HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY AMONG NON-ACADEMIC STAFF IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY WUKARI, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Keywords

Human Capital Development; Service Delivery; Non-Academic Staff; University Administration

Abstract

Research Problem:
Inefficient administrative service delivery resulting from inadequate human capital development among non-academic staff remains a major challenge confronting public universities in Nigeria. Despite their critical role in institutional administration and coordination, non-academic staff often have limited access to training, capacity-building, and professional development opportunities necessary for effective service delivery.
Methods/Theory:
The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 341 respondents was scientifically determined from a population of 2,295 non-academic staff using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and Key Informant Interviews and analysed using mean, standard deviation, and thematic analysis. The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory, which explains how investment in training enhances employee productivity.
Results:
Findings revealed that human capital development significantly improves administrative efficiency, responsiveness, speed of service delivery, and quality of institutional services. However, inadequate funding, irregular

training programmes, poor implementation of staff development policies, unequal access to training opportunities, and weak monitoring mechanisms were identified as major constraints affecting effective service delivery.

Conclusion:

The study concluded that effective service delivery in universities depends significantly on sustained investment in the training and professional development of non-academic staff.

Key Contribution to Knowledge:

The study contributes to knowledge by extending the discourse on human capital development beyond general employee productivity to the specific issue of administrative service delivery among non-academic staff within a Nigerian university context.

Recommendation:

The study recommended regular, inclusive, and adequately funded staff development programmes supported by effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

Introduction

Human capital development has become one of the most significant issues in contemporary organisational and development discourse because of its direct relationship with institutional productivity, administrative efficiency, and service delivery. Across the globe, institutions are increasingly coming to accept that sustainable development is not attainable without conscious investment in human resources through education, training, retraining and professional capacity building. In developed countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, there is a widespread practice of continuous staff development using digital technology for training, research collaboration, international relations, and capacity building, based on employee performance. As a result, universities' administrative effectiveness, responsiveness, and institutional performance have increased considerably (World Bank, 2021).

In the same manner, there is a growing recognition that the quality of human capital influences the effectiveness of service delivery. In Europe and some countries in Asia, for example, higher learning institutions have come up with new approaches towards human resources development by using technologies such as computer-based training (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). In addition, incentive-based human resource management and collaboration among institutions have been used to improve service delivery. Nevertheless, there are discrepancies that continue to persist between developed and developing areas with regard to training opportunities, funding, and personnel. These disparities have greatly influenced the effectiveness of institutions in delivering services to their clientele (Ringson&Matshabaphala, 2023).

In Africa, scholars have been taking more interest in studying human capital development and its effects on institutional performance and the provision of public services. Research carried out in countries such as Kenya, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of Congo has revealed some of the main challenges hindering the creation of an efficient workforce. These include inadequate training facilities, poor institutional capacity, inefficient administration,

and brain drain. The lack of sufficient professional development opportunities is particularly problematic in higher educational institutions because it affects institutional effectiveness and administrative responsiveness (African Development Bank, 2021).

The situation in Nigeria is not much different, as the public sector, with particular reference to the university system, is still grappling with issues of human capital development and effective service delivery. However, the growth of higher education institutions has not been matched by commensurate investment in staff training, development and welfare over the years. Regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission have emphasised the need for capacity building and continuous professional development of both academic and non-academic staff in Nigerian universities. However, the university system continued to be hampered by challenges such as inadequate funding, irregular staff training programmes, poor motivation and frequent industrial actions, which undermined the effectiveness of service delivery. Research has shown that poor human capital development causes administrative delays, teaching quality problems and low research output in Nigerian universities (Okojie, 2020; Aina & Adesina, 2019).

Furthermore, the Nigerian public sector is frequently characterised by bureaucratic inefficiencies, weak accountability mechanisms, and limited emphasis on performance-driven human resource practices. These institutional challenges have significantly affected the quality, efficiency, and timeliness of services delivered by public organisations. Within the university system, such deficiencies are reflected in delays in processing students' records, inadequate administrative and academic support services, poor maintenance of facilities, and weak responsiveness to the needs of staff and students. As a result, the connection between the development of human capital and service delivery has become a key issue for policymakers, university administration, and researchers, especially in terms of the influence of staff competency and institutional capacity on administrative efficiency (Okojie, 2020).

Notwithstanding increasing interest in the subject of human capital management, certain issues are still not addressed satisfactorily in the extant literature. Firstly, most prior studies have examined the issue of civil service broadly without focusing specifically on the university sector and its peculiarities as an administrative milieu. Secondly, even in cases where prior research included analysis of higher education institutions, insufficient attention has been devoted to non-academic staff, although their importance is undeniable. In addition, much of the existing literature concentrated primarily on employee productivity and organisational performance, while critical dimensions of service delivery, such as efficiency, responsiveness, speed of service, and institutional coordination, received limited attention. It is within this neglected area of scholarship that the present study is situated. Unlike earlier studies that generalised staff categories and performance outcomes, this study specifically interrogates how human capital development influences service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari. The study, therefore, advances the argument that effective service delivery in higher education institutions depends significantly on the competence, training, and professional development of non-academic personnel who drive the administrative operations of the university system.

Statement of the Problem

Inefficient delivery of administrative services due to inadequate human capital development among non-academic staff is a problem facing several public universities in Nigeria. While non-academic staff play very important roles in record keeping, communication, coordination within institutions and services to students, among others, delays and lack of responsiveness, inefficiency, poor quality of service delivery and other related problems still abound within public universities in Nigeria. This is due largely to the fact that capacity building and training programs for these staff are often erratic, poorly executed, improperly managed, not properly planned, inadequately budgeted for and therefore fail to contribute positively to the performance of the staff involved.

In recognition of the rising need for efficient administration of universities, the role of non-academic staff in ensuring the effective delivery of services has become more pronounced than ever before. However, whereas there has been significant emphasis on the need to develop human capital through training and career development among academic staff in Nigerian universities, non-academic staff receive minimal opportunities for capacity building. This problem has resulted in inefficient services, staff ineffectiveness, lack of motivation, lack of administrative competence, etc. While there have been continuous calls from the National Universities Commission for the development and capacity building of staff within the university system, these have not been effectively practised due to institutional and funding limitations.

Another problem evident in previous literature is the fact that most of the literature on human capital development in Nigeria tends to deal generally with either issues of productivity, organisational performance and effectiveness, or public sector reforms without taking into account the specific contribution of non-academic staff within university administration to the efficiency of service delivery within universities. Furthermore, whereas previous literature on higher education institutions has focused mainly on issues concerning academic staff, there has been no concern about non-academic staff whose functions form the basis of university administration. Thus, there has been a paucity of literature on how human capital development can enhance the role of non-academic staff in service delivery within emerging universities in Nigeria, like Federal University Wukari.In light of the above discussion, this study aims to assess the link between human capital development and service delivery of non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the effect of human capital development on service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari.

ii. To identify the challenges affecting effective human capital development and optimal service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari.

Conceptual Clarification

a. Human Capital Development

Human capital development has been increasingly described in modern scholarly discussions as something more than regular staff training because it is perceived as an

institutional strategy geared towards enhancing the skills and abilities of employees. In their studies, Oyelude and Unegbu (2024) and Kelvin-Iloafu et al. (2023) state that institutions, which are engaged in constant development of their employees' competencies, have a better chance to demonstrate efficiency and innovation and to deliver sustainable service. In public institutions, human capital development can also be seen as a means of overcoming institutional problems, such as bureaucratic inefficiency, poor administrative responsiveness, and lack of employee productivity. In particular, this study posits that human capital development in modern Nigeria should not be perceived as regular training, but as an ongoing process, which is intended to enhance the ability of non-academic staff members to perform their tasks. Hence, in the current research, human capital development will mean regular training, workshops, retraining programs, and other developmental activities directed at enhancing the competence of non-academic staff at Federal University Wukari.

b. Service Delivery

Service delivery can be defined as the quality of services provided by institutions to their stakeholders promptly. The modern literature tends to define the term as an indicator of efficiency, responsiveness, and the competence of the personnel in terms of the provision of necessary services (Nchuchuwe&Etim, 2020; Ringson&Matshabaphala, 2023). In public organisations, poor service delivery can be revealed through inefficient performance, poor communication, weak coordination, and a lack of responsiveness to the demands of clients. Based on these facts, this study claims that in university administration, the term does not only refer to regular duties performed by administrators but also to the efficiency, responsiveness, and quality of services provided by non-academic staff members.

Human Capital Development and Service Delivery

The nexus betweenhuman capital development and service delivery is one of the areas widely studied in public administration and organisational theory. According to studies on the topic, human capital development is crucial for increasing organisational effectiveness and productivity among employees. As pointed out by Nchuchuwe and Etim (2020), continuous training of employees improves the quality of service delivery in organisations within Lagos State. Also, Otoo and Mishra (2018) claim that the development of employees increases institutional effectiveness and ensures good service delivery. The existing literature on the topic proves that the effectiveness of institutions depends on the degree of investment in knowledge acquisition among employees. In other words, Human Capital Theory remains relevant for understanding the essence of organisational effectiveness.

Nevertheless, despite general acceptance, studies in human capital and service delivery have predominantly adopted a conventional approach in conceptualising the former as a means of enhancing the latter. Specifically, researchers have prioritised exploring the relationship between human capital development and employee productivity as well as organisational performance without adequately examining service delivery as a particular aspect influenced by the former. For example, Oigbochie, Agba, and Ocheni (2023), Adeniji, Osibanjo, and Abiodun (2015), and Okoye and Ezejiofor (2013) examine employee productivity, growth, and organisational

effectiveness. Notwithstanding, these studies fail to analyse the role of human capital development in the process of ensuring responsive, speedy service delivery and effective administrative coordination in institutions.

One of the major limitations of existing scholarship is the tendency to generalise various categories of workers in public organisations without sufficient justification. In higher education studies, the focus is mainly on academics due to their involvement in teaching and research activities. As noted by Akinyemi and Abiddin (2013) and Mabungela (2024), staff development is instrumental in contributing to organisational performance and service quality of universities. However, the two studies overlook differences between academic and non-academic staff, whose roles vary significantly as far as the institutional functions are concerned. It is crucial to emphasise that non-academic staff play a vital role in supporting the efficient operation of university administration through records management, communication, admissions processing, student services provision, and institutional coordination. Unfortunately, the contribution of non-academic staff to service delivery remains relatively unexplored in existing literature.

In addition to the lack of focus on non-academic staff and their roles in administrative systems of universities, another significant gap identified in the literature pertains to the applicability of findings generated by scholars.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between human capital development and service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain quantitative and qualitative data from respondents regarding their perceptions and experiences on issues relating to staff development and service delivery within the university system.

The population of the study comprised 2,295 non-academic staff drawn from different administrative units of the university. To obtain a scientifically representative sample, the study adopted Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)2}$$

Substituting the values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{2295}{1 + 2295(0.05)^2} = 341$$

Based on the calculation, a sample size of 341 respondents was obtained for the study.

The study adopted a proportionate stratified sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of non-academic staff across the various administrative units and departments of the university. The population was stratified by administrative units at the beginning, e.g., Registry, Bursary, Student Affairs, Establishment, ICT, and other relevant sections. Thereafter, respondents were sampled proportionally to the size of the staff within each unit in each stratum. The method was used to reduce sampling bias and to give equal opportunity to represent all categories of non-academic staff in the study.

In addition to the survey respondents, five (5) Key Informants were purposively selected from relevant administrative departments based on their experience, institutional knowledge and managerial responsibilities. The purposive

selection enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth qualitative insights into issues of human capital development and service delivery in the university.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed on a five-point Likert scale for the quantitative component. Key Informant Interview (KII) was used to collect qualitative data. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, while qualitative data from the interviews were thematically analysed and presented in narrative form to complement the statistical data.

Presentation of Data

This section presents data on how human capital development influences service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari, drawing on both quantitative data from the survey and qualitative insights from Key Informant Interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship.

Table 1: Effect of Human Capital Development on Service Delivery among Non-Academic Staff in Federal University Wukari (n = 341)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
Human capital development programmes improve the efficiency of non-academic staff in service delivery.	120	110	50	35	26	3.77	1.15
Training received by non-academic staff enhances the speed of administrative service delivery.	105	118	47	41	30	3.66	1.18
Capacity-building programmes help non-academic staff perform their duties more effectively.	130	95	52	34	30	3.76	1.16
Human capital development reduces delays in administrative processes in the university.	98	122	55	36	30	3.65	1.17
Skills acquired through training improve the quality of services provided to staff and students.	125	104	49	33	30	3.77	1.14
Lack of adequate human capital development negatively affects service delivery among non-academic staff.	140	90	45	36	30	3.80	1.19
Regular staff development programmes increase the responsiveness of non-academic staff to service requests.	110	112	48	40	31	3.67	1.18
Human capital development improves overall satisfaction with administrative services in the university.	118	108	50	34	31	3.73	1.16

Source: Field Survey, 2026

From the table below, it is evident that the effect of human capital development on service delivery was evaluated among the non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari. From Table 1, all the items scored above the criterion mean of 2.5, indicating the effect of human capital development on service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari.

The most pronounced effect, as indicated by the results, was that inadequate human capital development was a barrier to service delivery with an average score of 3.80 (Std. = 1.19). It was followed by the idea that capacity building programs help improve efficiency with a score of 3.77 (Std. = 1.15), and also, the acquisition of skills through training improves the quality of service delivery with a score of 3.77 (Std. = 1.14). In addition, capacity building helps improve employee performance with a score of 3.76 (Std. = 1.16), and further, human capital development helps improve satisfaction with administrative services provided in the institution with a score of 3.73 (Std. = 1.16). Also, training improves the speed of service delivery at Federal University Wukari with a score of 3.66 (Std. = 1.18), and further, staff development programs increase the responsiveness of service requests with a score of 3.67 (Std. = 1.18). Again, human capital development decreases delays in service delivery with a score of 3.65 (Std. = 1.17); however, it recorded the lowest mean value but above the acceptable benchmark. Further, it is clear from the standard deviations calculated in all items that they were above 1.00.

Similarly, in the Key Informant Interview (KII), participants were asked about the effect of human capital development on service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari.One of the interviewees, aged 43, expressed that:

"Staff who attend training programs perform well in the discharge of their responsibilities. They are organised and familiar with current administrative procedures and therefore make service delivery easier and effective."(KII001/12/02/2026/participant from Registry Unit).

Another respondent, aged 45, observed that:

"The capacity building workshops are very helpful as they enable us to acquire new skills. We used to experience a delay in document processing, but now we have improved with training, even though it could be better"(KII002/15/02/2026/participant from the Bursary Department).

Another interviewee,aged 38, stated that:

"When the university invests in staff development, it boosts morale. People become more committed to their work, and this reflects in how they attend to students and other staff" (KII003/20/02/2026/participant from Student Affairs Unit).

Similarly, another intervieweeobserved that:

"Human capital development is very important because administrative work is changing. If staff are not trained regularly, they will struggle with new systems, and this can slow down service delivery in the university" KII004/(22/02/2026/participant from ICT Unit).

Table 2: Challenges Affecting Effective Human Capital Development and Optimal Service Delivery among Non-Academic Staff in Federal University Wukari (n = 341)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
Inadequate funding limits the availability of regular training and capacity-building programmes for non-academic staff.	135	108	48	30	20	3.82	1.12
Irregular staff development programmes negatively affect the effectiveness of administrative service delivery.	128	115	45	32	21	3.79	1.14
Poor implementation of training policies reduces the impact of human capital development programmes.	120	118	50	33	20	3.75	1.15
Unequal access to training opportunities among non-academic staff creates disparities in service delivery performance.	110	120	55	36	20	3.70	1.17
Weak monitoring and evaluation of training programmes reduces the effectiveness of human capital development in improving service delivery.	125	112	52	32	20	3.76	1.16

Source: Field Survey, 2026

In Table 2, respondents assessed the challenges affecting effective human capital development and optimal service delivery among non-academic staff in Federal University Wukari. All the items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.5, indicating general agreement that several institutional and administrative factors hinder effective human capital development and, by extension, service delivery in the university.

In particular, the study showed that there is high agreement that insufficient funds hinder regular training and capacity-building programs (Mean = 3.82, Std. = 1.12) and is thus the biggest threat to service delivery effectiveness. Closely associated with the first was irregular staff development programs, and also rated high in terms of negatively impacting the effectiveness of service delivery due to poor development programs for staff members (Mean = 3.79, Std. = 1.14). On the other hand, ineffective monitoring and evaluation of training programs was found to be an issue since it lowers the efficiency of human capital development programs in the institution (Mean = 3.76, Std. = 1.16), alongside the ineffective implementation of training programs (Mean = 3.75, Std. = 1.15). Finally, uneven distribution of training among non-academic personnel was found to create a disparity in terms of performance in service delivery (Mean = 3.70, Std. = 1.17). Even though this had the lowest score, it was still above the accepted norm.

Moreover, in the KII session, the respondents were interviewed on the issues facing effective human capital development and provision of optimal services to non-teaching staff in the Federal University Wukari. For instance, one of the respondents, a senior administrative officer, responded by saying that,

"The availability of sufficient funds is one challenge. Inadequate financial support does not allow us to conduct any meaningful training to develop our human capital. Ineffectively carrying out our duties is due to a lack of regular, up-to-date skills." (KII001/12/02/2026/ participant from Registry Unit).

Also, another respondent, age 45, commented that,

"Training programmes may be planned, but there is an inconsistency in conducting them. I mean, you can get trained today and have to wait for several years to train again. How effectively will the staff use such information in their everyday activities?"(KII002/15/02/2026/ participant from the Bursary Department).

In addition, one of the respondents, who is 52 years old, remarked that:

"There is also the problem of unequal access. Not all personnel are allowed to participate in training programs. Some units receive more training than others, and this results in unequal performance and service delivery" (KII003/18/02/2026/ participant from Establishment Division).

Likewise, another interviewee (KII 004), who is 38 years old, observed that:

"While training may be offered, there is no adequate monitoring and follow-up. Nothing is done to evaluate the application of the acquired knowledge. The absence of follow-up makes the training less effective" (KII 004/20/02/2026/participant from ICT Unit).

Discussion of Findings

The Effect of Human Capital Development on Service Delivery Among Non-Academic Staff in Federal University Wukari

The findings of the study indicated that human capital development greatly enhances the quality of service delivery by the non-academic staff of Federal University Wukari. Generally, the participants concurred that training and professional development activities result in enhanced efficiency, responsiveness, quickness of administration processes, and service quality. This finding raises a crucial organisational and theoretical issue: Is there such a thing as efficient university administration without the consistent development of the non-academic staff members who manage the daily activities of the university? Based on the findings of the current study, the answer to the question posed is a resounding no. The study adopts the assumption that the non-academic staff members are not just supportive staff members in universities, but are central to enhancing administrative efficiency and service delivery in institutions. This means that the issue of poor service delivery in Nigerian universities cannot be fully addressed without addressing the issue of developing the administrative staff of the institution.

The findings are in agreement with previous studies such as Nchuchuwe and Etim (2020), Otoo and Mishra (2018), and Oigbochie, Agba and Ocheni (2023), which found that human capital development has a positive impact on employee performance and organisational effectiveness. However, this study is different from many previous studies in two important aspects. Firstly, whereas the previous studies broadly studied productivity and organisational performance in public institutions in general, the

present study specifically interrogated service delivery outcomes such as responsiveness, efficiency and administrative effectiveness in a university environment. Second, the study highlighted the non-academic staff, who are often overlooked in higher education scholarship but occupy a strategic position in the administration of institutions. The findings also support the Human Capital Theory, which argues that investment in training and skills increases organisational performance.Nevertheless, this research study has critically extended the theory by revealing the influence of institutions, administrative structure, and the degree of implementation of developmental opportunities in public universities on the training-service delivery relationship.

The Challenges Affecting Effective Human Capital Development and Optimal Service Delivery Among Non-Academic Staff in Federal University Wukari

Inadequate financing, improper training programs, poor implementation of training policies, inequalities in terms of developmental opportunities, as well as lack of proper monitoring systems are some of the issues that have been identified as key barriers to the effective development of human resources in Federal University Wukari. These findings call into question a central assumption of dominant human capital discourse that provision of training automatically results in improved institutional performance. Rather, it argues that human capital development cannot achieve meaningful service outcomes in contexts with weak, inconsistent, and unequal institutional support structures. In this regard, the findings suggest that the crisis of service delivery in many Nigerian universities is not merely a problem of staff incompetence, but also a reflection of structural weaknesses in the implementation of staff development policies and institutional commitment to administrative capacity building.

The findings corroborate the findings of Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede and Nkomah (2014), who argued that poor implementation of training policies hampers service delivery in Nigeria, and Onyango and Wanyoike (2014), who found that institutional support is a prerequisite for successful capacity building in public institutions. However, the present study differs from these studies in that it specifically illustrates how these institutional deficiencies impact non-academic staff within a Nigerian university administrative system. In theory, the results reveal a major limitation of Human Capital Theory. According to the theory, investments in human capital lead to higher levels of productivity. Nevertheless, from the results obtained from the study, it can be argued that access to such opportunities is quite discriminatory since it is limited by a lack of funds, procedural processes, and institutional differences. It is for this reason that the study suggests that human capital should be seen not only in economic or managerial terms but as a form of institutional governance as well.

Conclusion

Conclusively, human capital development plays a critical role in ensuring efficient service delivery by the non-academic employees at Federal University Wukari. The results indicate that training, capacity building, and professional development contribute to efficient administration, timely response, and high-quality service delivery by the university staff. The research also indicates that factors such as insufficient funds for training, irregular training

programs, poor implementation of staff training policies, and uneven distribution of training programs affect the efficiency of human capital development efforts. It follows that for universities to achieve effective service delivery, it is not sufficient to have training programs; rather, their implementation needs to be consistent, inclusive, and well-supported.

Conceptually, this study can be viewed as a continuation of the debate about human capital development, but with the shift of interest from the general problem of employee productivity to the more specific topic of service delivery in administrations among non-academic personnel of universities. From the theoretical perspective, the empirical findings validate the basic tenet of the Human Capital Theory, according to which the development of human capital leads to improvements in organisational performance. At the same time, the study brings out a deficiency in the theory by pointing out that outcomes of human capital development are influenced by factors such as lack of funding, implementation of policy and inequalities regarding access to development. The empirical data of this study agree with that of other research work, such as that of Nchuchuwe and Etim (2020), as well as that of Otoo and Mishra (2018), in that human capital development influences organisational performance positively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Federal University Wukari should invest more in human capital development through training and professional development programmes. This recommendation is based on the findings that indicate that training and professional development play a significant role in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in delivering services.

ii. Federal University Wukari management should develop an appropriate human capital development policy and ensure its proper implementation through monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This will ensure that training programmes are equally accessible to all non-academic staff members since lack of proper funding, irregularity in conducting training, poor implementation of policy, and access to development programmes hinder effective delivery of services.

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