Role of Human Resource Management in Nigeria Sustainable Development

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Abstract
This research examined the role of human resource management in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria. The global economic crisis posed several threats to Nigeria’s economy and necessitates the best use of talented human resources to tackle the global economic downturn. Human resource management derived from personnel management, considered as the effective management of employees, encourages the leadership that motivates people, draws on their talent, drives their participation in decision-making, and takes into consideration their expectations and needs. The data for this study was obtained from secondary sources. The neo-theory of a closed linear system was adopted as the theoretical framework while the mode of analysis is content analysis. Human resource management practices has the ability to create organizations that are more intelligent, flexible and competent through the application of policies and practices that concentrate on recruiting, selecting, training skilled employees and directing their best effort to cooperate within the resource bundle of the organization for sustainable development. Thus, this study concluded that to stimulate sustainable development, management is required to develop skilled and talented employees who are capable of performing their jobs successfully. Sustainable development can be created through the best exploit of human resources as an organizational intangible asset.

Keywords: Human Resource, Management, Sustainable Development, Employees, Organisation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The basic tenet for Human resource management is that the people working in an organization are its greatest asset for achieving objectives. Human resource management (HRM) is a coherent and holistic approach to the management of people that require and develops organizational structures and system, individual attitudes and behavior. Commonly, it refers to “training” or development of skills. Other principal element to HRM may be; recruitment, induction, performance management, career development, reward and recognition. The theoretical framework for this study is the neo-classical theory of a closed linear system. In systems theory, a linear system is a mathematical model of a system based on the use of a linear operator. Linear systems stoically exhibit features and properties that are much simpler than the non-linear case.

Human Resource management is described as the process governed and directed by policies, strategies, rules and culture. A simple strategic model is comprised of four key components viz.; mission, objectives, strategy, implementation and review. The term “Strategic HRM deals with the longer-term people issues, as part of the strategy and mission statement. Implementation of strategic HRM is dependent on efficient vertical
integration between organizational strategy and training strategy or policy (i.e. the links between the human resource activities and the organization’s strategy and, the horizontal integration which refers to the links between the human resource activities themselves and to the fact that the conduct of one human resource task may influence the conduct of another).

There is no single definition of sustainable development. In “The Brundtland Commission Report,” the term sustainable development is defined as, “development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” A view from the United Kingdom Government website perceives sustainable development to mean, “a better quality of life now and for generations to come,” Eze (2017) observes that, “while there is a diversity of views on the concept of sustainable development as well as specific policy and practice options for achieving it, there is agreement on some of its core principles such as: meeting basic human necessities fairly and efficiently; preserving options for both present and future generations to meet their needs; promoting community well-being based on broad participation and active citizenship; linking various aspects of sustainability (i.e. economic, ecological and social); managing and utilizing resources with prudence and precaution, maintaining a holistic perspective and fostering cooperation and shared responsibility.

Projects located in government departments are unable to successfully reform organizational policy and develop HRM strategies for sustainable development because the whole process is too dependent on wider public service reform. Even then, the development of policies and strategic plans for HRM in government departments may only be sustained with full departmental and ministerial backing driven by radical reform of public service management system. Projects generally successfully complete strategies through a long integrative and consultative process in which participants benefit from inter-sectional discussions and learn more about organizational analysis and strategic planning processes.

Projects striving for strategic interventions form working committees and many consultative workshops. If the end results not a working strategy, then considerable time has been forfeited from the core business of achieving sustainable development by the organization; this may also be detrimental to the organization’s performance. Solid guarantees at the most senior level must be sought before embarking on such a long and time-consuming process. Developing strategies without the guarantee and merely hoping that champions at the very senior level will take the process forward after strategy development by projects is a very risky strategy for organizational reform.

If human resources are an organization’s greatest asset, then the effective management of this asset would potentially lead to a “quantum leap” in overall organizational performance and achievement of sustainable development, thus justifying focusing support for the HRM development process. Generic elements of HRM are probably the most important barriers to most endeavors striving to achieve sustainable development e.g. new extension approaches, management system, strategic planning, restructuring, gender reform etc. If gains can be made in these areas, then evidence suggest from the projects working in government departments and organizations that sustainable development is achievable in Nigeria. Even if departmental staff responds well to essential training in management and core HR elements, without a clear mandate for
change, these skills tend to become eroded over time (evidenced by project training evolutions). The lesson here is that the principle of training to close a skill gap for ‘today’s’ requirement and not what might be “tomorrow’s” requirement must be adhered to.

1.1 Conceptual Literature Review On Human Resource Management

The available literature present ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ version of human resource management (HRM). The ‘hard’ version emphasizes the term resource and adopts a rational approach to managing employees’ that is, aligning business strategy and human resource strategy, and viewing people as any other economic factor, as a cost that must be control. The ‘soft’ model emphasizes the term ‘ human’ and thus advocates investment in training and development and the adoption of commitment strategies to ensure that highly skilled and loyal employees gives the organization of work and the management of the employment relationship that fits with the new economic order (Storey, 1995).

Adamolekun (2005) defines Human resource management as a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques. The point of note is that HRM emphasizes the strategic role of personnel in managing organizational or societal change; that it integrates human resources considerations to overall organizational strategy; and it focuses on securing employee commitment to organizational goals through a consensual development of an organizational culture, devolved responsibility and empowerment.

Human resource management has become an import factor for all organizations in this age of global competition in which all large-scale organization must compete for resources whether they are in the public, private sector and nongovernmental organizations. The importance of HRM orientation for Nigeria public administration system in particular is that it underscores the need for the transformation of personnel department in public sector organization from a preoccupation with passive or even negative roles of administrate ring largely on the basis of outdated rules to actively developing and pursuing policies for harnessing the personnel function with overall proactive strategic management within the organization. It therefore focuses on the need to develop professional skills for managing the most critical of all organizational resources namely personnel instead of treating it as a residual responsibility that can be handled by anyone who cannot be otherwise productively engaged in the organization (Adamolekun, 2005).

The united nations economic commission for Africa (UNESCA) 1990), describes human resource as the knowledge, skills, attitudes, physical and managerial effort required to manipulate capital, technology, and land among other things, to produce goods and services for human consumption. Explaining further, human resources are the totally human potentials (knowledge, skills, attitude, energy and technology) inherent with a nation’s human resource stock and whose combined effort, if properly developed and harnessed, would yield a high level of labour productivity. Human resources management or development can be seen as the process of developing or managing the skills, knowledge and the capabilities of all the people of the society and which are needed in the labour market for the production of goods and service. In economic terms, it could be
described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy (Uwat, 2002, Harbison and mayers, 1964).

In a more precise way, Human resource management (HRM) is the process of hiring and developing employees so that they become more valuable to the organization. It also includes conducting job analysis, planning, personnel needs, recruiting the right people for the job, orientating and training, managing wages and salaries, providing benefits and incentives, evaluating performance, resolving disputes, and communicating with all employees at all level.

Armstrong (1999) asserts that modern human resource management is guided by several overriding principles. The paramount principle is a simple recognition that human resources are the most important assets of an organization; a business cannot be successful without effectively managing these resources. Also, business success is most likely to be achieved if the personnel policies and procedures of the enterprise are closely linked with, and make a major contribution to the achievement of corporate objectives and make a major contribution to the achievement of corporate objectives and strategic plans. Another principles is that, it is human resources responsibility to find, secure, guide and develop employees whose talents and desires are compatible with the operating needs and future goals of the company. From this, it can be said that human resource management is a strategic approach to the acquisition, motivation, development and management of the organization’s or society’s human resources (Armstrong, 1999; burstiner, 1988).

1.2 The Role of Human Resource Management in Achieving Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has become a household name all over the world championed by the United Nations to manage our resources notably human capital or resources. According to the world commission on environmental and development (1987), sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs. The point is that meeting the needs of the future depends on how well we balance social, economic and environmental objectives or needs, when making decisions such as efficient use of labour.

Sustainable development require high quality and appropriate human resource to successfully implement. Sustenance is the ability to make things continue to happen for a long time while sustainability refers to the use of natural products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment. It is a compelling idea for many people. It is mostly concerned with how business and societies can contribute to some of the most challenges that the world face today. The role of sustainable development is to address the expectation of both employees and employers. It encourages society and business alike to focus on performance, consistent, eagerness to improve and continual learning. In summary it is known fact that fundamental and overriding success factor in the implementation of sustainable development is human capital and how this is harnessed and effectively utilized rest squarely on effective leadership (Olayode, 2006).

Strategic management is the comprehensive collection of ongoing activities and processes that organization or society use to systematically coordinate and align resource and action with mission, vision and strategy. Strategic management activities transform the static or organizational plan into a system that provides performance feedback to decision-making
and enables the plan to evolve and grow as requirement and other circumstances change. It is the management of a society or an organization resource to achieve its goals and objectives.

Strategic human resources thus refer to management of human resources or capital that is focused on a long-term success. It concerns itself with targets usually for a 5 or 10 years span ahead which addresses issues such as first, where we are now in terms of age, education, and experience of the employees, their attitudes and opinion, the value of employee’s skills, education and abilities. The cost and effectiveness of the human resources and analyses of the assets of the work force, second, ‘how we got there’, which specifically deals with the growth, history and patterns of the society especially in the analysis of supply and demand of labour. Thirdly, the “where we are headed which has to do with population projection for the future in terms of quality and quantity, ratio of high talent man power to total workforce, future supply of labour, future demand of human resources, future cost of labour etc.

The central point of strategic human resources is on estimating the demand for labour for some period into future. This call for two kinds of data: (i) An inventory of present employment levels, and (2) forecast of future employment needs. This will determine the training need with which the society might be face din terms of the kind of jobs that may be shorthanded, and the kinds of jobs that may be difficult to find. This boils down to manpower development and management in the critical areas for sustainable development which education plays a vital roles.

In Nigeria, education and training for manpower of human resources for development have multiplied tremendously since the colonial period. Education, mainly in the formal, intellectually oriented from, is institutionalized through primary school, secondary school and tertiary education. The growth in the educational and training system in Nigeria has been phenomenal, both in terms of the numbers of institution and of enrolments. But sad to say that there exist a widening and growing demand at all levels both for general and liberal execution and for technical as well as professional skills. This is anchored on its extremely unbalanced enrolment and output of trained manpower. The criticism is that the systems is Bookish,”elitish” and colonial in orientation and does not reflect the actual needs of the country in terms of the types and various mixes of manpower that are needed for sustainable social economic development. For example, the national tertiary education policy of 60:40 science/humanities mix of enrolment established since independence has never been met in the universities, nor have the polytechnic achieved even a 50:50 ratio of technical, technological and related occupation compared with administrative and non-science based skills (Yesufu, 2000).

2. SUMMARY

Effective manpower utilization hinges on effective and visionary leadership. In recent years, Nigeria has seen the need for strategic Human Resources Management for sustainable development. A good example is the directive given to all Nigerian universities by NUC in 2015 as matter urgency to human resources need of the university as basic requirement for lecturing to produce at least 5000 Ph.Ds. from 2010-2015 to avoid total collapse of the sector. The issue is not churning out 5000 PhDs manpower for the sector but emphasis should have been on critical area of sciences, technology,
engineering, medicine etc. A closure look at some critical sector reveals dearth of staff which require strategic management for achievement of sustainable development.

3. CONCLUSION

Human resources management is the epic center of any meaningful development that must be perused by any country or state. It entails a process of expanding choices and developing capabilities of the people in all economic, social, technological and cultural activities through which the skills, knowledge, productivity and innovation are enhanced for sustainable development. To achieve sustainable development in the critical area of science, engineering and technology. This where strategic management of human resources or manpower forecast plays a vital role.

The manpower forecast is meant to ensure the best human material is available to promote sustainable development of the economy and also provide basics that aspect of educational planning and training that will ensured the human resources concern have the necessary skills and proficiency and as when necessary. This must be while utilized and motivated to avoid brain drain. It’s a well-known fact that the best Nigerian brain in all field of sciences, computer technology, academics, engineering and even space sciences are mostly found in the USA, Western-Europe and among the rank of international and Non-governmental organization (NGOs); (Yesufu, 2000); Adams, 1968).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations suffice:

1. All aspects of strategic Human Resource Management, HR planning, personnel development and performance management require a committed and sustained public sector reform process to become a reality at the organizational level to achieve sustainable development. A project located with a single department cannot do this.

2. The lengthy process of strategy development is a productive learning process for concerned personnel, the legacy of which may be future initiatives once junior middle ranking staffs are promoting to senior decision and policy-making ranks. This goes a long way in achieving sustainable development in the long run.

3. Organizations find it increasingly more difficult to respond to the ever more complex systems in which they work. However, the technical skill base should not be neglected. In line with this, the value of a human resource management strategy should be vertically integrated with an organizational strategy.

4. If units in an organization are to be successful, they must be credible in the eyes of the whole organization by employing staff at least with formal training in Human resource management.

5. In addition to substantial staff training center refurbishment and re-equipping the management processes and structures at training centers are necessary for an efficient Human resource management and achievement of sustainable development.
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