

An assessment of the challenges affecting the implementation of Computer Training Policy among Principal Officers of Federal University Gashua, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines the challenges faced by principle officers in staff computer training at tertiary educational institution, with special emphasis on Federal University Gashua. The paper adopts a qualitative approach towards unveiling the causal mechanisms that affect the implementation of staff computer training policy, using principal officer's knowledge of the phenomenon. Twenty principal officers were involved in the study. A purposive random sampling method was adopted for the selection of these principal officers. The finding revealed certain mechanisms that challenge the implementation of staff computer training policies in the university. The authors are of the view that all staff computer training activities in Federal University Gashua should be linked to its mission as contained in its 2014-2019 strategic plan: "providing timely, relevant and transformational academic programmes through focused teaching and research that are responsive to the needs of the local, national and global communities in rapidly changing world. This paper is original since it examines staff computer training activities and various factors affecting it in federal University Gashua, which creates an opportunity for further investigation into strategic issues confronting staff training activities in the university in general.

Keywords: *University, Computer training, Policy, Principal Officers, challenges.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Staff Training have reached a turning point in tertiary institution in Nigeria, which is why education sector is agitating to receive the biggest share of government's budget. During the 2018/2019 financial year, government spent 3.3 billion Naira on education as an investment in human capital (Government Budget Report, 2018). However, the country has still failed to acquire a required skills base, which is necessary to achieve national goals (Abdul 2018). According to Mela (2016), most staff training at the university were not properly evaluated or linked to the strategic goals of the institution and that, "the lack of skilled people is visible in some Nigerian universities", which demonstrates that research among the academic staff have also been hard hit by the insufficient computer skills shortage. As a result, the management of Federal University Gashua initiated a programme to raise the profile of staff in the country by launching computer Training Improvement Programme. Therefore, this paper is

posed to examine the challenges faced by principle officer in implementing staff computer training in the university and to proffer suggestion where there are shortcomings in the staff computer training strategies.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The term 'policy', refers to a plan or course of action linked with government, politics or business with the intention to influence and determine decisions, actions and other matters (Hauwa, 2012), while university is an institution of higher learning that provides training, teaching and research opportunities and development of the community (Fabunmi, 2005). Policy provides an official backing for every organization action and activities without bias and a basis to be followed by all groups, departments or individuals for whom the policies were made. In a review by Okoromo (2006) he claimed that, "policy is an overall guide that gives the general limits and direction in which administration actions will be taken." The point made by Okoromo is that policy defines areas in which the organisation's decisions are to be made, however it does not supply the decisions. Therefore it can be said that policy brings about a meaningful relationship between organisation objectives, business functions and organisation personnel, as it discourage deviations from unplanned courses of action. As cited in Adetunji (2014), policies don't have to be rigid, as room should be allowed for any necessary adjustment after its formulation and during its implementation. This is because policy is a guiding course of action that ensures consistency when an organisation is governed by its approval as a principle and practice. Koontz and O'Donnel (2005) are of the opinion that policies should not only be formulated, but that also need to be communicated, programmed, evaluated and monitored, if the policy is to achieve the purpose for which it was established. Lindblom (1995 cited in Okoroma, 2006) confirmed that good policies should not be rigid in nature, and describes policy making as a process of successive approximation to some desired objectives, in which what is desired itself continues to change under consideration. Lindblom, as cited in Adetunji (2014), stated that a good policy should be one that can easily be reviewed to suit human needs as they arise within the organization after the policy have been made, or the policy may affect some other useful function of the system. In his conclusive statement, he pointed out that a good policy maker should not expect that all policies made must be adhered to completely, nor should a policy maker expect any policy to be totally successful. Regardless how good a policy may be, its implementation into an organization might be surprised by the introduction of a previously overlooked element that the policy maker failed to take into consideration when formulating the policy. According to P. Ilu 2018, Computer is defined as an automatic electronic apparatus for making calculations or controlling operations that are expressible in numerical or logical terms. Adetunji (2018), opined that the basic function performed by a computer is the execution of a programme. A programme is a sequence of instructions, which operate on data to perform a certain task. In modern digital computers, data is represented in binary form by using two symbols 0 and 1 which are called binary digits or bits. Daniel (2002), observed that ICTs have become within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of

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modern society. Many countries now regard understanding ICT and mastering the basic skills and concepts of ICT as part of the core of education, alongside reading, writing and numeracy. However, there appears to be a misconception that ICTs generally refers to computers and computing related activities. This is fortunately not the case, although computers and their application play a significant role in modern information management, other technologies and/or systems also comprise of the phenomenon that is commonly regarded as ICTs. Pelgrum and Law (2003) state that near the end of the 1980s, the term „computers“ was replaced by IT (information technology) signifying a shift of focus from computing technology to the capacity to store and retrieve information. This was followed by the introduction of the term ICT (information and communication technology) around 1992, when e-mail started to become available to the general public (Pelgrum, W.J., Law, N., 2003). According to United Nations report (1999) ICTs cover Internet service provision, telecommunications equipment and services, information technology equipment and services, media and broadcasting, libraries and documentation centers, commercial information providers, network-based information services, and other related information and communication activities. According to UNESCO (2002) information and communication technology (ICT) may be regarded as the combination of Informatics technology with other related technology, specifically communication technology. The various kinds of ICT products available and having relevance to education, such as teleconferencing, email, audio conferencing, television lessons, radio broadcasts, interactive radio counseling, interactive voice response system, audiocassettes and CD ROMs etc have been used in education for different purposes (Sharma, 2003; Sanyal, 2001; Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007). The field of education has been affected by ICTs, which have undoubtedly affected teaching, learning, and research (Yusuf, 2005). A great deal of research has proven the benefits to the quality of education (Al-Ansari, 2006). ICTs have the potential to innovate, accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students, to help relate school experience to work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, as well as strengthening teaching and helping schools change (Davis and Tearle, 1999; Lemke and Coughlin, 1998; cited by Yusuf, 2005). Jhurree (2005), observed that, much has been said and reported about the impact of technology, especially computers, in education. Initially computers were used to teach computer programming but the development of the microprocessor in the early 1970s saw the introduction of affordable microcomputers into schools at a rapid rate. Computers and applications of technology became more pervasive in society which led to a concern about the need for computing skills in everyday life. Hepp, Hinostrroza, Laval and Rehbein (2004) claim in their paper, Technology in Schools: Education, ICT and the Knowledge Society that ICTs have been utilized in education ever since their inception, but they have not always been massively present. Although at that time computers were not fully integrated in the learning of traditional subject matter, the commonly accepted rhetoric that education systems would need to prepare citizens for lifelong learning in an information society boosted interest in ICTs (Pelgrum, W.J., Law, N., 2003). The 1990s was the decade of computer communications and information access, particularly with the popularity and accessibility of

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internet-based services such as electronic mail and the World Wide Web (WWW). At the same time the CD-ROM became the standard for distributing packaged software (replacing the floppy disk). As a result educators became more focused on the use of the technology to improve student learning as a rationale for investment.

Any discussion about the use of computer systems in schools is built upon an understanding of the link between schools, learning and computer technology. When the potential use of computers in schools was first mooted, the predominant conception was that students would be taught by computers (Mevarech & Light, 1992). In essence, it was considered that the computer would take over the teachers job in much the same way as a robot computer may take over a welders job. Collis (1989) refers to this as “a rather grim image” where “a small child sits alone with a computer”. Meanwhile, the use of information and communication technologies in the educative process has been divided into two broad categories: ICTs for Education and ICTs in Education. ICTs for education refers to the development of information and communications technology specifically for teaching/learning purposes, while the ICTs in education involves the adoption of general components of information and communication technologies in the teaching learning process. People in this modern society are becoming more and more familiar with Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT refers to the technology that enables communication and the electronic capture, processing, and transmission of Information (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006). However, compared with developed countries, the use of ICT in education programs in developing nations is relatively limited, because underdeveloped countries face shortages of financial resources, limited internet access, a lack of trained teachers and the lack of proper policies (Gulati 2008; Kozma 1999; Oliveira 1989; Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006). In addition, many African countries have not been able to employ teachers, and provide resources to keep up with this demand. This brings about compromised quality of education. Further, many African governments face the predicament of educational expansion that corresponds with economic development. Despite the setbacks, access to education is a strong focus of most governments. ICT can play a significant role in equalizing opportunities for marginalized groups and communities. But the paradox is that for those groups that are unable to cross the technology divide, ICT is yet another means to further marginalize them. Education has a major role to play in resolving this problem. Thus, unless ICT becomes part of both the delivery and content of education, the disadvantage will deepen and development will suffer. But the failure to use ICT is itself a result of the digital and knowledge divides that exist, and their causes are deeply embedded in the complex historical and socio-cultural context of the country. ICT is perceived as a prerequisite for development. However, when it comes to comparing the developing world with the developed world, there is also a huge gap in the usage of ICT between these two groups. This gap is referred to as “the Digital Divide” (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006) and can be seen within a country and between countries. The ICT environment surrounding education in developed countries is relatively abundant. According to the research done by the Second Information Technology in Education Study (SITES), which is the project of the International Association for the Evaluation of

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Educational Achievement (IEA), the number of PCs (Personal computers) in schools is increasing and access to the internet is easy in developed countries. Moreover, ICT is actively adapted in schooling to the extent that ICT changes pedagogical practice innovatively (Kozma 1999). In contrast, in underdeveloped countries, ICT infrastructure is weak and the internet access is limited. Supply of PC (Personal computer) in school is much less than needed and trained person who can resolve computer literacy is also in serious shortage (Gulati 2008; Kozma 1999; Oliveira 1989). The digital divide is mainly related to such factors as appropriate products, cost, education, literacy, human resources, and government regulations. To tackle the digital divide, carefully selected technology can be used. Open source software, which is basically free because its source code is open to the public, might be a good choice for the countries under financial pressure. Governments have a significant role in reducing the digital divide. They can cut the tax imposed on ICT related imports or liberalize the market for PCs, telecommunication and the internet business. These actions will result in a lower price of ICT related products and an increase in affordability. Industries also have a role in closing this division. Normally, industry works for profit, but corporations have a social responsibility to spend their resources on unprofitable but highly required areas and some of them are actively involved in addressing the digital divide (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006). The main challenges for implementing ICT in the education sector in underdeveloped world include:

The first issue, which almost all developing countries face, is how to deal with the scarcity of financial resources (Oliveira 1989). Resources in the developing world are always scarce so that they have to be spent mostly on basic supplies such as food, housing and roads. In a sense, investing in ICT for schooling might be regarded as a long term issue which means adopting ICT in the education system is relatively not an urgent issue considering the serious poverty in many African countries. This results in a vicious circle between scarcity of funds and underdevelopment. When it comes to the controversy of priority of investment between basic services and ICT, both might be linked in the case of education (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006). One piece of good news about cost is the cost of hardware is decreasing rapidly. The price of PCs and peripherals is reduced to half of the original price every two years. Because of this, the salary of the IT professionals who can teach the new technology is the biggest burden on education budgets and it is followed by software related costs (Oliveira 1989).

Secondly, access to the internet is highly limited in remote areas, and relatively poor infrastructure in developing nations such as supply of electricity makes this worse (Gulati 2008). Low infrastructure is the fundamental problem for developing countries to deal with and it might take a long time and huge funding to improve. Low literacy rates also hinder locals in remote areas from accessing information through the internet and due to the dominance of English on the internet; non-English speaking local people are isolated from the benefits of using internet (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology 2006). Another challenge of developing nations to adopt ICT in education systems is a lack of trained teachers (Gulati 2008; Kozma 1999). When it comes to practically applying

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ICT, which is new to traditional teachers, many may not know how to deal with it and sometimes they are reluctant to accept new technologies in their classrooms. Thus, tutors who can train these teachers about new technology and IT professionals who can technically install and maintain the system are needed. Whereas results indicate that ICT has penetrated many sectors including banking, transportation, communications, and medical services, Nigerian educational system seems to lag behind. Further, recent report by the National Council for Science and Technology (2010) indicated that some computer use in Nigerian lecture rooms are still in its early phases, and concluded that the perceptions and experiences of lecturers and principal officers do play an important role in the use of computers in Nigerian lecture theaters. Training both physically, socially, intellectually and mentally are very essential in facilitating not only the level of productivity but also the development of personnel in any organization. Therefore, training can be put in a contact relevant to school administrators. However, knowledge is the ability, the skill, the understanding, the information, which every individual requires acquiring in order to be able to function effectively and perform efficiently. Human resources, are the most valuable assets of any organization, with the machines, materials and even the money, nothing gets done without man-power. Abiodun (1999) submitted that: Computer training is a systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job. It can take place in a number of ways, on the job or off the job; in the organization or outside organization. JeromGumphi, (2019) observed that computer training and development in Federal UniversityGashua, is a work activity that can make a very significant contribution to the overall effectiveness and profitability of university. He therefore, suggested a systematic approach to training which encases the main elements of training. Gumphi, further opined that, the effectiveness and success of federal university Gashua, therefore lies on the people who form and work within the university. He further argued that if staff in the university should be able to perform their duties and make meaningful contributions to the success of the university's goals, then, their is need to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge likewise basic computer training. According to Milton Kazmeyer (2019), as an employer, training your employees in computer skills can not only increase productivity but also help you stave off problems that can cost time and significant amounts of money to fix. Training in basic computer skills can greatly affect how quickly a new hire picks up the specific applications unique to your business. To someone without computer experience, a PC can be an unnerving, unfamiliar piece of hardware, and the constant fear of causing some catastrophic error can make it difficult to feel at home at the keyboard. Training new employees in computer skills will ensure that everyone has the basic knowledge they need to function at your business, and it can help new-hires with computer skills gain familiarity with your specific business systems. He further observed that computers increase productivity, but those gains can only be realized if employees are comfortable and experienced with the systems. According to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, investments in technology produce gains in productivity three to five times greater than other investments by allowing employees better access to the information they need to do their jobs. Ensuring that your employees are trained and familiar with computers

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will help them spend less time tracking down that information and more time utilizing it to perform vital tasks for your company.

Milton Kazmeyer (2019), still observe that giving your employees some basic computer knowledge can also help you head off problems. Malware programmes and hackers often rely on user error or ignorance of common traps to gain access to a system, and training your employees in how to avoid these mistakes can greatly enhance your business's online security. A simple training course in how to spot phishing attempts, in which a user or Web site employs deception to extract data from unwitting employees, may mean the difference between keeping your company's network secure and losing vital data to an outsider. Training may be defined as an organized and coordinated development of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by an individual to master a given situation or perform a certain task within an organizational setting. Flippo (1980); as cited in Ngu (1994) conceptualizes training as a calculated effort aimed at increasing an employee skills for doing a particular job and developing person's knowledge for vocational purpose. In correlation with the above stipulations, the wordings of French (1974), can be reiterated, he maintains that training is a process that aims to bring up individuals up to a desired standard for present or potential assignment. In a similar line of reasoning Glueck (1986), sees training as a systematic process of altering the behaviour, knowledge and motivation of employees in a direction to increase organizational achievement. Glueck (1986) goes further to assert that training is a premeditated course of action taken in order to bring about changes in employees approach to work. In his own way, Stones (1982) as cited in Atiomo (2000) corroborated that training is any organizational planned efforts to change the behaviour of employees so that they can perform to an acceptable and standard result on the job. In analysing the concept of training as submitted by Glueck (1986), Stones (1982), Flippo (1980), and French (1974) above, it can be seen and understood that they examined training from both conceptual and operational viewpoints. Therefore, training helps employees to improve their work performance in order to ensure the standard and quality of work required by the organization to achieve both organizational and individuals predetermined objectives. According to Milkovich et al (1988), training is a systematic process of changing the behavior, knowledge and/or motivation of present employees to improve the margin between employee characteristics and employment requirement. In a similar development, Strauss et al (1980) opined that training at one extreme, consists of a few hours of induction by the supervisor, who gives the new employee a skeletal outline of company policies and on the other extreme, it consists of several years of formal courses designed to develop qualified specialist. This imply that training on the job and some form of in-service training are examples of training being designed or intended to develop the knowledge or expertise, greater confidence and a higher degree of performance. Fanibuyan (2001) defines training as the systematic process of altering the behaviour and or attitudes of employees in a direction to increase organizational goals and development as programme generally aimed at educating supervisory employees above and beyond the immediate technical

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requirement of the job and have a main objective of the improvement of the effective performance of all managers. Punia and Saurabh (2013), stated that training is the application of gained knowledge and experience .In a similar line, Appiah et al, (2013), defined training as an organized activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill. (Gordon 1992) sees training as a type of activity which is planned, systematic and it results in enhanced level of skill, knowledge and competency that are necessary to perform work effectively. To me, this implies that training is to equip people with the knowledge required to qualify them for a particular position of employment or to improve their skills and efficiency in the position they already hold. Therefore, training according to the above definitions is the formal procedures which an organization uses to facilitate employees learning of the organizations as well as the individual's goal and objectives.

III. Objectives of Staff Computer Training Policy in Federal University Gashua

Training like any other organizational activity has its objectives. The objectives of staff computer training are to improve staff's productivity and the organizational effective and efficient use of scarce resource. Jerom Gumphi, who is a director ICT opined that the objectives of staff computer training are to: provide the skills, Knowledge and aptitudes necessary to undertake required job efficiently among the academic staff and non-academic staff and to develop them so that if he/she has the potentials, he/she may progress, increase efficiency by reducing spoilt work, misuse of computer and lessening physical risks. According to S.M.Ngu (1994) training objectives can be derived from the current manpower situation. He reiterated that the existing manpower situation determines the training objectives both at the organizational and national level. Ngu (1994) corroborated that to be able to identify training needs, therefore will entail a comprehensive manpower survey which is usually an aspect of manpower planning. He added that a comprehensive manpower survey will expose the types of skills and personnel that need to be developed or trained. Ngu (1994) reaffirms that for a country to enjoy both domestic and international influence and prestige, its citizens must be highly educated, honest and well respected rather than being ignorant, inefficient and corrupt. A training policy therefore, in Federal University Gashua is also geared towards that. Giangreco, Sebastiano, and Pecce (2009), as cited in Kulkarni (2013) corroborated that the key determinants of overall satisfaction with training are: perceived training efficiency and perceived usefulness of training. Karthick, (2012) as cited in Kulkarni (2013) affirms that training objectives tell the trainee that what is expected out of him at the end of the training programme. He added that training objectives are of great significance from a number of stakeholder perspectives; trainer, trainee, designer and evaluator .Nyerere, (1973) emphatically states that training is a future investment though expensive but the society expects a return from the few trained individuals. Training aims at upgrading employees' skills in anticipation of their achieving higher positions in the organization. Cuming, (1980) concretizes the objective or purpose of training as to give employees at all levels sufficient instruction and guidance to enable them to perform their jobs effectively and prepare themselves for promotion. Koontz and Weihrich, (1989) explain

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that, the objective of training is supposed to be identified during analysis of training needs so that the same will facilitate the measurement of the effectiveness of training efforts. The objective of training is supposed to be worked out by an organization before training is implemented. In this; Milkovich, et al., (1997) points out that, "...in spite of sizable budgets, good intentions, and real needs, many training programmes fail to achieve lasting results. Why? Too often, it is because the purported goals of the learning are vague. If we don't know where we're going we can't tell if we got there. Nor can we tell if it's where we wanted to be".

According to Wognum (2001), training needs may occur at three organizational levels namely;

1. Strategic level where needs are determined by top management while considering organizations goals, mission, strategy and problems, which need to be resolved or fixed.
2. Tactical level where needs are determined with middle management while considering developments needs to the coordination and cooperation between organization units.
3. Operational level where needs are determined with lower executive management and other employees while considering problems related to operations such as performance problems of individual workers and departments in subject.

In order to enable an organization formulate human resource training and development goals that will enable both formal and informal human resource training and development methods and programmes, create a workforce that enables effectiveness and competitiveness, it is worth giving consideration to, provide proper coordination as well as proper incorporation of the needs within the three levels.

The first issue is to identify the needs relevant to the organization's objectives. According to Wognum (2001) and Torrington et al. (2005), there are three categories of identifying training needs. These include:

- a. **Resolving problems:** This focuses on workers' performance.
- b. **Improving certain working practice:** This focuses on improvement regardless of the performance problems.
- c. **Changing or renewing the organization situation:** Which may arise because of innovations or changes in strategy?

The above are summarized in Table 1 below. It is worth putting in mind that during the identification of training needs, there is need to create, develop, maintain and improve any systems relevant in contributing to the availability of people with required skills.

IV. Benefits/Importance of Staff computer Training

Training and development are designed by organizations in order to accomplish needed changes. According to Torrington and Chapman (2008), training and development may be due to introduction of new approaches to managing people or it may simply involve upgrading the skill levels that are required to operate a machine. Thus training and development are a benchmark for any planned change that is introduced in an organization. Taking this into account, training shows itself as a tool suitable for satisfying the adaptation needs of management methods to the society's demands. Presently, the society demands a new type of training for employees, emphasizing aspects such as creativity and intuition. Employees are expected to have a good ability to acquire new knowledge that activates the responses of the working centers according to the new social demands as well as the ongoing technology evolution and the steady competitiveness of the modern world. Furthermore, the main purpose of training is to acquire and improve knowledge, skills and attitudes towards work related tasks. It is one of the most important potential motivators which can lead to both short-term and long-term benefits for individuals and organizations. There are so many benefits associated with training. These benefits have been summarized by Cole (2001), below:

1. High morale: Employees who receive training have increased confidence and motivations, job rotations and transfers.
2. Lower cost of production: Training eliminates risks because trained personnel are able to make better and economic use of material and equipment thereby reducing and avoiding waste.
3. Lower turnover: Training brings a sense of security at the workplace which in turn reduces labor turnover and absenteeism is avoided.
4. Change management: Training helps to manage change by increasing the understanding and involvement of employees in the change process and also provides the skills and abilities needed to adjust to new situations.
5. Provide recognition, enhanced responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion.
6. Help to improve the availability and quality of staff.

In his own opinion, Dr. Dantata, director academic planning federal university Gashua, observed that staff computer training helps in the following ways:

1. Increase productivity among the academic staff
2. Improve the quality of work and raise morale among the entire staff of the university
3. Develop new skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes among newly recruited staff
4. Use correctly new tools, machines, processes, methods or modifications thereof.
5. Reduce waste, accidents, turnover, lateness, absenteeism, and other overhead costs.
6. Fight obsolescence in skills, technologies, methods, products, capital management etc.

7. Bring incumbents to that level of performance which meets standard of performance for job.
8. Develop replacements, prepare people for advancement, improve manpower deployment and ensure continuity of leadership.
9. Ensure the survival and growth of the university.

V. Methods of staff Training

Nadler (1984) noted that all the human resource development activities are meant to either improve performance on the present job of the individual, train new skills for new job or new position in the future and general growth for both individuals and organization so as to be able to meet organization's current and future objectives. There are broadly two different methods organizations may choose for training and developing skills of its employees. These are on-the-job training given to organizational employees while conducting their regular work at the same working venues and off-the-job training which involves taking employees away from their usual work environments and therefore all concentration is left out to the training. Examples of the on-the-job training include but are not limited to job rotations and transfers, coaching and/or mentoring. On the other hand, off-the-job training examples include conferences, role playing, and many more. Armstrong (1995) argues that on-the-job training may consist of teaching or coaching by more experienced people or trainers at the desk or at the bench. Different organizations are motivated to take on different training methods for a number of reasons for example;

1. Depending on the organization's strategy, goals and resources available.
2. Depending on the needs identified at the time, and
3. The target group to be trained which may include among others individual workers, groups, teams, department or the entire organization.

Denny (1969) as cited in Ngu (1994) sees induction training as a programme of reception and introduction for new comers which begins on arrival and is designed to help them to settle into the new surrounding as quickly as possible. He summarises the purpose of induction training thus:

- a. To give the history and background of the organization.
- b. To train the new comers on their job.
- c. To clearly define line of responsibility and line of authority.
- d. To fashion out organizational and individual method.

Furthermore, Bass & Vaughan (1966), Flippo (1976), Green and Biggs (1976), as cited in Ngu (1994) have identified two types of training viz: On the job and Off the job. On the Job Training according to these authorities implies a technique of training through which an employee acquires relevant skills, knowledge and attitude at his actual work. According to Ojo (2000), on the job training is where an employee is shown how to perform the job and he or she is allowed to do it under supervision. Stone (1982) redresses that during on the job training, the steps

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are repeated where an error is made until the employee learns the correct procedure. In the wording of Kulkarni (2013), on the job training may be seen as thus; job instruction, apprenticeship and coaching, job rotation, committee assignment, internship training, and training through step by step. Ngu (1994), affirms that Off the job training is a type that can be conducted outside the working environment. It is usually conducted in classrooms, in this case the trainees are given theoretical knowledge on how to handle a particular operation. Kulkarni (2013) reaffirms and classifies Off the job training as thus: Programme instructions, class room lectures, work shop and seminars, conference method, vestibule training, behavioural modelling, experimental exercise, audio-visual method and case study method.

VI. Methodology

The paper is a meta-analytical study, which relied on secondary data. It is also a qualitative study that is based on conceptual analysis, and “emic” perspective. An empirical analysis was also done in the study through the use of information obtained from survey.

VII. Discussion of findings

It is considered in the literature to be important for the managers (principal officers) to hire educated, skilled and knowledgeable employees in the organization as they are the main human capital or assets of the organization. (Nadler &Wiggs, 1986; Nadler & Nadler, 1989; Harrison, 2000, Schmidt & Lines, 2002; Harrison &Kessels, 2004).Similarly, human resource development (ICT) practitioners are also deemed to be important human capital in the university because of their knowledge, skills, experience and competence to render effective staff computer training programme. Unfortunately, the lack of intellectual ICT professionals, who are the main human capital in the HRD function, is regarded as impeding the effective implementation of computer training programme. While government policy on education has been campaigning for universities to equip staff with the skills and knowledge to become knowledgeable workers. Principal offices in federal university, Gashua, are faced with the challenge of coping with demand for knowledgeable and competent staff. A critical factor will be discussed to describe the challenge faced by principal officers in coping with the demand for knowledge workers: This critical factor relates to the hiring and retention of technical expertise and a competent workforce. As cited in Abdull, (2014), hiring of skilled, trained and knowledgeable workers is increasingly difficult in some competitive organization , but at the same time, developing and retaining these workers increases the challenges facing employers and HRD practitioners (Cunningham &Debrah, 1995; Chermack et al, 2003). For instance, several principal officers interviewed deliberated on the issues related to hiring, retraining and retaining technical expertise, and it was found that staffs usually leave the university after being provided with training.

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“.....it is difficult to get employees to stay after getting expensive training.....these workers are good and skilled, but we cannot stop them from going because they are looking for better prospects”
(The director, academic planning federal university Gashua).

Therefore, the above implies that the university principal officers may have to assess and examine their hiring and promotional criteria to ensure that their employees are competent according to their job specifications (Hansen, 2003). Moreover, aspects such as training, retraining and career progression may require some serious attention to enable skilled and competent workers to be trained, retrained and retained within the university. Indeed, attracting and retaining capable human resources has become the key challenge for most organisations, as the workforce has become more challenging in terms of their valuable expertise and the working environment has become more competitive (O’Connell, 1999; Wedell, 1999; Chermack et al, 2003). It has been clearly stated that human resource training and development (HRT&D) activities are designed to change an individual’s behaviour and attitudes towards their job and organisation (Yan & McLean, 1998), but ICT/Human Resource Training practitioners are confronted with problems relating to employees’ behaviour and attitudes. Firstly, it was found that top management, senior managers’ and line managers’ uncooperative behaviour towards Human Resource Development (HRD) had a significant effect on the effectiveness of Staff computer training. For instance, it was reported that getting line managers to release employees to attend training and support employees’ transfer of training and learning is a problem in the university. This is seen in the following statements by one of the Head of Department interviewed:

“.....The University Principal Officers always have staff computer training excellent as the most important thing on their minds. They always make it difficult for us to run training programme smoothly. For example, when we have certain computer training programme for the staff, the first thing they moan about is that they don’t have enough manpower on the ICT floor for anyone to go for training.....”

Secondly, another dilemma is staff inability to transfer learning from the training programme attended and apply this learning to the workplace. This is due to lack of support from government to provide ICT facilities for the transfer of training. Earlier research on the transfer of learning has provided convincing evidence that the work environment - the physical, social, and psychological conditions that individual employees experience at work can either encourage or discourage the acquisition and transfer of new skills and knowledge (see for example, as cited in Lawal 2013: Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Reid and Barrington, 1994; Cheng & Ho, 2001; and Kupritz, 2002). This is clearly affirmed by one of the ICT human resource professional that:

“.....even the few staff that attends computer training, hardly benefit from certain ICT intervention facilities like laptop or Ipad from the federal government.....”

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Lack of awareness and mindset is one of the greatest challenge to effective implementation of staff computer training policy in Federal University Gashua. In study conducted by BollyVett on challenges of ICT Programme in Uganda, (2014), Lack of awareness and mindset is the first barrier to ICT programme that must be dealt with before an organisation can start moving forward. There tends to be some vague knowledge about ICT, interpreted as simply an advanced technology that requires a lot of expertise, a lot of money, and very advanced skills. It is not appreciated as a means of creating efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Lack of awareness is indicated by one common answer: “.....*It is very expensive, the cost is too high, we cannot afford it.....*” This ranges from the failure to purchase good generational computer of high speed quality, connect to the World Wide Web with high connectivity. The same university will, without hesitation, buy a Hilux Van at N5,000,000 plus for the chief executive. This is a great challenge to effective implementation of staff computer training policy in federal University Gashua. The fact that computers are still very expensive in Nigeria, makes them a target for thieves who usually have ready markets to another party at a much less figure. This has made many schools to incur extra expenses trying to burglar proof the computer rooms. This extra expense makes the university shy away from purchasing computers of high quality. This is evidently stated by one of the interviewers that:

“.....criminal activities are enormous in an unsecured environment like Gashuapurchasing computer of high quality is like throwing a valuable resource in to a latrine.”

VIII. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In general, the challenges faced by principal officer in implementing computer training programme in federal university Gashua varied from the lack of intellectual HR professionals to coping with the demand for knowledge-workers and fostering learning and development in the workplace. The core and focal challenge is the lack of intellectual professionals (HRD) in ICT, and this suggests that employers viewed HR T&D as a function secondary to HRM and perhaps considered it as being of lesser importance as well as coping with the demand for knowledge-workers, with issues relating to the hiring, training and retention of a skilled and competent workforce. This implication could lead to the ineffective implementation of staff computer training programme in the university. The ageing workforce and their positions within the university also pose a major challenge in terms of developing older workers to become knowledge workers, particularly with regard to their levels of education. However, the issue of “how HRD practitioners cope with an ageing workforce, to develop knowledgeable and skilled workers to attain knowledge-worker status” requires further research. Furthermore, the lack of commitment towards training can be seen throughout organisations, from top management to shop-floor employees. The top management and managerial level employees are found to be uncooperative towards HR T&D, whilst lower level employees lack the commitment to participate in training and development activities.

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This suggests that employees may have embedded pessimistic attitudes towards training and be fundamentally resistant to change. Of course, the phenomenon of change is often resisted, as it requires individuals to take aboard new learning and adopt new skills and competencies. In point of fact, employers and HRD practitioners in these manufacturing firms are seen to be confronted with the individual employee-negotiated character of learning rather than the resources required to support such learning. Indeed, these dimensions in learning are said to be an important adaptation with respect to fostering learning and development in the workplace (Guile & Young, 1999). However, to successfully develop and foster learning and development in the workplace, it is essential for individual employees to engage in self-directed and self-motivated learning. The strategy of moving forward and planning strategically in response to these challenges to HR T&D remains the responsibility and initiative of each individual organisation.

The findings of this study imply that the process of developing knowledge workers towards achieving knowledge economy status is likely to be very challenging and to take a long time to achieve unless employers can surmount these challenges by developing and implementing contemporarily appropriate policies and procedures for HR management and development. The literature has identified many challenges to the effective implementation of staff computer training programme in the university. However, the findings from this study mainly reflect the major challenges faced by principal officers in effective implementation of staff computer training programme. Therefore, it is hoped that these findings will contribute to and expand the existing literature on HR T&D as well as contributing to practice.

IX. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is part of a larger research project on implementing staff computer training programme in federal university Gashua, Nigeria, employing in-depth interviews with twenty principal officers in the university. This posits several limitations, including the small sampling size for interviews, the qualitative research methods employed and research rigour. It is suggested that a detached stand-alone exploration employing questionnaire surveys complemented with in-depth interviews with a larger sampling size be conducted. This would permit the findings to be generalised beyond federal university Gashua. Finally, as the findings of this study are specific to federal university Gashua, an investigation of the challenges to the effective implementation of staff computer training programme in other federal universities in Nigeria is recommended.

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