagree.

### **RESULT**

The results from the study are reported in tables 1 and 2. Data are analyzed using mean and percentages.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does in-service training influence the academic staff capacity development?

Table 1: Mean response of the influence of in-service training on academic staff capacity development

S/N	Items	UNCIAL (n=372) $\bar{X}$	Remark	UNIUYO (n = 248) $\bar{X}$	Remarks
1.	Training boost the skill capacity of employees	2.85	A	2.92	A
2.	Attending workshops/conferences enhance employees capacity building	3.25	A	2.84	A
3.	Inadequate provision of training facilities affect staff capacity negatively	3.34	A	3.26	A
4.	Staff become unproductive after training	2.15	D	2.00	D
5.	Manpower are enhanced as a result of training	3.12	A	2.88	A

Field Survey, 2023

The result from table 1 shows that the respondents from the two federal universities agreed on all items except item 4 as influence of in-service training on academic staff capacity development. This is evident by mean responses greater than 2.50 for these items and below 2.50 for item 4.

**Research Question 2:** How do research grants influence the academic staff capacity development?

Table 2: Mean response of the influence of Research grants on academic staff capacity development

S/N	Items	UNCIAL (n=372) $\bar{X}$	Remark	UNIUYO (n = 248) $\bar{X}$	Remarks
6.	The provision of research grants to academic staff can enhance their productivity	3.28	A	3.12	A
7.	The universities management provide adequate research grant to it staff	2.10	D	2.06	D
8.	For proper service delivering academic staff need research grants	3.00	A	3.02	A
9.	Frequent provision of research grants can motivate academic staff	3.45	A	3.20	A
10.	Research grants can enhance academic staff capacity building	2.85	A	2.90	A

Field Survey, 2023

The result in table 2 shows that the respondents from the two federal universities agreed on all the items except item 7, which states that research grants does not influence academic staff capacity development. This is evident by mean response greater than 2.50 for these items and below 2.50 for item 7.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDING

Research question one sought to ascertain the extent to which in-service training can influence academic staff capacity development. The result shows that more than 60% of the respondents

from the two universities agreed that: training boost the skill capacity of employees, attending workshops/conferences enhances employees capacity building, inadequate provision of training facilities affect staff performance negatively and manpower are enhance as a result of training. The results, agreed with the findings of Ekpo et al. (2016), on quality education and human capacity development among principals in secondary schools in Calabar metropolis, and also agreed with the findings in a study carry out by Egbula and Ekpo in 2016, on professional training on goal attainment of secondary school principals in Cross River State. The respondents however, disagreed that staff becomes unproductive after training (Ekpo & Ndum, 2021).

Research Question two sought to ascertain the extent to which research grants can influence the academic staff capacity development. The result shows that more than 60% of the respondents from each of the two universities agreed that: the provision of research grants to academic staff can enhance their productivity, for proper service delivering academic staff need research grants, frequent provision of research grants can motivate academic staff and research grant can enhance academic staff capacity building. This result is in line with a study carry out by Ajewole (2014) on education and human capacity building. The respondents however disagreed that universities management provide adequate research grant to it staff.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that in-service training significantly influence academic capacity development. Similarly, research grants also significantly influence academic staff capacity development.

## **Recommendations**

From the findings, it was recommended among others, that

- Institution of higher learning should provide training programmes for all academic staff in universities/higher institution
- Adequate funding of research studies should be the priorities of government and management of institutions.
- Government policy on education, as regarding training and research grants should be effectively co-ordinated for proper service delivery.

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