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STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS

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Abstract
Staff training and development are based on the premise that skills of employees need to be improved for organizations to grow. Hence, Federal Polytechnics in Nigeria have over time engaged in the training and development of their lecturers in order to enhance productivity and job performance. This paper examines the staff development process, the need for academic staff development in polytechnics and various staff development programme in Nigerian polytechnics. It explores key strategies such as professional training programs, mentorship, industry collaborations, research engagement, and digital literacy initiatives. The study highlights the role of government agencies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) in providing financial support for training and research. The paper argues that continuous professional development through structured programs, research incentives, and industry partnerships is essential for improving teaching quality and institutional excellence. It recommends that the Nigerian government should allocate more funds for staff training, research, and professional development through agencies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).
Keywords: Staff Development, Capacity Building, Nigerian Polytechnics, Effective Teaching, Professional Training, Research, Industry Collaboration

Introduction

Education lecturers are those who transfer knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners with the sole aim of knowledge building and production. They are usually seen in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in the department of educational management and administration. They inculcate transferable skills into the learners. They are extensively involved in teaching, research and community service. Education lecturers are responsible for shaping the destinies of nations and individuals. Capacity building of lecturers is a commitment to structured skills enhancement and personal or professional competence for effective service delivery. It is important for everyone, no matter their occupation, role or responsibility within an organization, to ensure that their skills and knowledge are up-to-date. The undertaking of staff development is particularly important in today's fast moving technological world for the production of students with innovative and creative thinking. Hence, capacity building needs of educational administration lecturers in the universities include: new knowledge and skills to carry out their duties effectively, skills on research and development, ideas needed for knowledge creation and team spirits to deliver lectures appropriately. It equally equips them with proper knowledge of the application and utilization of information and communication technology devices.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2006) defines capacity building as the process of development and strengthening of skills and instinctual abilities. At organizational level, it involves the processes and resources that organizations use for their adoption and survival in a dynamic and changing world. Levin and Fullan (2008) envisage capacity building as those strategies that a group uses to improve their effectiveness in results achievement. Harris (2021) on the other hand views capacity building as providing the environment that make collaboration and mutual learning possible. Capacity building is therefore an attempt

to improve the effectiveness of lecturers by improving their teaching strategies, techniques, handling of new instructional materials, or equipping providing relevant information and skills that are important in effective lesson delivery. It therefore includes all In-Service Training (INSET) activities aimed at improving lecturer's competences.

Human capacity building programmes for academic staff in polytechnics are deliberate and well-thought programmes which are set-up with the aim of improving staff job performance. Generally, staff development programmes are the various means by which all categories of staffs in an organization are encouraged to improve their capabilities to enhance performance. In the polytechnic education system, capacity building programmes refer to opportunities provided for staff to increase their knowledge, skills, experiences and understanding, thereby improving their job performances. These opportunities include sponsorship of staff on educational programmes that could lead to acquisition of additional qualifications such as Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Master in Education (M.Ed.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Others include short training courses such as conferences, seminars and workshops; and induction training programmes for newly employed staff.

The rationale for sponsoring educational training that leads to acquisition of additional educational qualification is premised on the need to keep academic staff knowledge relevant to national social, scientific, technological, economic, and political realities. Such programmes equip lecturers with teaching and research skills that help them to transmit knowledge effectively, initiate and execute research that proffer solutions to societal problems as well as improve the output of the polytechnic. The inability of some academic staff to make meaningful impact through research has being responsible for their stagnation for a long time with the resultant negative effects on the quality of ND and HND graduates from these polytechnics.

Conference attendance and presentation of research outcomes, seminar and workshop programmes provide opportunity for academic staff in polytechnics to improve performance in the sphere of teaching and research. It has being reported that these programmes enhance academic staff abilities to conduct research, write good and acceptable report for publication both at local and international platforms. Seminar which is seen as a form of academic instruction, where people of same or common interests come together and focus on particular subject, which everyone present is required to actively participate. It however appears that academic staffs of polytechnic are finding it difficult to attend these programmes probably for lack of supports. This seems to have reduced their level of performance. Kori (2016) is of the opinion that seminar upgrade and updating the knowledge and skills of employees and the modelling and reorientation of their attitude. It enables staff to be more effective and efficient in their job. But, when seminar programmes are not adequately and regularly organized among academic staff, they tend to perform below expectation.

Workshop programmes appear to be sparingly organized among academic staff in polytechnics. In most cases orientation, coaching and other forms of in-service training are normally organized for newly employed academic staff, but it should be noted that both the newly employed and old staff should constantly participate in workshop programmes so that they can be updated and be kept abreast of latest development on their jobs.

The Staff Development Process

Staff development in an organization involves a systematic approach which generally follows a sequence of events which includes: needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation.

1. **Needs Assessment**

   The purpose of staff development is to address some needs or gaps within an organization, such needs can be either a current deficiency, such as poor employee performance, or a new challenge that demands a change in the way the organization operates (new legislation or increased competition).

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For example, in the Polytechnics a new legislation on professionalization of teaching has created the need for all lecturers to acquire teaching qualification. In order for training to be aligned with its purpose, the learning needs of an organization and the groups and individuals must be identified and analysed and to do so successfully. Ivanevich (2020); suggest that the following must be put into consideration:

i. **Training needs analysis aims:** There should be a consideration of what is to be filled by training, that is the difference between what people know and can do and what they should know and be able to do. Training should not only be about putting things right, but it should be concerned with identifying and satisfying learning and development needs – that is multi-skilling, fitting people to take on extra responsibilities, increasing all–round competence and preparing people to take on higher levels of responsibility in the future.

ii. **Training needs analysis areas:** Training needs analysis should reflect organisation needs, group or units needs and individual employee needs. The three areas are however interconnected.

iii. **Sources of information:** In the identification of training needs, the sources of information must be considered. Such information may come from:

- Organizational goals and corporate plans which indicate the direction in which the organisation is going and can indicate the major training priorities;
- Human resource and succession planning which provides information on future skills requirements and management training needs.
- Personnel statistics.
- Exit interviews which might suggest deficiencies in training arrangement.
- Consultation with senior management can give opinions on training needs.
- Data on productivity, quality and performance which indicate the gaps between expectations and results and therefore suggest training needs.
- Departmental layout changes which provide information about future developments.
- Management requests for training which set out perceived needs.
- Knowledge of financial plans which determines whether the funds will be available for training and may encourage fresh approaches if resources are limited.

2. **Design of staff development programme**

The second phase of the training and development process involves designing the staff development programme or intervention. According to Dessler (2018) as well as Werner &DeSimone (2016), the following activities should be carried out during this phase: selecting the specific objectives of the programme, developing an appropriate lesson plan for the programme, developing or acquiring the materials for the trainees to use, *determining* who will deliver the programme, selecting the most appropriate method or methods to conduct the programme and scheduling the programme. The design phase also involves selecting and developing the contents of the programme which implies choosing the setting for the programme (such as on the job, classroom or online), the learning techniques (lecture, role play or simulation) and the materials to be used such as films, videos, or power point presentations.

3. **Implementation of the Staff Development Programme**: Staff development and training programmes must be implemented using the most appropriate means or methods (as specified in the design phase.) There are a variety of training approaches that an organization can adopt depending on the

kinds of people to be trained and the main objectives of training. New employees have to learn new skills and since their motivation is likely to be high, they can be acquainted relatively easily with the skills and behaviour expected in their new position.

4. **Evaluation of Staff Development:** This is the final phase of the training and development process. Programme evaluation measures the effectiveness of the staff development intervention. It is an important but often underemphasized activity. This is the situation of many Polytechnics where there are no mechanisms put in place to assess staff development interventions. However, evaluation has important usefulness for an organization and they includes; determining whether a programme is accomplishing its objectives, showing the weaknesses and strengths of the development programmes, determining the cost-benefit ratio of the programme, deciding on who should participate in future programmes, identifying which participants benefitted the most or least from the programme and establishing a data base to assist management in making decisions (Nassazi, 2013).

The Need for Academic Staff Development in Polytechnics

Employee development can play a vital role in the attainment of the goals of Polytechnic education in Nigeria. Polytechnics are established to produce trained manpower in engineering, applied science, technology and commerce, and therefore require a well –trained manpower to achieve this objective. Staff development in the Polytechnics will therefore enable the employees to acquire and improve upon their skills. Globalization has further necessitated the optimal utilisation of new knowledge, technologies and innovations to make Polytechnics improve organizational performance and competiveness in the global village so as to achieve their objectives. Through staff development, the teacher whose position is crucial in the educational system, could become knowledgeable about new ideas and new teaching methods, thereby avoiding the use of obsolete methods to teach students of the 21st Century Information Age. Malaolu & Ogbuafor (2013) state that a work forces lack of training is related to low competiveness while Ivancevich (2010) points out that a greater human capital stock is associated with greater productivity and higher salaries. In addition, Nassazi (2013) and Cole, (2004), state that staff development motivates workers and boosts their commitment and productivity.

Admittedly, staff development in organizations tends to create a significant contribution to organizational competence and this in turn is a great boost for enhancing innovativeness. Current literature, to a large extent, supports the fact that organizational performance is positively impacted by the presence of staff development practices (Ivansevich, 2020; Noe, 2016). From the foregoing, it can be stated that staff development can contribute to the attainment of the goals of Polytechnic education as it increases the productivity of employees and organizational performance as well as impact positively on the quality of students. The significance of developing the personnel in the Polytechnics is that the additional skills and knowledge acquired by a staff while still in the service of the Polytechnic makes him efficient, more dedicated and hardworking. Bello (2013) notes that if teaching and non-teaching members in a school show lack of interest in their job or show negative attitude to work, such personnel were without any doubt in need of training or development. Staff development, therefore can play a major role in the successful attainment of Polytechnic objectives as the investment in it benefits all the stakeholders of the organization. Thus, staff development will benefit the lecturer, students, parents, the management and the Ministry of Education that are the main stakeholders in Polytechnic Education.

Nassazi (2013) & Mullins (2017) state that the main reasons for staff development are: creating conditions to increase an organization's effectiveness and competitiveness; gaining highly – motivated staff; achieving suitable human resources to introduce and implement new programmes, increasing skills required to use the organization's available technological resources and ensuring rapid and

suitable replacement for any staff that leaves the organization. Therefore, it is evident that staff development programmes have important benefits for educational institution such as the Polytechnics. Hence, this study sought to find out whether the various opportunities for staff development have been beneficial and significant in improving lecturers‟ capabilities.

Staff Development Programmes

There are a variety of staff development and training approaches that an organisation can adopt depending on the kinds of people to be trained and the main objectives of training. New employees have to learn new skills and since their motivation is likely to be high, they can be acquainted relatively easily with the skills and behaviour expected in their new position. The training of experienced employees can be problematic, as their training needs are not easy to determine and the individual involved may resent being asked to change his/her established ways of performing their jobs.

Training and development methods used by organizations can be classified as either on the job or off the job training.

a. **On -the - Job Training:** It is the most widely used training method, as it is simple and cheaper to adopt, and it places the employee in actual work situations. There are many types of on the job training and these include the following:
   i. **Orientation:** Orientation is usually given to new members of staff as it encourages new comers to quickly adapt and take interest in their job. Orientation usually emphasizes the following themes; the organization's mission and history, the key staff and the rules and regulations of the employees.
   ii. **Coaching:** A coach acts as a cheerleader and most often work with individuals on one on one basis, by focusing on the present and future needs. A coach might help a person develop and implement worthy goals, provide feedback or listen to feedback, help a person think through alternative solutions, help develop priorities and give career information. A coach can be someone internal or external to the organization in which the individual is employed.
   iii. **Mentoring**: This involves designating a more senior staff member to work – shadow or to provide professional support to a new or relatively inexperienced employees.
   iv. **Quality circles:** This is an emerging concept that has its origin in Japan and it allows small groups participate actively in planning, designing and implementing work procedures in business and industry. The use of quality circles for staff development in education is a technique that places the primary responsibility for personal growth on individuals linked together for the improvement of teaching and student learning. Members of a circle can include teachers from several backgrounds and they cooperate to enhance their growth by sharing ideas.
   v. **Clinical supervision:** Staff development can also be facilitated through effective clinical supervision. It focuses on instructional improvement through improved staff performance. Assessments carried out by the supervisor helps to improve future performance of the staff.
   vi. **Job rotation:** It involves shifting employees from position to position so that they can broaden their experience and familiarize themselves with various aspects of work in an organization. Successes have been recorded in industries by the practice of moving employees and managers to various positions to enhance organizational effectiveness and employee development. The practice has not been generally accepted in education but the idea has received some favourable acceptance as a positive growth practice for

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school administrators. However, job rotation in educational institutions particularly Polytechnics can be applied to allocate classes or programmes to lecturers on rotational basis.

vii. **Understudy training / training position**: In the understudy method, a person is trained to assume a position at a future date by understudying the duties and responsibilities of the person currently occupying the position. Thus, an individual or group may be assigned to assist a superior officer in the performance of his duties related to the position and at times left to grapple problems and solve them without the help of the superior. After gaining expertise, the trainee then takes over when the superior is transferred, retired or promoted to a higher position.

viii. **Job instruction training:** According to Werner & DeSimone (2016) is defined as a sequence of instructional procedures used by the trainer to train employees while they work in their assigned job. The job instruction training technique has four step processes that help the trainer to prepare the worker, present the task, allow practice time and follow up. Preparing the worker may include providing employees with a training manual, hand-outs or other job aids that can be used as reference.

ix. **Planned work and activities:** this involves giving trainees important work assignment to develop their experience and ability. For instance, trainees may be asked to head a committee or participate in important committee meetings. This is common in academic institutions where lecturers are members of various committees. Such experience can help them gain insight into how their organization operates and also improve their human relations skills.

2 **Off the Job Method***:* Off the job techniques are conducted outside the normal work setting and individuals are therefore relieved from the stresses and demands of the work place. Conducting training away from the work setting has several advantages. It offers trainees the opportunity to meet people from other departments or organizations and are thus exposed to useful new ideas and experiences. Off the job method/classroom training include lecture, discussion, vestibule training, case studies, role playing and simulation as well as programmed instructions or computer-based training.

i. **The lecture approach/discussion:** The lecture method involves the oral presentation of information by a subject expert to a group of listeners and when used in conjunction with visual aids such as slides, charts, maps and hand-outs, it can be an effective way to facilitate the transfer of theories, concepts, procedures and other factual material. The discussion method involves the trainer in a two-way communication with trainees and the trainees in communication with each other. It encourages active participation of the trainees and offer the trainees an opportunity for feedback, clarification and sharing of views.

ii. **Vestibule Training -** This method of training is where the worker is trained to use machine or perform a task similar to the ones in real work situation. Under this method of training, the training programme is conducted out of the job in an area separate from the work place under the supervision of a skilled instructor. After going through the vestibule training for a specified period of time, the trainees are expected to apply their newly acquired skills when they are assigned to their real job.

iii. **Behaviour Modelling:** The use of behaviour modelling is based on social theory, and it is an effective method for interpersonal or social skills training. This method of training incorporates the use of videos to clearly demonstrate the way things ought to be done and what behaviours are to be avoided.

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Behaviour modelling is often based on the demonstration of the right and effective way to behave and as a result, trainees are provided with facilities to practice such. Mondy & Noe (2015) state that behaviour modelling is where target behaviour is selected and videos on each behaviour produced, key points are displayed on screen and are backed by trainer-led discussions. Learning here is trainer enforced through role play.

iv. **Back to industry (attachment) programmes:** In order to maintain the knowledge of technology and practices commonly used, the use of sabbatical or professional leave is used in order for employees to replenish and update their skills and knowledge.

v. **Case study:** it is a training approach in which trainees study information provided on a case and then make decisions based on it. Cases can be studied by individuals or groups. vi. Business Games and Simulations- The game requires participants to role play decision makers using data to make a variety of decisions. They are mainly use in business organisations.

vi. **In- basket training:** It is a simulation used in management development and it is used to assess learner's ability to establish priorities, plan and make decisions. The trainees make decision by acting out a manager's role using information contained in the manager's in-basket such as telephone messages, notes, memo, letters and reports. viii. Role playing- participants are expected to act on specific problems they may face on their jobs. It therefore involves learning by doing.

3. **Self-Paced /Computer- Based Training Methods:** This can be conducted off the job, that is, in the classroom or in an individual self-paced format. According to Werner and DeSimone (2016) the increased availability of networked computers has led to a limitless interplay between instructor-led and individual based computer training. Computers are increasingly becoming indispensable in the delivery of training in many organizations. It is estimated that 55 percent of organizations now use computer-based training in their training programmes. There are three methods or approaches of using computer-based training (CBT). These are computer aided instruction, intranet training, and intelligent computer assisted instruction.

i. **Computer- aided instruction (CAI):** The programmes of computer -aided instruction include electronic workbooks, compact disc and read-only memory (CD-ROM) presentations. The CAI software packages have a wide range of materials from many subject areas. Many companies have replaced instructor-led courses with CD-ROMS. Research has also shown that trainees using CAI take less time to learn same amount of material using conventional methods (Wexley as cited by Werner & DeSimone, 2016). Polytechnics could also use this method to train lecturers as it is cost effective.

ii. **Internet and intranet –Based Training:** Internets are computers networks that connect millions of computers linked together via modems, telephone cable lines. Intranets are computer networks that use internet and World Wide Web technology and software tools, to find, manage, create, and distribute information within an organisation (Cropt,2016). Thus with intranet, trainers can communicate with learners, conduct needs assessment and other administrative tasks and transmit course materials. This type of technology-based training is referred to as e-learning (electronic learning).

iii. **Intelligent computer-assisted instruction:** It is a more advanced computer- assisted instruction because it has the ability to qualitatively evaluate learner performance. It is able to discern the learner capability from the learners‟ response pattern and the learners‟ errors.

All of the above training approaches have shown that there are a variety of training approaches that an organization can use to for personnel development. However, most of them are used in business organizations' but can be adopted by educational institutions like the Polytechnics.

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Strategies to Enhancing Staff Training in Polytechnics

Staff development is essential for the growth and sustainability of any higher education institution. In Nigerian polytechnics, staff development is crucial in ensuring that academic and non-academic personnel remain competent, motivated, and aligned with global best practices and for this to be achieved, certain strategies must be adopted among them include:

1. **Professional Development Programs**

   Professional development programs involve continuous training to improve staff skills and competencies. This can be achieved through workshops and Seminars as well as conference and research engagement**.** Workshops and seminars expose staff to the latest developments in their fields. Topics can range from pedagogy to technical skills. For example, UNESCO (2018) recommends regular capacity-building workshops for educators to improve teaching quality. Institutions can partner with organizations like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) to sponsor training. Encouraging staff to attend local and international conferences enhances knowledge sharing. According to Adamu & Adebayo (2019), academic conferences help educators stay updated on global trends and innovations. Polytechnics should facilitate staff participation in industry-related training. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) emphasizes the need for practical industry experience for lecturers (NBTE, 2020).

2. **Provision of Scholarships and Study Grants**

   Financial support for education plays a crucial role in making higher learning accessible, Scholarships and study grants enable staff members to pursue higher qualifications. This financial assistance not only alleviates the stress of funding education but also allows staff to focus more on their studies and personal development. TETFund has played a significant role in providing sponsorships for master's and doctoral degrees. The World Bank (2021) recommends investment in staff training for sustainable education development.

3. **Digital Capacity Building**

   With the advancement of technology, staff must be proficient in digital tools. This can be ICT training and E-learning adoption and virtual training and webinars. Capacity building in digital skills is strengthening digital capacities and skills to meet the demands of digital world skill development and training. So, capacity building in digital skills is to adopt and develop new practices with digital technology in order to be able to analyse and develop a critical perspective on content and underlying systems, services and network. This involves providing training on Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Moodle enhances online teaching. in addition, institutions should leverage online learning platforms such as Coursera and Udemy for continuous professional development.

4. **Mentorship and Coaching Programs**

   Mentorship is now a key element in nurturing a productive and engaged workforce, offering a platform for experienced professionals to guide and support newer staff, which in turn enhances the overall productivity and harmony within the organization.

   Employee growth and personal development are highly valued, and mentorship offers a tailored approach to achieving these goals. However, when mentorship programs are aligned with an organization's goals, they become a powerful force in achieving strategic objectives. Aligning mentorship with organizational goals also builds staff's sense of unity and purpose. Such strategic alignment improves individual performance and also propels the collective success of the organization,

5. **Improved Funding and Incentives**

Sustainable funding ensures continuous staff development. The Nigerian government, through TETFund, can increase funding allocation to staff training. Institutions should prioritize staff development in their budgets. Financial incentives and promotions can motivate staff to engage in self-improvement.

6. **Collaboration with International Institutions**
   Educational institution maintains standard practice and this standard of practice and these standards vary from one country to another. With international collaboration, higher education institutions are exposed to different practices and may adopt a few practices which could help them improve. Also these institutions can share their good practices to other higher education institutions in need of improvement and guidance. Higher education institutions can better explore these through strategic partnerships. Polytechnics should form partnerships with foreign institutions for exchange programs and joint research.
7. **Encouraging Research and Publication**
   Research and publication play a crucial role in the professional growth of academic staff in any tertiary institution. In Nigerian polytechnics, fostering a strong research culture can significantly enhance staff development by improving their knowledge base, skills, career prospects, and institutional reputation. Institutions can provide research grants to support faculty members.

Recommendations

To enhance staff development and capacity building for effective teaching in Nigerian polytechnics, the following recommendations should be implemented:

1, The Nigerian government should allocate more funds for staff training, research, and professional development through agencies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).
2. Institutions should organize regular training workshops, seminars, and certification programs to keep lecturers updated on modern pedagogical techniques and industry trends.
3. Polytechnic management should provide research grants and incentives to encourage lecturers to conduct meaningful research and publish in reputable journals.
4. Polytechnics should partner with industries to provide staff training, internships, and industrial attachments to enhance lecturers' practical knowledge.
5. Training in ICT and e-learning platforms should be mandatory for all lecturers to improve digital teaching methods.
6. Polytechnic management should hire more qualified lecturers to balance teaching loads and allow staff time for research and self-improvement.
7. Lecturers who excel in research, teaching innovation, and professional development should be recognized through promotions, bonuses, and awards**.**
8. Polytechnic management should formulate clear staff development policies that outline training schedules, funding opportunities, and career progression paths.
9. Nigerian polytechnics should partner with foreign institutions for exchange programs, joint research, and capacity-building initiatives.
10. Institutions should encourage lecturers to pursue higher degrees, professional certifications, and specialized training programs to enhance their qualifications.

Conclusion

Staff development and capacity building are essential pillars for ensuring high-quality education and institutional excellence in Nigerian polytechnics. As centers of technical and vocational education, polytechnics play a crucial role in equipping students with the skills necessary for national development. However, the effectiveness of teaching and learning in these institutions is directly tied to the competency, motivation, and continuous professional growth of academic staff. Without structured capacity-building initiatives, lecturers may struggle to keep pace with evolving educational trends, industry demands, and technological advancements.

A well-designed staff development program enhances teaching methodologies, research output, and administrative efficiency. Training workshops, conferences, mentorship programs, digital literacy initiatives, and industry collaborations are critical strategies for improving the competency of lecturers. Additionally, research and publication should be prioritized to encourage knowledge creation and dissemination, thereby ensuring that lecturers remain thought leaders in their respective fields. The integration of modern pedagogical techniques, including ICT-driven teaching methods, will further improve the delivery of technical education and enhance students' learning experiences.

For this to be achieved, requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, polytechnic management, private sector partnerships, and international collaborations. Increased funding from agencies like the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), structured mentorship programs, and performance-based incentives will motivate staff to actively engage in continuous learning and self-improvement.

Furthermore, polytechnics must embrace a culture of lifelong learning where faculty members continuously upgrade their skills to align with global best practices. Institutions should establish robust research and development (R&D) units, provide financial incentives for research activities, and promote knowledge exchange programs with universities and industries. Encouraging industry-academia collaboration will ensure that lecturers gain practical exposure to emerging technologies and innovations, which can be incorporated into teaching and research.

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