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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA UNDER A GLOBALIZED ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

The pace of globalization is increasing continuously in terms of markets for goods and services, investment opportunities across borders amongst others. Enterprises face competition from all fronts. Human resource management is not left out in this transformation crusade as it has obligation to move along with the changing demands of the globalization process. One of the objectives of this paper is to show that effective managers should constantly be aware of the changes taking place in domestic (home country) environment, as well as around the globe (international and foreign environments) on HR issues and developments. By so doing, they can scan their environment on an ongoing basis, and when they detect opportunities and/or threats, they can transform their organization to seize the opportunities and/or combat or neutralize the threats as the case may be. In this study, problems, issues and trends in HRM practice in Nigeria in the current period were reviewed. The factors affecting HRM and its practice in a global context and what should be the direction of the profession and its practice in Nigeria constitute the main focus of this paper

Keywords: Human Resources, Challenges, Globalization, Management, Economy.

Introduction

Human resources are the live wire of an organization. Despite the application of technology in modern business management, human resources are still relevant and the most adaptive resources of the organization. The strategic values of HR stem from the fact that apart from other resources employed in the course of production (land, capital, technology etc) which are passive, human resources are endowed with discretionary decision-making power and thus have competitive advantage over the other resources. Besides, HR combines other resources in the right mix to formulate appropriate strategies for the accomplishment of the desired objectives of the enterprise. The globalization of business is having a significant impact on

human resource management practices; and it has now become more imperative than ever for business organizations to engage in human resource management practices on an international standard. While the management of people is mostly associated with HRM, the definition, parameter and context are contested by different writers. Some authors such as Kane (1996) argued that HRM is in its infancy, while other authors such as Welbourne and Andrews (1996) dispute it. However, other writers have attempted to differentiate between personnel management and HRM like Sisson, (1990), by emphasizing on the strategic approach to managing people. Other writers such as Legge (1995) have focused on the soft and hard approach to managing human resources. All these distinctions have contributed to the fundamental differences in understanding and defining human resource management practices, and therefore, HRM should not be incorporated within a single model, but rather adequate emphasis should be on understanding human resource management issues, which will assists practitioners, authors, managers and organizations in developing and implementing HRM policies and practices that will be productive and that can make businesses to gain and sustain a competitive advantage. This paper is however, aimed at exploring HRM strategies, challenges and impact in Nigeria.

HRM is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques (Storey, 2001). Beer et al, (1984) defined HRM as a strategic approach to the management of human resources that involves all management decisions and actions that affect the relationship between the organization and employees. While Armstrong (2006), defines HRM as a strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to the management and development of the organization's human resources in which every aspect of that process is wholly integrated within the overall management of the organization. Schuler and Jackson (1987) develop the strategic model of HRM by linking HR to competitive strategic framework that an organization can use to gain competitive advantage. They argue that the strategy that management of an organization employs can affect the kind of employees' behaviour.

However, this strategic model of HRM is not left with some flaws such as ignoring the employees' interest, not recognizing the legal requirement, social norms and values of the environment in which they operate (Legge, 1995:115; Budhwar and Debrah, 2001: 500). The strategic model according to Legge labels this model as the hard HRM model, which contrast totally from the 'soft model' of HRM that emphasizes commitment HR strategy. This commitment strategy model was as a result of the interest in the cultural factors that has promoted the Japanese economic performance making the country to have a competitive advantage over countries in the late 1970 to 1980. Looking at these three definitions of what HRM is, there is a major area of convergence, which is the 'Strategic' nature of the management approach. These definitions have encompassed the linking of various HRM practices such as recruiting, selection, rewarding, training, appraising and planning with organizational goals. Hence, strategic HRM is a more integrative practice that links the organizational goals with the strategic management process (Sparrow, Brewster & Harris, 2004). All these definitions indicate that HRM is an elusive concept with various meanings; deciding on an accepted definition will lead to confusion. That is why Storey (2001) argues that HRM is elastic and it covers a range of applications that varies from books, society and

organizations. However, in defining, HRM, these three components should guide how the concept can be operationalized.

***H**: Human (something to do with people)*
***R**: Ambiguous concept that people find difficult to relate to.*
***M**: Management places domain of Business and Organization*

According to Price (2000), much academic literature have forgotten the human element in HRM, rather people have been tagged as a 'resource' along with other resources such as tables and desk. Price (2000) believed that people cannot be discussed and treated in exactly the same manner as equipment's. The 'human' aspect of HRM is concerned with the relationship between employer and employee and it is associated with the human relations movement and the concept of high commitment to work practices developed by (Walton, 1985). This model defines HRM as the softer issues of strategic management (Beer, et al, 1995). That is why HRM should therefore, be part of management strategies concerned with the decisions, strategies, factors, principles, operations, practices, functions and methods related to the management of people as employees in any type of organization (Steering Committee for HRM Standards & Qualification in South Africa, 1999).

In order for HRM to function very well, Price (2000) argued it has to be pragmatic (aims to achieve practical solutions to real work problems) and eclectic (the solutions can be drawn from a variety of theoretical & managerial traditions).

Given all these arguments, HRM is a philosophy of people-management based on the belief that human resources are uniquely important to sustain business success; and an organization gains competitive advantage by using its people effectively, drawing on the expertise to meet clearly defined objectives (American Management Association, 2000). As the management of an organization is accountable for obtaining and maintaining qualified employees, in today's complex environment, fulfilling that mission is a major contribution to an organization's success (American Management Association, 2000). There are three levels at which HRM can be operationalized following Budhwar and Sparrow (2004:7) which are national level (this involves the external labour market, national culture, social-cultural environment, legislations); contingent variables (such as the type and the nature of business, ownership, age, etc); organizational strategies (this relates to the HR functions and the internal labour market). This framework will be the basis on which HRM practices in Nigeria will be discussed. However, this model should be treated with some caution because Budhwar and Sparrow (2004) developed this framework to analyse issues of HRM in different countries and to a large extent, continents.

Traditional Functions of Human Resource Management

In a nutshell, the primary task of HRM is to ensure that the organization's HR are utilized and managed effectively. HR practitioners are saddled with the responsibility of designing and implementing policies and programmes that will enhance human abilities and improve on the organization's overall effectiveness. Empirical studies have shown that poor human relations at work, neglect of staff welfare programmes and lack of motivation are often the factors that cause industrial strife and declining productivity in the work setting. The modern day entrepreneurs recognize that HR are vital element in the organization and concomitantly

acknowledge the role the HR practitioners play in developing these valuable resources. To acquire and retain HR in the organization, the HR practitioners in brief perform four critical roles:

i. Create and implement policies, which should be in writing and communicated to all employees through circulars or the employee handbook.
ii. Offer advice and counsel the employees on matters bordering on productivity, safety at work, career path or management, morale, honesty and integrity, human relations, etc.
iii. Provision of services that assist Line Managers in performing their jobs or serving the organizational units e.g recruitment, selection and placement, compensation management, training and development, staff welfare programmes, industrial and labour relations, research and planning.
iv. Control of HR programmes and laid down procedures i.e. to monitor and ensure that HR policies and guidelines are implemented religiously or to the letters e.g. grievance handling and disciplinary procedures, Federal Character principles or Quota system, fairness of appraisal exercise, granting of loans, etc.

Each of the above functions is a complex flow of activities and it underscores HR management functions as an integral part of the overall corporate plans of the enterprise. It follows therefore, that HR management function is a joint responsibility for all managers within the enterprise (Fajana, 200).

Globalization and HRM in Nigeria

In the present day, business is conducted on international scale and this involves the transfer of goods and services, technology, managerial knowledge and capital to other countries or across national boundaries. Globalization has made the world smaller through fast communication network. The economies of the world have become increasingly integrated (Bhagwatti, 2004). Besides, we are now in a world where quality, efficiency and competiveness count most.

The progress and survival of the business enterprise of this century can be measured in this sequence: information, knowledge and their application through science, engineering and technology. In other words, knowledge sharing impacts on global enterprises as they export their management philosophies and techniques, as well as their technologies, products and services around the world (Kuruvilla et al, 2003). The internet has made communication network to be very easy and also for marketing to take place without necessarily moving from your desk. You can even see what the product is like and be advised by the seller. For you to participate in the global market, you must produce an internationally acceptable product. Your product must satisfy the market you are targeting. You must add value to the product.

With the rapid expansion of global markets coupled with the view that the whole world is in one market, it has now become imperative for the Human resource practitioners to adapt to international needs by moving people, ideas, products and information around the world to meet local needs. In addition to these factors, the geographic dispersion, multiculturalism, different legal, social system and cross-border movement of capital, goods, services and people that the international firm faces adds a need for competency and sensitivity that is not found in the domestic firm (Vance and Paik, 2006). Therefore, Managers of this century must

strive to balance the demand to think globally and act locally. However, some environment factors may constitute a problem and affect the rate of adaptation from international to local environment for the under listed reasons:

i. Economic system (capitalism; mixed economy and Marxists) and level of economic development (Developed, Developing and underdeveloped);
ii. Legal system/environment and constraints (laws, regulations and administration of justice) ;
iii. Political environment (power, ideologies, government policies and regulations);
iv. Educational system and language vary from one country to the other and;
v. Socio-cultural/Ethical environment (values, social organizations/systems, reward system, etc)

Human Resources Management in Nigeria

HRM policies and practices are carried out within an economic, social, political and legal environment. Thus, there is a need for considerable historical and cultural insight into local conditions to understand the processes, philosophies and problems of national models of HRM (Hofstede, 1993). Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of 180 million people. Nigeria's population and human resource base make it one of the most attractive countries for foreign investment in Africa. As foreign and local firms increase their involvement in Nigeria, they will need to build capabilities and utilize local competencies. The knowledge of human resource management (HRM) and more importantly perhaps, knowledge of the factors that impact on HRM in Nigeria will become increasingly critical to the way we do businesses in Nigeria and ultimately their success. Hence, the way to get things done cannot be divorced from local values, customs, and the overall external and cultural environment.

HRM as a concept got introduced into the Nigerian literature in 1940 during the colonial era; with industrialization and commercialization, which later became wage employment. Ever since then, there has been a tremendous growth of HR in Nigeria, which in recent years has been characterized by lack of professionalism and specialization. Different reasons have been accounted for as the challenges facing HRM practices in Nigeria. Some of which are discussed here.

The socio-cultural diversity of Nigeria has influenced the HRM practices in Nigeria. Nigeria is characterized by over reliance on culture, language, religion, gender and educational qualifications as a basis for determining who gets employed. What this means is that, the opportunity for an average Nigerian to get employed is a factor of the aforementioned variables. Nigeria according to Fajana (2009) is one of the African countries troubled by abundant labour and scarce talent. Attracting, developing, deploying and retaining best talents have become a challenge. That is why Fajana and Ige (2007) argued that the desire for top performance has driven the need for effective management.

i. HRM in Nigeria can be said to be 'still in Infancy' and lot of academic research is still required in this area. Lack of indigenous and comprehensive HRM models is one of the challenges facing HRM practices in Nigeria, which is why the majority of principles and practices evidence in workplaces in Nigeria are all adopted from other countries.

ii. HRM practices in Nigeria are a convergence with western-inspired, with the evidence of cultural and institutional influences on it. That is, there is a blend of transplanted and indigenous HRM practices. The sensitivity to individuals' socialization as well as economic, historical, political, and social contexts according to Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) may enable organizations to capitalize on the potential to transplant forms of HRM from parent country cultures to developing countries such as Nigeria.

iii. Nevertheless, most organizations are characterized by lack of funding for human resource management research and development. Nigeria's democracy has enhanced the practice of HRM, determining the quota of expatriates it permits.

iv. Nigeria's economy allows the importation of new technologies to enhance HRM, but training is still a bit slow, thus employment of expatriates to handle such is still encouraged. In Nigeria, there is application of new management techniques and skills used in the running of organizations, all aimed at running a cost- effective system. HRM practices in Nigeria cannot be totally diffused from what is evidenced in other countries. However, due to the peculiarity of the social and cultural characteristic of Nigeria, HRM in Nigeria is an area open for further research.

v. Good employer-employee relations are therefore critical to the stable and sustainable development of the Nigerian economy, as well as the world economy as a whole.

vi. Lack of the internal manpower to complete all necessary tasks and the complexity of today's business climate as a result of deregulation, globalization, and technology advancements has outpaced many companies' level, for companies to get special projects done without adding employees to the payroll (Olofin & Folawewo, 2006).

vii. Most organizations in Nigeria now offer a continued education and training to help its people cultivate the right skills and expand their career within a truly global/collaborative workplace. However, in recent time, Nigerian workplaces are introducing different HR ideologies adopted from foreign organizations. For instance, there has been a tremendous increase in level of contract or temporary employment and most of these activities are contracted out to consultants, via outsourcing thereby, reducing the number of personnel in its payroll. The implication of this is that organizations are paying lesser for more work, and at the same time are losing the psychological attachment, commitment, and loyalty of their employees.

viii. In Nigeria, organizational control is firmly in the hands of management and the management's role is to effectively manage the number of employees and match them closely with desired goals and objectives. Both the management and the Nigerian government strive to make coherent HR policies that fit closely with overall business strategy. For example, in the oil industry (which is the most organized and highly paid employment sector) the government of Nigeria has made concerted efforts over the last 50 years to promote the participation of indigenous workers in the oil industry. Regulation 26 of the 1969 Petroleum and Drilling Act represents one of government's early efforts to increase Nigerian national oil workers' participation in the industry. Recruitment is selectively done in Nigeria, and employees are trained to perform required skills. However, due to the complexities involved in the activities of the oil industries, a lot of skilled expatriate services are required leading to a high level of expatriate employment till date. This is also because most of the oil companies are multinationals, with parent companies in well-developed and advanced countries.

ix. For most organizations in Nigeria, performance appraisal is a dialogue process and serves as a mentor to generally mould the individual to perform at an optimal level.

The employees are allowed to carry out a self-evaluation based on engagements and projects, they were involved in during the assessment period. It is expected that performance appraisal system should be a fair process involving assessments on skills, technical knowledge and how well the employee can offer quality service delivery. However, the lack of skill and know-how of the appraiser have made some of the tools and parameters for appraising employees' performance to be faulty. Such appraisal system and process might not capture what it is expected to. The concern to develop the right performance appraiser system have pushed indigenous companies in Nigeria to employ expatriate services, as trainers, in positions requiring special skills and expertise, with which Nigerian workers cannot compete.

x. Wages and other fringe benefits in organizations in Nigeria are by collective bargaining between unions and employers or employees' association. In some private organizations, the basic wages are generally higher than the public sector organization. What is evidence in Nigeria is that wage scales are based on job analysis and evaluation to ensure equity and increases are based on merit or performance. The higher the risk, time allocation, skills requirement, experience required, the higher the wage. That is why jobs that are high in occupational hazards are the highest paid job in Nigeria. In the case of public sector organizations owned by Government, salary adjustments may result from annual merit reviews, promotions, individual special adjustment or general adjustments. General adjustments are made when the Government decrees a general wage increase in both the public and private sectors.

xi. In recent years, most organizations in Nigeria are now re-emphasizing the need to train their employees. Training is expected to generate enthusiasm for creating new ideas, and is mutually beneficial to employers and employees. Managers, supervisors and HR departments are responsible for ensuring that workers are effectively trained. Some organizations in Nigeria now provide workers with education and subsidies for job-related training; while some other organizations have changed their wage structures to include education and training subsidy allowance in workers' wages.
The challenge here is that such training is expected to be job-related and proven to be of mutual benefit to both employers and employees. This can limit the employees from acquiring other skills that are not related to the job description. Nevertheless, most organizations in Nigeria are constantly aware of the need and relevance of training and they equally design the right training to meet identified needs. This will ensure that they have the right crop of qualified, competent and valuable professionals to make the right input and be knowledgeable in diverse fields.

xii. Another area of HRM practices that need further development and enhancement is the occupational health and safety. There has not been reliable official statistics on the number of fatalities and non-fatalities in organizations in Nigeria. This is because most organizations are not willing to share their experiences with others because of the fear or being accused of not handling health safety issues properly and compensating the victims adequately. There is also the challenge of employees in Nigeria not knowing there right to work in a safe environment free of occupational hazards and appropriate compensation in the case of accidents or hazards that can affect them both psychologically and physically.

xiii. Most organizations in Nigeria are highly unionized, especially the public sector organizations. Employees unite to protect and promote their interest, so also do the employers. Until March 2005, the Government of Nigeria promoted compulsory union

membership at the workplace, which has resulted in almost 60 per cent unionization rate. For instance, the oil workers are unionized by occupational category: white-collar workers belong to the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN) and production workers or blue-color workers to the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG). Some of these industry-wide trade unions affiliate with different national unions, such as the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), respectively. It is only the private organizations that there has not been a high participation in union. Rather what we have in some of these private organizations is employers and employees forming and meeting at common forums to discuss issues, identified problems and map out strategies for a better working relationship.

Lessons from the Experience of other Countries

Human resource managers and practitioners in Nigeria can learn and adopt the following best practices from other developed countries:

- Openness and objectivity of the recruitment and selection process;
- Strategic development of staff for optimal utilization;
- Flexibility in pay system;
- Balance of power in the application of equal employment opportunity;
- The efficiency of affirmative action in ensuring employment opportunity and;
- Group harmony which can enhance cooperation and decision-making.

Issues and Trends in Human Resource Management in Nigeria

Traditionally, the responsibility of the HRM has been centred primarily on recruitment, selection, orientation, training, job analysis and evaluation, labour relations, appraisal exercise, etc but in the modern time, some trends and issues have created a new dawn for the HR practitioners and professionals. Some of these issues are discussed below:

i. **Productivity Improvement**

Poor productivity is likely to create unemployment and inflation, decline in standard of living of the masses, hence all hands must be on deck in search of ways to improve productivity and thus strengthen the economy for the betterment of all parties in employment relations. Modern day HR practice has led to greater output and improved quality of products and thus the trend has encouraged HR practitioners in taking active roles on matters impinging on productivity improvement.

ii. **Quality of Work Life (QWL)**

This term refers to the extent to which employees' personal needs are met through their work e.g. one's QWL improves as one's work meets more and more personal needs. Therefore, it is expected that improvements in QWL will affect the performance of the organization favourably. The HR professionals are known to be taking keen interest on issues that relates to job satisfaction and commitment in their bid to promote Quality of Work Life (QWL).

iii. **Health and Safety at Work**

The focus is on creation of a work environment which minimizes the likelihood of an accident or injury. Akin to this, is job stress which can be as hazardous as an unsafe work place. The

modern managers have recognized the dangers of potential personal and organizational job stress and have taken interest on ways to reduce the problem through medical attention.

iv. **Quota System in Employment**

This is very common in public organizations where employment in government establishments is expected to reflect the Federal Character Principle. The HR practitioners have herculean tasks in ensuring that employment is carried out in line with the above principle without compromising merits and standards.

v. **Labour and Social Legislations**

From the 70's to date, the above legislations have granted workers more rights in terms of job security and entitlements which were perceived as mere expectations in the yesteryears. These rights and entitlements (various fringe benefits, medical care for employees and family, Pension, Gratuity Schemes, National Housing Fund, Retrenchment benefits, etc) have added additional strain and costs which the employers must bear in hiring, maintaining and disposing employees.

vi. **Labour Dissatisfaction at Work**

This has to do with issues like growing rate of unionization of employees, low morale and alienation from work. Others include labour turnover, brain-drain, poor work habits/attitudes, industrial conflicts and strikes which are inevitable phenomena in the workplace.

vii. **Changing Values of the Employees**

In the past decades, work ethics was tenaciously followed by the employees in terms of punctuality, honesty, diligence, etc, but in the modern day, there is growing evidence of serious decline in work ethics. The syndrome is such that some of the enterprises do not provide the basic guidelines for living rather the individuals are responsible for exploring and determining for themselves what they want to do and become in life. With this philosophy one needs not to wonder why work has become one alternative among many to the workers who want to survive in a turbulent and harsh environment of the modern day. The trend leads to the erosion of values as bribery, corruption; lack of transparency, indiscipline, wasteful spending, etc becomes rampant.

viii. **Changing Demands of the Employers**

Due to competitive pressures, the organization must embark on changes in its internal environment as well as technological innovations. The foregoing factors no doubt have serious effect or repercussion for HR management and planning in the organization as manpower contraction or expansion becomes imminent.

ix. **Changing Role of Government or State in Industrial Relations**

Due to the civil war in Nigeria, the government shifted its non-interference posture for more positive roles in industrial relations practice. This is evidenced by its "Interventionist Policy" in industrial relations in what it coined as "Guided Democracy" in Labour matters. The government enacts legislations from time to time as industrial situations may warrant and implements labour standards approved by ILO. The HR practitioner need to keep himself abreast of labour legislations on continuous basis.

x. **The Clean Wage Option**

This is the consolidation of the basic pay with all allowances or fringe benefits. In other words, it is the payment of total package as salary without segmentation or distinction between the salary and the fringe benefits components. This is currently being practiced by many countries in the Third world including Ghana which adopted the option in 1988. In Nigeria, the option was adopted by some oil companies including Mobil Producing Nigeria in 1997. The option has implications which are mix grill for both the employees and the employers. For the employees, the option will attract high element of taxation because only basic salary which is equivalent to the total package or clean wage should be taxable while the total emolument will increase the terminal benefits and holds more prospects for the retirees. On the other hand, it will translate into higher contributions by the Employer to Staff Pension and Gratuity Schemes as calculation will be based on the clean wage option.

xi. **Social Responsibility by the Employers**

Since the enterprises operating within some communities have made life unbearable for the populace through water pollution and destruction of other natural resources, the enterprises thus have social responsibility in terms of making contributions to the well-being and development of these communities e.g Oil companies in Nigeria provide social amenities to the host communities to avert crises. Other companies sponsor sporting activities, give scholarships to brilliant and indigent students, sponsor or host educational activities, etc as contributions to the needy sectors of the economy.

xii. **Economic Recession**

This phenomenon which is caused by decline in economic activities brings dramatic changes with decline in industrial production and output coupled with corresponding rise in the rate of unemployment. This trend affects industrial relations, institutions and constitutes the main environmental factor affecting collective bargaining processes. It also creates room for spate of industrial actions due to manpower contraction caused by capacity under-utilization in industries. The HR managers must modify their responses by aligning with the unions to face these challenges realistically all in a bid to keep the enterprise afloat rather than adopting adversarial approach to labour/management relations.

xiii. **Public Service Reform by Government**

In Nigeria, the main thrust of public service reform is to show that government business can be carried out openly, economically and transparently devoid of favouratism and corruptible tendencies. The reform focuses on refraining government institution, implementing social charter, value re-orientation, moral rectitude, respect and due process to guarantee effective and transparent system of economic and financial management of government resources. The foregoing underscores the need to launder the image and future of the public service. HR managers in the public sector should act as vanguard in bringing back the service to the good old days or past decades when it enjoyed recognition and respect.

xiv. **Casualization of Labour**

This is a nonstandard work arrangements caused by the effects of globalization and trade liberalization. This shift from standard to nonstandard work arrangements is as a result of employer's orientation to avoid costs associated with the application of the provisions of the labour laws which are designed to protect permanent employees in standard and pensionable

employment and also for the purpose of flexibility. The practice gives employers the freedom to 'hire' and 'fire' casual employees at will. The practice has been a source of constant conflict between unions and employers. No legislation in Nigeria is supportive of this practice hence HR managers should be bold enough to guide and advise management accordingly.

xv. **Outsourcing of Services**

The practice involves employers contracting out some of their non-core or ancillary services. Akin to casualization, this is done to cut costs as it denies employees the right to organize or belong to trade unions. As experience had shown, permanent employees who have stake in the organization show more commitment to their jobs than the contract employees supplied by vendors. HR managers should examine the cost-benefit implications of outsourcing certain services vis-à-vis engaging employees on permanent basis.

From the foregoing, it is thus obvious that the environment of HRM has been continuously varied and becoming more complex. The trends have made it more imperative for new approach to be evolved in HR planning and management. The approach should integrate HR policies with the strategic objectives of the enterprise in pursuance of its corporate goals.

The Challenges of Human Resource Management in a Globalized Economy: The Nigerian Perspective

The competitive pressures faced by the modern day enterprise for survival and success due to globalization and liberalization will continue to create room for future demand for organizational excellence. The new, global, complex, and often chaotic world of the Multi-national Enterprises requires a new strategic focus and new capabilities from HR just as it does from other management functions (Briscoe et al, 2009).

For the HR practitioner to thrive and be relevant in the global context, new roles and agenda for the profession should not focus on traditional HR activities such as staffing and compensation, but on its outcomes. Furthermore, HR should not be defined by what it does but by what it delivers i.e results that enrich the organization's value to customers, investors and employees.

For the HR practitioners to contribute their quota to the enterprise in achieving excellence, they need to adopt the following:

(i) HR Collaboration with Line Managers

HRM function is a joint responsibility for all managers within the enterprise that is, both HR or staff and line managers must be involved. HR professionals should become a partner with senior and line managers in strategy execution, helping to move planning from the conference room to the market place (Ulrich, 1998). The HR department in the execution of the corporate plans should give guidance on the ways to carry out the plans by playing the role of an Architect. By so doing, HR department will come up with a comprehensive set of blue prints showing various units or parts and their working/operational relationships.

In the same vein, organizational or HR audit will be undertaken and same related to the blue prints. The outcome of the comparison or exercise may show areas that require addition or reduction in manning level as the case may be. It can identify components that need to be

changed to facilitate the achievement of goal(s). The architectural framework may be defined in terms of work related variables such as leadership culture, governance, management style, competence, motivation, human relations, discipline etc. Having identified the faulty parts, the next step is to embark on replacement of the parts.

(ii) HR Exhibition of Expertise in the Organization of Work

As trained administrators, the HR professionals will have to explore and design means of carrying out HR functions in a better, faster and cheaper ways to reduce costs. Beside cost reduction, efficiency and quality have to be maintained in service delivery. HR professionals should become experts in the way work is organized and executed, delivering administrative efficiency to ensure that costs are reduced while quality is maintained (Ulrich 1998). In a nutshell, the HR professionals could streamline the organization's systems and procedures and deliver flawless administrative services to become a reckonable party in the execution of corporate plans.

(iii) HR as Vanguard of Employees' Welfare

The HR professionals will be held accountable for ensuring that employees show commitment and add value to the business of the organization irrespective of attending to their social needs. This goes to underscore the relevance and importance of HR approach which holds that organizational goals and human needs should be mutual and compatible and that one set need not to be gained at the expense of the other. According to Ulrich (1998) HR professionals would become champion of employees, vigorously representing their concerns to senior management and to increase employees' commitment to the organization and their ability to delivery of results.

Furthermore, HR managers must take responsibility for orientating and training line managers on the importance of building high morale for their employees and to achieve same. In similar vein, the HR managers shall assume the role of spokesmen for personal and professional growth; and provide resources to help employees meet the global and challenging demands put on them by the job.

(iv) HR as an Innovative Agent

The HR professionals must work towards initiating change that are focused on creating high performing teams, reduce cycle time for innovation or implementing new technology. They should ensure that the organization's broad vision statements get transformed into specific behaviours tailored towards making the vision a reality. As Ulrich (1998) puts it, HR should become an agent of continuous transformation, shaping processes and a culture that together improve an organization's capacity for change.

Change can generate resistance in some cases hence the HR managers as an agent of transformation and tactician can by psychological means replace resistance with excitement through the application of change models. The model must identify the key success factors for change and assess the organization's strengths and weaknesses regarding each factor.

(v) Upgrading the Skills of HR Professional

To be able to cope with the global challenges and be relevant in the current century, the quality of HR staff need to be improved. The enterprise need people who know the business,

understand the theory and practice of HR. Those who can manage people effectively and make change happen and have personal credibility and integrity. Sometimes such individuals or talents may already exist within the organization but they must be identified and given additional qualitative training to sharpen their skills. In summary, the HR professionals cannot expand their role in the organization without the requisite expertise considering the current knowledge-driven operating environment. Knowledge is part a of learning process. It is the accumulated experience and actionable information that exists within an organization. It is information or the capacity to take action (Nonaka and Teece, 2001).

For HR professionals to be effective partners in executing corporate plans, they must have knowledge about strategy, business policy, markets and the operation of the economy both locally and globally. They must also be conversant and updated themselves continuously on legal and regulatory norms of their home country.

(vi) HR Creating Value in the Organization

To meet the increased expectations of the organization, the HR professionals must articulate their role in terms of creating value. They must measure their effectiveness in terms of business competitiveness and success rather than employee comfort or satisfaction. They must lead cultural transformation rather than consolidate same in order to turn the enterprise around. In support of the foregoing, Brewster (2005) asserts that with increasing flexibility, firms also want to change the nature of employee identification and their sense of involvement and this change identity knows few national borders.

(vii) Business Challenges and Globalization

Due to globalization, enterprises now face business challenges which require the organization to build new capabilities. This innovation has created opportunity for the HR professionals to play leadership role in assisting the organization to meet the competitive challenges. With the rapid expansion of the global markets as earlier stated, the HR professionals must think globally and transform same to meet local needs. They must be more literate in the ways international customers are handling commerce and competition than ever before. Globalization and Internationalization has given rising concern for processes and competencies, more emphasis on customer/client satisfaction, increased education and enlightenment of workers amongst others.

(viii) The Effect of Information Technology in Workplaces

Information technology has made the world smaller and faster through internet which is why ideas and large amount of information now move freely and constantly. The challenge for the HR Managers is to make good use of what information technology offers and to make it to be a viable productive part of work setting and tool. New information technology has opened up possibility of greater strategic control in companies. The possibilities from such technological innovations will provide continued strategic opportunities for companies (Lynch, 2006).

(ix) The Challenge of Privatization and Liberalization

The privatization of government companies involves the divestment of public holdings in these enterprises for the benefit of single or multiple private shareholders or owners. The exercise will usher in a lot of changes within the privatized organization and the HR

professionals must brace up to the challenges posed by the exercise as it relates to HR planning and management.

Akin to the foregoing, it is an incontestable fact that deregulation or liberalization encourages the use of automation all in support of globalization. Labour unions must realize that the current transformation process will obviously change the economics and politics of organizations. Therefore, education, training and retraining of its rank and file members in the organization should be seen as an important vehicle and given priority in building the required human capital. The unions must strive to build capacity with qualitative technical knowledge and competence to match the sophistication on the management's side (Anyim, 2011). The HR professionals must assist the union to elicit management support for capacity building as enlightened workforce helps in reducing conflict in labour/management relations.

(x) HR and Political Process

With the democratic changes occurring all over the world, the populace in which the work community is inclusive must internalize democracy and discharge their civic duties to the country. The HR professional must through the process of socialization assist the political authority or the government in promoting democratic ideals to enhance stability and progress of the nation. It is obvious that a country in crisis will face a decline in economic activities and this would in turn affect the operations of corporate entities. The HR professionals owe it a duty to contribute towards political stability due to its favourable consequences for organizational progress and prosperity.

(xi) Multi-Skilling Process

The pace of change in the HR environment in this era of globalization will require the HR professionals to be multi-skilled. They must devote more attention to core strategic issues in HR management and be facilitator or change initiators and internal consultant to the organization. The process of multi-skilling endows the HR professionals to function in other capacities and also affords them the opportunity to appreciate the job schedule of line Managers.

(xii) Diversity of Workforce

The concept focuses on the attachment of value to individual differences in the workplace which is made up of heterogeneous groups. The HR practitioner must ensure that no group of members has advantage or disadvantage over the other in the workplace. Besides he/she must also ensure that the productivity, creativity and commitment of the workforce are maximized while meeting the needs of their diverse interests.

(xiii) The Emergence of Generation Y in Workplace

Generation Y are young employees born after 1980 entering the workforce, necessitating changes by management and HR alike (Allen, 2003). Based on research, Generation Y appears different from previous generations, because they are self-confident, generally independent and often pursue multi-career paths which require them being managed differently. Generation Y is also generally at ease with the requirements of technology and uncertainty which is characteristics of the younger employees in the workforce. They also demand responsibilities early in their careers and are unafraid of challenging their employers policies and procedures. Heathfield (2004) states that these workers will become more like

independent contractors, which are typical of generation Y. They will also move from workplace to workplace without any hesitation, and are akin to free agents who will decide where and why they should work. The emergence of this new breed of workforce will create additional responsibility for HR practitioners who have to provide a wide range of services in a different configuration in a bid to carry this group along in employees' employment relationship.

(xiv) HR, Reputation Management and Corporate Ethics

Reputation management relates to stakeholders' view or the impression they hold about the operational conduct or integrity of an organization. Top management and the HR practitioners currently pay high-level attention to reputation management and ethics (Schultz, et al., 2003). Due to cases of corruption scandals and other vices in organizations, the HR practitioners should take the responsibility of facilitating the training of employees in sustaining and protecting their organization's reputation. Besides, HR professionals could monitor reputation and ethics in the organization and this would assist management to assess its reputation management efforts.

(xv) HR and Knowledge/Talent Management

Knowledge management focuses on identification of employees with intellects and expertise and how to channel same towards organizational effectiveness. In the information age, knowledge rather than physical assets or financial resources is the key to competitiveness. As pointed out by Mecklenberg et al (1999) knowledge management allows companies to capture, apply and generate value from their employees' creativity and expertise. Consequently the role of the HR practitioners is to ensure that the organization has the intellectual capital it needs in the right proportion and at the appropriate time. Programmes must be created to enhance knowledge management initiatives and also to elicit management's support. The HR professionals must device means to ensure that valued and talented employees who can contribute to knowledge creation and sharing are attracted and retained.

Conclusion

Following the challenges posed by globalization, it is hoped that the HR professionals will not only destroy the stereotype routine methods of doing job but would launch HR'S full potentials for more positive contributions to employees' well being, organization building, and a better Human Resource Management Practices in Nigeria.

The socio-cultural diversity of Nigeria has the HRM practices in Nigeria. Both the management and the Nigerian government should strive to make coherent HR policies that fit closely with overall business strategy. Employment discrimination has not been adequately addressed because of the 'quota system' that is still present in most of the public service organizations. Lastly, most organizations in Nigeria are highly unionized, especially the public sector organizations and employees unite to protect and promote their interest, so also do the employers. While in the private organizations, there has not been a high employees' involvement in union activities. It is obvious that HRM practices in Nigeria has not been fully developed and there is the urgent need to employ the services of HR professionals, consultants and researchers to help shape and develop new directional focus that will ensure an efficient and effective human resource practice in Nigeria.

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