

ENGAGING THE CHALLENGES OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ORGANISATIONS IN NIGERIA

By

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Introduction

The increasing importance of people as the primary sustainable source of competitive advantage makes it even more important that dedicated resources and thinking time are applied to the strategies through which people are developed and managed.

- CIPD, 2001

I remain honoured, and humbled by this opportunity given to me to share my experiences with distinguished personalities here present. I thank God for making this lecture possible and even thank Him more for making it possible for all of us to be present here today. Issues in human resource management concern all of us if we remember that at one time or the other we are challenged to take a second look at the responses, attitudes, interests, competencies, etc of people associated with us. Sometimes, we are also required to be in control of other people whose behaviour is always intangible, unpredictable and subjective.

The world in which human resource managers exist and in which they interact, is continually changing, generating new issues and conundrums to consider. While in most cases, managers have a fair degree of choice about how to deal with new ideas and new sets of circumstances, the choices themselves are often difficult.

Attempt is made in this lecture to clearly define and contextualize Human Resource (HR) Management in complex organisations. Some measure of energies will be deployed to identifying the contemporary challenges facing HR management in our immediate environment. A central aspect of this lecture will be to package some mitigative and pragmatic measures relevant to our interest as stakeholders in public organisations. I shall take the liberty of my being a staff and therefore, a primary stakeholder, to render some illustrations with the university system.

The role of human resources in the long-term viability of any business or non-profit making enterprise is enormous and significant. Other resources such as financial,

information, or physical are also essential but only human resources are virtually boundless in the potential impact on the organisation. Rather unfortunately, this overwhelming and pervasive role of human resources in organisations appears to be compromised to the extent of misplacing its role in the achievement of organisational objectives. Small wonder the attention given to issues in human resource management, especially in Nigeria, is less than satisfactory.

Organisations today face many challenges in the management of their human resources – challenges that range from constant changes in organisational environment, through unmotivated workforce to shortage of skilled manpower even in the face of heavy unemployment syndrome. We believe that what sets most successful organisations apart is how they manage human resources. The ability to achieve and sustain competitive advantage lies within the workforce. Without exception, what keeps executives up at night are decisions about human resources that are rather difficult and delicate: how to select and develop future leaders, how to reward good performance, or how to control labour costs while still treating people fairly. The specific challenges depend on the pressures organisations face. Managing human resources is indeed a challenge.

The impetus of choosing this topic stems from my many years of experience and touching the lives of many workers as a member of staff of the personnel management department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and in the last sixteen years, teaching Human Resource Management in the Department of Public Administration and Local Government of this great University. As a former practitioner and now academic, I remain convinced more and more that there is a big gap between theory and practice when human resource management is at issue in Nigeria. It is the lacuna that we shall attempt to address in this lecture.

Some Definitions

There are as many definitions of management as there are authors on the subject. Many of the definitions are relatively concise and simplistic. For example, more than a century ago, Taylor (1903:10) defined *management* as, “knowing exactly what you want (people) to do, and then seeing that they do it in the best and cheapest way.” As crystal as this definition may be, we think, however, that management is much more complex than we can discern from the above definition. Management is perhaps best understood from a resource-based perspective. All organisations use four basic kinds of inputs or resources from their

environment, namely: human, financial, physical and information resources. Other resources could be time and technology.

Management is responsible for effectively combining and coordinating these various resources to achieve the organisation's goals. How do managers combine and coordinate the various kinds of resources? They do so by carrying out four basic managerial functions or activities, viz, planning and decision-making, organising, leading and controlling. This is why Griffin (1997) defines *management* as a set of activities (including planning and decision-making, organising, leading and controlling) directed at an organisation's resources (human, financial, physical, and information) with the aim of achieving organisational goals in an efficient and effective manner.

We have talked about management to enable us to locate the essence and position of human resource management. As can be seen, human resource is a cardinal element of management. Human resource management is therefore an integral part of management and a specialised one at that. Why is human resource management important to all managers? Dessler (2001) notes that it is easier to answer this question by listing some mistakes a manager would not want to make while managing. For example, he would not want to:

- ☐ Hire the wrong person for the job.
- ☐ Experience a high turnover.
- ☐ Find his people not doing their best.
- ☐ Waste time with useless interviews.
- ☐ Have the company taken to court because of discriminatory actions.
- ☐ Have the company cited under federal occupation safety laws for unsafe practices.
- ☐ Have some of the employees think their salaries are unfair and inequitable relative to others' salaries in the organisation.
- ☐ Allow a lack of training to undermine the department's effectiveness.
- ☐ Commit any unfair labour practices.

The efficiency with which an organisation can perform will depend to a large extent, on how its human resources can be managed and utilised. Every manager must therefore be able to work effectively with people and also be able to solve the varied problems the management of people may entail. The type of leadership, which characterised our organisations in the first half of the 20th century, is no longer sustainable in the present working environment. The leadership was arbitrary and autocratic in its relations with subordinates. Today, things have changed. Employees are better educated and their

orientation and value system are not the same as those of the past. In addition, most organisations are becoming more complex in nature and, therefore, leaders in these organisations are expected to have greater technical competence and a better understanding of human behaviour. Organisational human resources have become of strategic interest to upper management because the effective use of people in the organisation can provide a competitive advantage. (Mathis & Jackson, 1997)

Human resources, easily recognised as the most important of the resources required for the production of goods and services, are the key to rapid socio-economic development and efficient service delivery. According to Barney (1995: 50), “human **resources** include all the **experience, skills, judgement, abilities, knowledge, contacts, risk-taking and wisdom of individuals and associates** within an organisation”. Without an adequate, skilled and well-motivated workforce operating within a sound human resource management programme, development is not possible. A manager or an employee, whether in the private or public sector, who underrates the critical role and underplays the importance of people in goal achievement, can neither be effective nor efficient.

Mathis and Jackson (1997) see human resource (HR) management as the design of formal systems in an organisation to ensure the effective and efficient use of human talent to accomplish organisational goals. Similarly, Griffin (1997) sees HR management as the set of organisational activities directed at attracting, developing, and maintaining an effective workforce.

Goals and Roles of Human Resource Management

Goals

The goals of HR management are to develop the workers in the organisation to contribute to goal achievement in the organisation, improve *productivity, quality* and *service*.

Roles

HR management has some specific roles to play in an organisation. These are strategic and operational roles.

Strategic Role

Human resources are critical for effective organisational functioning. Human resource was once relegated to second-class status in many organisations. However, its importance has grown dramatically in the last two decades. Its new importance stems from increased legal

complexities, the recognition that human resource is a valuable means for improving productivity, and the awareness today of the cost associated with poor human resource management (Wright and McMahan, 1992). Human resource, represents a significant investment of organisational efforts. If managed well, HR can be a source of competitive strength for the organisation. Indeed, managers now realise that the effectiveness of their HR function has a substantial impact on the bottom-line performance of the firm.

Strategically then, human resources must be viewed in the same context as the financial, technological and other resources that are managed in organisations. As a matter of fact, we rate human resources higher than other resources since the management of other resources (eg information resources) entirely depends on the former.

Operational Role

Operational activities are both tactical and administrative in nature. Griffin (1997) sees this aspect from the legal environment because some have regulated various aspects of employee-employer relations.

HR Management is interested in compliance with and observation of labour laws: new entrants must be oriented to the organisation; supervisors must be trained; safety problems must be resolved and wages and salaries must be administrated. In short, a wide variety of activities typically associated with the day-to-day management of people in organisations as provided by law and regulations, must be performed efficiently and appropriately. It is this collection of activities that has often been referred to as *the personnel function*. Contemporary studies and reports indicate that successful companies have always applied some basic HR ideas, which include flexibility, customer orientation, a focus on quality and a strong sense of employee commitment to the organisation.

Overall, these trends combine to create a shift away from traditional industrial relations-based personnel management towards new techniques, which become labelled as HR management.

Human Resource Management Policies: Bases and Principles

The earliest theories and practices of management focused mainly on the technology of work and the workplace. In other words, the emphasis was on how to organise work, especially at the shop floor. The works of Frederick Taylor (1856-1915), Erick Frank (1868-1925), Henry Gantt (1861-1919,) Henry Fayol (1841 –1925), Max Weber (1864-1920), etc. stand out clearly in this regard. These early attempts at defining the scope of management

were criticised because they ignored the *human side* of management. The critics argued that the organisation is a social system and that, instead of the focus on work and workplace technology, the 'human side of enterprise' should be emphasised. They, therefore, concentrated on how to adapt organisational structure, and processes to the socio-psychological needs of human beings within each organisation. Mayo, Barnard, Argyris, McGregor, Maslow, Herzberg, etc. are prominent in this Human Relations school. The work of these scholars emphasises the need for enriching the job of workers through challenging and stimulating responsibilities and with commensurate authority to enable them to perform. In addition, managers should recognise the importance of work teams, informal groups, recognition, and participatory decision-making as major sources of work satisfaction. Kelly (1969) gives a summary of the findings of the Human Relations school in which he emphasises the importance of realising that social and psychological motives can be more influential than economic motives in structuring the behaviour of workers. As Staw (1986) notes, a basic assumption of the human relations movement was that the manager's concern for workers would lead to increased satisfaction, which would in turn result in improved performance.

Contemporary scholars interested in HR management base their principles of policies on the teachings of the Human Relations school. Three principles upon which personnel policies in industry and commerce are based are as follows:

- All employees should be treated with **justice**. There should be a code of fair play, which means having regard for equity. No favouritism or antagonism should be shown towards individuals, and there should be consistency in treatment among all employees.
- The **needs** of employees must be recognised, particularly their desires for job satisfaction. It is necessary for employees to have knowledge of what is going on within the organisation, and to be consulted before changes affecting them take place.
- A business will function better **democratically** rather than autocratically.

Success is much more likely if the cooperation of employees is sought in achieving objectives than by trying to coerce them to these ends with the use of authority.

We cannot but strongly associate ourselves with these principles as they appear to even underscore the operational roles of HR management which are, largely abused and compromised in the Nigerian environment today.

Human Resource Management Functions and the Environment

Human resource management functions include broad areas of labour economics, organisation behaviour, motivation, training, collective bargaining, labour laws, income security, and personnel administration.

Mathis and Jackson (1997) see these functions as interrelated activities. The activities are:

- ☐ HR planning and analysis
- ☐ Equal employment opportunity
- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ HR development
- ☐ Compensation and benefits
- ☐ Employee and labour/management relations

These activities take place under challenging environments. It is important to always remember that the environment in which HR management takes place is very much in a state of flux. This is particularly true in developing countries like Nigeria. Changes are occurring rapidly across a wide range of issues. The environments, which occasion these changes include political, social, legal, economic, physical, cultural and technological environment. Technology moves forward at an ever-accelerating pace year by year.

Globalization of economic activities on a scale that has not been experienced before in human history has led to consolidations through the consolidation of global corporations and strategic alliances with deep implication for people management. So, a capacity for organisational flexibility has become central to the achievement and maintenance of competitive advantage. The practical outcomes of these changes are that HR managers have to learn how to manage an international workforce effectively and how best to attract, retain, develop and motivate people with those relatively scarce skill that are essential if an organisation is effectively to harness and deploy evolving technologies.

Diagrammatically, the functions/activities, environment and goals of HR management can be represented as follows in Figure 1.

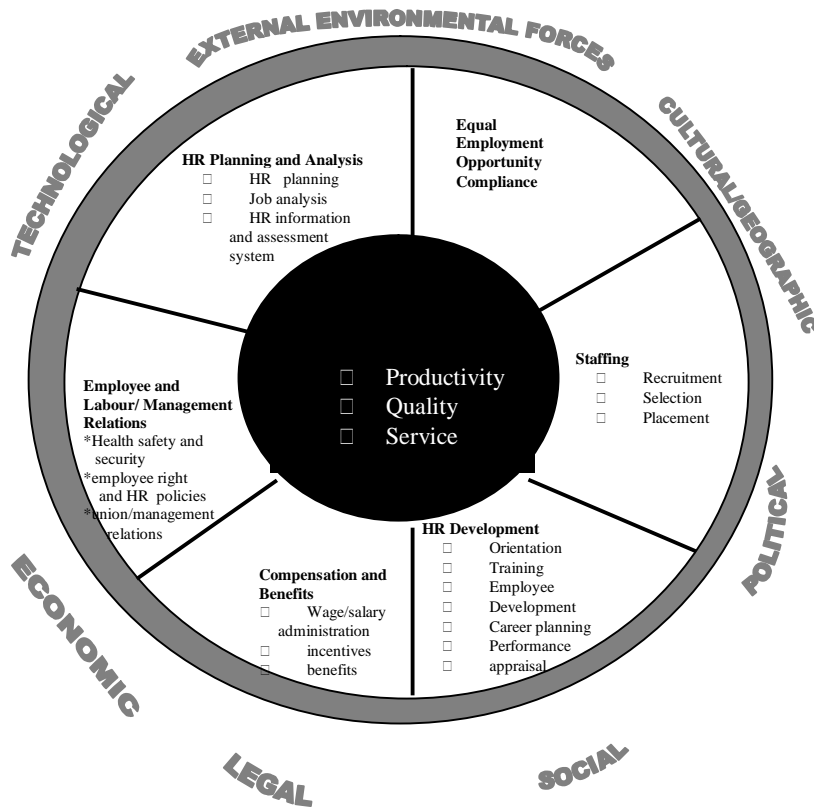


Figure 1. HR Management Functions/Activities, Environment & Goals

Source: Adapted from Mathis. & Jackson, (1997:17) Human Resource Management

Some of the HR activities are briefly described below.

Staffing

Staffing is the term used to describe the entire process of deciding workforce requirements, selecting individuals to fill positions in the organisation, and training, appraising and compensating them. A systems approach to staffing considers all these activities as an entire open system, which is influenced by environmental factors both within and outside the organisation. The component features of the staffing system are recruitment, selection and placement.

Education and Training

The training given to employees varies in type and intensity according to the nature and skills of the jobs involved as well as the experience of the employees concerned. New employees may have:

- ☐ no previous experience or training
- ☐ some “academic” qualifications in a related skill or discipline
- ☐ experience in a similar job in a different organisation.

The job itself may be skilled or unskilled. Education and training may be divided into three basic types:

- ☐ Formal course (internal and external), or studying for a professional qualification
- ☐ On-the job training
- ☐ Occasionally, group learning.

Appraisal Schemes

The purpose of formal appraisal schemes is to:

- ☐ assess the extent to which the goals of the organisation are being achieved.
gather information about the skills, potentials and problems of the employees
(e.g, assess the performance of employees so as to reward them with promotion)
- ☐ let employees know how well they have performed, and the assessment of their strengths and weaknesses
- ☐ allow the person being appraised and his/her superior to discuss how they should plan to achieve the objectives of both the person and his/her job.

Appraisal schemes are, therefore, means of rewarding, criticising, encouraging and counselling. The superior of the person appraised is meant to be both judge and counsellor, but, in practice, these twin roles tend to be incompatible. The “traditional” method of individual appraisal in bureaucracies is trait appraisal. The individual’s superior and perhaps the superior’s boss are asked to complete an appraisal report on the individual, grading him/her with regard to certain characteristics or traits such as foresight, penetration, judgement, expression on paper, and punctuality. The report may then be discussed in an interview between the individual and his superior.

Various ideas have been put forward to suggest how appraisals can be made more effective. These suggestions are that:

- ☐ their purpose should be constructive, which means that the superior and subordinate in a counselling interview should agree on the goals for the subordinate to achieve
- ☐ instead of trait appraisal, the individual might be judged on his/her success in achieving stated objectives.

Full package on how to improve staff appraisal exercises can be seen and appreciated in chapter 9 of my book on Human Resource Management published in 2003 and revised in 2008.

Management Development

Management development is the process of improving the effectiveness of an individual manager by training him/her in the necessary skills and understanding of organisational goals. Although management development is in some respects a “natural process”, the term is generally used to refer to a conscious policy development. The techniques of management development include:

- ☐ formal education and training
 - on-the-job training (as previously described)
- ☐ group learning sessions
- ☐ conferences
- ☐ counselling

Management is expected to provide a management development programme and training courses that are suitable for the programme. The principle behind management development is that by giving individuals time to study the techniques of being good managers, and by counselling them about their achievements in these respects, they will realise their full potentials.

Employee Motivation

Motivation can be defined as the forces that cause people to behave in certain ways. The student who stays up all night to ensure that his/her term paper is the best it can be, the salesman who works on Saturday to get ahead and the doctor who makes follow-up phone calls to his or her patients to check on their conditions are all motivated. Of course, the student who avoids his/her term paper by spending the day at the beach and the salesman

who goes home early to escape a tedious sales call are all motivated. They are simply motivated to achieve different types of things than the first three. From the manager's viewpoint, the objective is to motivate people to behave in ways that are in the organisation's best interest (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995).

One of the manager's primary tasks is, therefore, to motivate people in the organisation to perform at high levels. This means getting them to work hard, to be at work regularly and to make positive contribution to the organisation's mission. But job performance depends on ability, the environment and motivation. The relationship can be stated as follows:

$$P = f (M+A+E)$$

where p = performance

M = motivation

A = ability

E = environment

According to Moorhead and Griffin (1995), to reach high levels of performance, an employee must want to do the job (motivation), be able to do the job (ability), and have the right materials to do the job (environment). A deficiency in any of these areas will hurt performance. A manager should thus strive to ensure that all these three conditions are met.

Theories of motivation are numerous. (See Onah, 2008: 278-303) Central in all the theories is the need issue. Current thinking on motivation rests on the concepts of need deficiencies and goal-directed behaviour. Human beings come to the workplace with their individual needs. A need is accompanied by a state of drive and tension that results in behaviour being directed towards a goal that will satisfy the need and thus reduce the drive or tensions. In the first category of needs are the physiological needs, including hunger, thirst and rest. There are other higher needs like friendship, status, achievement, and a challenging job. The key to the understanding of human behaviour is understanding the human needs which most of the time differ from one individual to the other.

In order to motivate people to put in their maximum efforts, it is essential that these needs be satisfied as far as practicable. The implication of this, as many writers feel, is that no one object or item can serve as a perfect motivator. For instance, pay alone has been proved not to be an effective motivator for good performance.

The Problems

The problems that confront the practice of HR management in public organisations are huge and steep. These include, but not limited to, the following interrelated factors:

- Inadequate strategic HR planning
- Low budgetary provision for training and development
- Doubtful skills and competencies of HR management practitioners
- Poor reward management
- Ineffective supervision
- Indiscipline
- Occupational stress, and
- Environmental (political economic, social, physical, technology and legal) constraints

I used the occasion of my research, teaching and publications to address these problems to a considerable extent (see Onah, 1995, 1996, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2003, 2007, 2008, & 2009). In this section therefore, I will selectively discuss these hurdles to HR management practice in Nigeria.

Strategic Human Resource Planning

Most public organisations today are facing a chaotic situation because they do not plan their workforce, neither do they have any systematic Human Resource (HR) management programme that considers enterprise goals. The decay of public organisations is evident; the level of frustration is equally high; and the “marketplace” trend of enterprises is becoming a reality. The cause of the unfortunate development is primarily lack of HR planning. What else can explain the situation whereby a local government’s staff strength increases as soon as any new chief executive emerges? In departmental organisations like ministries, four directors are found in one obscure room doing nothing and other junior staff are satisfied to find a place under mango trees located around the premises. In the universities too, there is a noticeable skew in the student-staff ratios, especially for the non-teaching staff. Staff stagnation, irregular payment of salaries, redundancy, lack of challenge, crippling strikes, etc in public organisations are traceable to inadequate HR planning.

What Is Human Resource Planning?

The basis for human resource planning is the competitive organisational strategy of the enterprise as a whole. Mathis and Jackson (1997) see HR planning as the process of analysing and identifying the need for the availability of human resources so that the organisation can meet its objectives. According to Griffin (1997), human resource planning involves assessing trends, forecasting the supply and demand of labour and then developing appropriate strategies for addressing any differences.

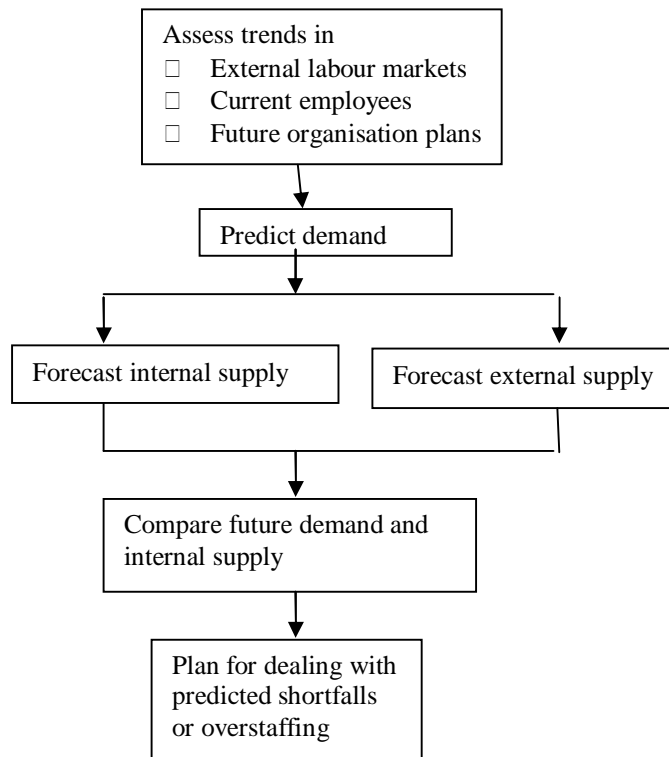
Dessler (2001) sees HR planning as employment planning which, in his view, is the process of formulating plans to fill future openings based on an analysis of the positions that are expected to be open and whether they will be filled by inside or outside candidates. This is why Ogunniyi (1992) in handling the subject says that manpower planning is a concept that involves critical analysis of supply, demand, surplus, shortage, wastage and utilisation of human resources. Its primary goal is the adoption of policy actions and strategies which will not be stressful and or be a negation of endeavours to balance the equation of supply and demand required for socio-economic and political development of a nation.

For me, HR planning is a management activity that involves a careful analysis of the existing workforce and job requirements and developing people who will run the structures of the evolutionary organisation in the future in order to ensure the achievement of objectives. From whichever window one views HR planning, it involves analysis and forecasting (Onah, 2008). HR planning involves analysis of:

- ☐ Workforce inventory (disaggregating it into skilled and unskilled, technical and non-technical, etc.)
- ☐ Relating the disaggregated workforce to the job involvements and requirements (eg student/lecturer ratio, proposed production level and available work-hours)
- ☐ Calculating the required establishment
- ☐ Determining shortages or surplus of workforce
- ☐ Taking appropriate management decisions.

Attracting human resources cannot be left to chance, if an organisation expects to function at peak efficiency. The process of HR planning is continuous in order not to take chances. Who is where, in what number and at what time in the organisation should always be an alarm for the HR manager. The HR planning process is represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Human Resource Planning Process



Source: Ricky W Griffin (1997: 389) *Management* 5th Edition

For HR management to meet its strategic role, there must be a planning, generally, and in particular, a visible HR plan linked to the objectives.

Training and Developing Human Resources

The inexorable march of time and the ceaseless clamour for social change combine to make adaptability and continuing preparation of the workforce as inevitable as the initial acquisition of knowledge and skills. This cannot happen if staff training and development do not occur in an enterprise. In order to maximize the productivity and efficiency of the organisation, every executive, manager or supervisor in a public or private enterprise has the responsibility and indeed the bounding duty to ensure the development of men and women who have requisite knowledge and expertise. The aim is to enable them to contribute their full measure to the welfare, health and development of the enterprise (Onah, 1993).

Staff training and development are important functions in public organisations. The importance of staff training and development in any organisation is clear if we recognise the fact that the structure that sustains it depends on the individuals that operate the structure.

Staff training and development can occur simultaneously or complementarily but the two do not necessarily have direct relations to each other. They should in fact, be separated in concept. Training on the job and some form of in-service training are examples of training being designed or intended to develop the knowledge or expertise, greater confidence, and a higher degree of performance. The principal intention of training, according to Akpan (1982: 128),

is to equip people with the knowledge required to qualify them for a particular position of employment, or to improve their skills and efficiency in the position they already hold. Staff development, on the other hand, implies growth and the acquisition of wide experience for future strategic advantage of the organisation.

In any event, we will, in this lecture, treat the two concepts together because they produce the same effect on the staff, which is the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of the staff. Any organisation that has no plans for the training and development of its staff is less than dynamic, for learning is a continuous process and acquired skills get obsolete when the environment changes. The university environment, for instance, certainly undergoes rapid changes at all times.

Wendell (1978:399) in dealing with the subject on hand highlights a number of problems facing the training and development process in organisations. Some of his concerns, and questions, include:

- ☐ How can training needs be determined, and how can a training need be distinguished from an organisational need that can be satisfied in some other ways?
- ☐ How can people be motivated to increase their capabilities?
- ☐ What are the relative utilities of various training methods and devices?
- ☐ To what extent can the achievement of objectives of the training programme be determined?

An untrained member of staff is a liability to a dynamic organisation as he not only applies the wrong skill but also impacts the wrong knowledge on others coming after him and those he happens to be supervising. As Akpan (1979:13) puts it:

An untrained man in the modern world may ... be a menace to the society. He is a quack; he knows only the laws of things; he has no idea of (their) why. Hence if there is any trouble anywhere - breakdown in a machine or a mistake in a ledger -- all he can do is to fumble and punch up trouble anyhow, leading to a more serious

breakdown or greater confusion. Really there is no place for the untrained worker, or even the intelligent amateur, in these days of specialised work.

There are many organisations in this country that regard training and development as expensive ventures and avoid them like the plague. What such organisations are interested in are the immediate returns. But in a changing world, of which Nigeria is a part, this attitude can no longer hold good.

It is also observable that even in some organisations where the need for employee training is recognised and time and money are committed to staff training and development, the exercise is often either inappropriate, haphazard or premised on a faulty diagnosis of organisational training needs. In other situations, where training happens to occur, deployment of staff so trained may be without regard to the skill the staff acquired, leading to frustration of personnel so trained and also general inefficiency in the system. Public enterprises in Nigeria are fond of this practice. The workforce is generally under-tapped, under-utilised and therefore, falls short of its anticipated contributions to the realisation of organisational goals.

Reward Management

A prime objective of effective people resourcing is to have ‘the right people in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing’. This cannot easily be achieved without the ‘right’ pay and reward strategies for the organisation. Reward encompasses pay, remuneration and compensation. It represents a portfolio of managerial practices where financial and non-financial elements are flexibly directed at enabling and rewarding employees who add value in the interest of competitive advantage. Reward, is used as an holistic term to reflect a more dynamic and flexible approach. Reward is a total remuneration concept of pay and benefits together with non-financial recognition and motivation applied in a contemporary context (see Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2002).

The term reward is used to identify the system of payment as a central, integrative feature of the approach to human resource management. It is basically a transaction because an employer pays certain amount of money in exchange for generally specified time, tasks, skills, commitment and loyalty (Dugguh, 2007). It is also a label, a status symbol, a determinant of standard of living and social class, and one of the main influences on the degree to which people value their employment.

Reward is a crucial issue in HR management. In public organisations in Nigeria, reward is more or less centrally determined with less than serious attention paid to individual differences and talents. This creates chaos and obvious frustration among workers. The situation is even worse in private and business organisations where managers take advantage of ineffective labour laws and whimsically determine and pay workers what they want.

Managers decide what employees should be paid and so influence all factors in the lives of the employees. A major current feature of the literature about reward systems has been a concern with defining and refining reward strategies. The primary concern of reward strategy is about aligning an organisation's reward arrangements with its key objectives. This means developing pay systems which enhance the chances of its goals. If for example, increased productivity were the goal, then a reward system which rewards efficiency would be more appropriate. The extent to which organisations can impose reward arrangements, which serve their businesses, is limited by the need to recruit, retain and motivate employees to carry out the job. There must be a balance between the objectives of employees and employers when developing reward strategies.

Pay policies need to be devised to meet the strategic organisational objective and also recognise employee expectations. Employee expectations include the maintenance of purchasing power in line with costs of living, or an increase in pay over time, and stability in pay. Employees normally expect fair pay. People often have good idea of their value in terms of the job, and if the pay they receive does not appear to be fair, their motivation and commitment will be adversely affected.

Reward system in Nigeria is characterised by tension. The tension is informed by the fact that there is imbalance in the power of the employers and the employees. Government is obviously the highest and more powerful employer of labour in the midst of high unemployment rate. The employers' power is enormous, and this probably explains why there is unseriousness in collective bargaining in Nigeria.

Doubtful Skills and Competencies of Human Resource Practitioners

The practice of HR management is an all comers affair in public organisations in Nigeria. Priority and preference are not given to individuals who have the requisite background. In the ministries, agencies local governments, universities, staff who are deployed to the personnel department appear to be considered on the basis of seniority and

not training, skills and competencies. Consequently, we find individuals who have no business managing people being Personnel Officers, Establishment Officers, HR managers as the case may be.

HR management is obviously not in the category of developed and established professions, such as law, medicine, engineering etc. which give members of its association the exclusive rights to practise their profession. However, HR management specialists are professionals because they display expertise in doing their work. It also shares the major identities of professions. Some of these identities according to Armstrong (2006) are:

- Skills based on theoretical knowledge;
- The provision of training and education;
- A test of competence of members administered by a professional body;
- A formal professional organisation that has the power to regulate entry to the profession;
- A professional code of conduct.

If professionalism is broadly defined as the practice of specific skills based upon defined body of knowledge in accordance with recognised standards of behaviour, HR management can be regarded as a profession. The academic debate on this continues. What is important is that HR management practitioners need expertise and defined competencies. We cannot talk of best practices if there are no standards as appears to be the case in our public organisations.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has produced the following list of competencies required by its professional members:

- Personal Drive and Effectiveness: The existence of a positive ‘can do’ mentality, anxious to find ways round obstacles and willing to exploit all the available resources to accomplish objectives.
- People Management and Leadership: The motivation of others (whether subordinates, seniors or project team members) towards the achievement of shared goals, not through the application of formal authority but rather by personal role modeling, the establishment of professional credibility, and the creation of reciprocal trust.
- Professional Competence: Possession of the professional skills and technical capabilities associated with successful achievement in personnel and development.
- Adding Value through People: A desire not only to concentrate on tasks, but rather to select meaningful outputs which will produce added-value outcomes for the

organisation, or eliminate/reduce the existence of performance inhibitors, whilst simultaneously complying with all legal and ethical considerations.

- Continuing Learning: Commitment to continuous improvement and change by the application of self-managed learning techniques, supplemented where appropriate by deliberate planned exposure to external learning sources (mentoring, coaching, etc).
- Thinking and Applied Resourcefulness: Application of a systematic approach to situational analysis, development of convincing business-focused action plans, and (where appropriate) the deployment of intuitive/creative thinking to generate innovative solutions and proactively seize opportunities.
- 'Customer' Focus: Concern for the perceptions of personnel's customers, including (principally) the central directorate of the organisation, a willingness to solicit and act upon 'customer' feedback as one of the foundations for performance improvement.
- Strategic Capability: The capacity to create an achievable vision for the future to foresee longer-term developments envisage options (and their probable consequences), select sound courses of action, rise above the day-to-day detail, and challenge the *status quo*.
- Influencing and Interpersonal Skills: The ability to transmit information to others especially in written (report) form, both persuasively and cogently; display of listening, comprehension and understanding skills, plus sensitivity to the emotional, attitudinal and political aspects of corporate life.

Staff Discipline and Control

What Is Staff Discipline?

Staff discipline deals with the level to which the employees of an organisation are able to conform, and submit themselves to the rules and regulations governing their conduct in the workplace. This also includes conduct outside the immediate workplace but which has implications that border on the status of the employee as a member of the organisation. These rules may cover general terms of employment, hours of work, communication channels, performance standards, organisational expectations and general employees' conduct. These rules and regulations are made by the organisation as an extension of its broad policies and goals meant to guarantee the cooperation of its employees in the pursuit

of organisational goals. Staff discipline, therefore, measures how much these employees are willing, without coercion, to submit themselves to these rules and allow their actions and conduct as employees to be guided by them.

Staff Discipline and Control

Koontz, et al (1980) conceptualise control in terms of measurement and correction of performance activities in order to ensure that enterprise objectives and the plans devised to attain them are being accomplished. Control consists of verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plans adopted, the instructions issued and the principles established. It is meant to point out weaknesses and errors in order to rectify them and prevent reoccurrence.

While staff discipline is employee-centred, staff control is organisation-centred. It defines the power and authority of the organisation to direct, order or restrain the activities and conduct of its employees with a view to ensuring its conformity with organisational plans and objectives. Staff control focuses on the ability of the organisation to determine and effectuate its intentions using its human resources. Conversely, whenever an organisation is unable to bring its employees to fulfil its plans in the pursuit of organisational goals, staff control is diminished or lost. In other words, control encapsulates organisational efforts to ensure that employees' behaviour is in line with organisational plans and standards. After behaviour standards and plans have been set, control represents the organisation's effort to ensure employee compliance with those standards.

Staff discipline and control deal essentially with the ability of employees to remain within the bounds of the rules of conduct as defined by the organisation. They also connote the employees' submission to the organisation's authority to direct, order or restrain their activities in the workplace. The essential elements in the factors of discipline and control are therefore, the willingness of the employees to abide by the rules as defined by the organisation and the ability of the organisation to extract compliance with their rules from their employees. Either way, both employees and organisational actions are involved.

Causes of Indiscipline

A number of factors have been identified as prominent facilitators of indiscipline. They include the operating environment as well as individual and organisational factors.

i) Operating Environment

The bulk of the factors responsible for indiscipline are traceable to the environment and the instinct to survive. The organisational environment substantially determines how an employee responds to its rules and regulations. Goss (1996) argues that for a HR management initiative to be successful, it must rest on an organisational climate in which employees feel a sense of positive identification with and commitment to an organisation. In other words, employees' identification with the goals of the organisation depends largely on the perceived positive correlation between their support for the rules and the satisfaction of their needs. To the extent they feel that compliance with organisational rules and goals will enhance the satisfaction of their need in the organisation, to that extent are they likely to comply with them. Conversely, if they perceive their compliance as not being contributory to the satisfaction of their needs, they may only comply under compulsion or to avoid being punished. Therefore, where an organisation creates a climate that ties positive identification with organisational rules and goals to individual employee personal goal and progress, compliance with rules and identification with organisational goals more easily come from employees. Thus, employee discipline becomes a function of the perceived benefits derived as presented by the organisation's climate.

The second aspect of the operating environment consists of the larger community in which the employees live and work. Since employees work and live as participant members of society, their interaction with their environment exerts some influence on their concept and practice of discipline. These influences may result from the political, economic or social climate in the environment as illustrated below.

ii) Economic Environment

A climate of pervasive poverty in the operating environment and the relatively low and highly irregular pay in enterprises create an environment that suggests other sources of livelihood for employees who must struggle to survive. This pressure to survive manifests

in different dimensions whose end-point is indiscipline. Some employees resort to doing other businesses outside their regular employment using their official time. Others pilfer public property and funds. Others demand gratification to render their normal services and may become reluctant to serve if such gratification is not forthcoming. All this hinges on indiscipline resulting probably from poverty. Furthermore, because of the failure of the pay structure to meet a substantial part of the employees' basic needs, they feel reluctant to give their best to the organisation in the area of service. They may come to work late, go on extended break, loiter during office hours, close before normal time, and generally put in little effort in their work.

The attitude of these employees is not peculiar to them but pervades the entire economy with virtually the same result on productivity and discipline. The interaction between employees of various organisations experiencing the same economic pressure tends to reinforce this attitude across organisations and consequently spreads indiscipline in the operating environment.

iii) Individual Employee Factors

The environment is not the sole stimulating factor of employee action even though it plays a vital role. Reitz (1977:48) in discussing causes of behaviour argues that human behaviour is a function of both the individual who is behaving and the environment in which he or she is behaving. $B = f(P, E)$ where B represents behaviour, P = the person behaving and E = the environment. This means that the person and his environment determine his behaviour directly and indirectly by their effect on each other.

In a typical workplace, some of the following factors affect the individuals degree of discipline; individual differences, individuals' perception of organisational issues and processes such as role of the government; people resourcing style; staff performance appraisal; and reward system.

The limitless examples of indiscipline in the public service are worrying. Indiscipline is prevalent among all categories of staff. With the rising level of indiscipline, a question of whether organisation eg. universities can realise goals is easily on the lips of well meaning individuals and professionals. Much more disturbing is the dearth of courage among supervisors to enforce discipline. Why are we affraid to call people to order?

Legal Issues

In developed countries like the USA, some laws regulate various aspects of employee-employer relations. These laws, which are relatively stable, facilitate the work of HR managers. Examples are:

- 1 *The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1964* forbids discrimination in all areas of employment. The law is to ensure that employment decisions are made on the basis of an individual's qualifications rather than on personal biases. Additionally, it frowns at discrimination on the basis of sex, race, colour, religion, or nationality in all areas of employment relationship.
- 2 *Compensation and Benefits*. Laws addressing these issues include: Fair Labour Standard Act; Employee Retirement Income Act; and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993; etc.
- 3 *Labour Relations*. Laws regulating labour relations include the National Labour Relations Act (Wagner Act yr) and Labour-Management Relations Act (Taft-Hartley Act yr). These laws clearly establish procedures by which employees can establish labour unions and require organisations to bargain collectively with legally formed unions. The laws also spell out and limit union power and specify management rights.

Occupational Safety and Health Act yr. This Act mandates the provision of safe working conditions for organisations.

Admittedly, there are some laws regulating work in Nigeria but these laws rather than facilitate HR management activities complicate them for the managers. For example, the federal character principle of appointments entrenched in the Constitution of Nigeria is not only controversial but also difficult to apply. In addition, most of the laws regulating some aspects of HR management are Decrees made by the military to deal with specific situations on ground. The Decrees could not be challenged in the law courts. Decree No 43 of 1988, which gave the civil service legal backing, was designed to handle problems arising from the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme of the Babangida military regime. Although it was claimed that the central aim of the Decree was "to build and sustain a virile, dynamic, efficient and result-oriented civil service through professionalization," unfolding events in the service showed some inadequacies of the Decree, hence its radical review in 1998/99 by the Allison Ayida Commission.

The labour laws such as Trade Union Decree No 31 of 1973 and Labour Decree No 21 of 1974 are all glaring examples of the militarization of public organisations. Rather than facilitate HR management activities, these decrees were meant to intimidate workers and regiment them for unchallenged military rule. The Public Officers Special Provisions Act (Decree No 17 of 1984), for instance, authorises Heads of State to remove, without question, any public officer or civil servant in the “public interest”. Of course, that “public interest” is always the interest of the ruling (military) elite. There were also unworkable Acts like the Workmen’s Compensation Act of 1958 revised by Decree No 17 of 12 June 1987, which virtually nobody has benefited from owing largely, to its technical and cumbersome profile. Currently, there is the controversial Trade Union (Amendment) Act 2005 which is clearly a weapon fashioned against workers.

Given the loopholes observable in these laws and their unstable profile, they become easy to misapply or abuse and since managers and chief executives do not enjoy any immunity, they are always in a dilemma of being aware of what is right but forced to do the wrong thing.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Stress has been defined in many ways, but the common ground of most definitions is that stress is caused by a stimulus, that the stimulus can either be physical or psychological, and that the individual responds to the stimulus in some way. This is probably why Gibson et al (1988) define stress as a person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological and physical demands on that person. This definition implies two components. First is the notion of adaptation, which means that people adapt to stressful circumstances in any of several different ways. Second is the role of the stimulus. This stimulus is generally called a *stressor* (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995). In other words, a *stressor* is anything that induces stress. Finally, the demands placed on the individual by the stressor must be excessive for stress to result. Of course, what is excessive for one person may be perfectly tolerable for another. A person must therefore, view the demands as excessive or stress does not occur. Earlier, McGruth (1970), Lazarus (1971) and Kasl (1978) had all individually accepted the definition of stress as, "a (perceived) substantial imbalance between demand and response capacity, under conditions where failure to meet demand has important (perceived) consequences."

Stress was first discussed by Selye (1936) in the context of endocrinology, but not presented in a generally available source until much later (Selye, 1950; 1956). The central idea in Selye's concept of stress was that despite the obvious detailed differences between different illnesses or responses to noxious events, there was a considerable degree of commonality in the somatic reaction to these events. He referred to this as the *general adaptation syndrome* (GAS) and argued that these reactions were responsible for the adaptive bodily response to threat.

The sources of stress, as Selye points out, need not be bad. For example, receiving arrears or bonus and then having to decide what to do with the money can be stressful. So, too, can getting a promotion, gaining recognition, getting married, and similar "good" things. Selye called this type of stress *eustress*. Of course, there is also negative stress called *distress*; this is what is commonly taken to mean stress. Excessive pressure, unreasonable demand on our time, bad news, and so forth, all fall into this category. In other words, stress can have good or bad sources.

Stress is often thought to be a dominant psychological problem of today. It is commonly held that life in Nigeria nowadays is stressful and that stress is responsible for many accidents, mental breakdowns, unhappiness, poor performance at work and at school,

as well as high crime among many Nigerians. All this may be attributed to the increasing competitiveness and uncertainty of contemporary Nigeria. Additionally, radical changes in economic and political policies always leave their marks on the lives of the people for whom the policies are made. Government and other expert assessors of the impact of such policies often pay attention almost exclusively to the economic and political aspects of such impact. The psychological impact is hardly ever addressed, yet all observed healthy as well as aberrant responses to such policies have deep psychological roots. Some social and economic policies of the federal government and their concomitants such as privatisation, deregulation, and liberalisation give rise to a radical change in the social environment of Nigeria and demand adaptation. But how is an average Nigerian worker capable of coping with the numerous adjustments and adaptations? What are the consequences of these stressful situations? Research in the area of stress, especially occupational stress, has become of utmost importance because of its consequences on productivity.

STRENGTHENING THE PRACTICE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

Quite a huge number of problems constrain effective HR management in public organisations in Nigeria. I have talked about some and in the same way I am going to give some pragmatic measures aimed at strengthening the practice of HR management.

Role of HR Planning

HR planning is a key to the strategic development of any organisation. All organisations must spend resources in HR planning. HR planning as I mentioned earlier determines the human resources required by organisations to achieve its strategic goals. It addresses human resource needs both in quantitative and qualitative terms, which means answering too basic questions. First, how many people, and second what sort of people? Human resource planning also looks at broader issues relating to the ways in which people are employed and developed in order to improve organisational effectiveness.

An important aspect of HR planning which needs to be taken seriously is HR auditing. HR audit is an overall quality control/check on HR activities and an evaluation of how these activities support the organisation's strategy. HR audit is a process of examining policies, procedures, documentation, systems and practice with respect to an organisation's HR functions.

HR audit is not about queueing up to show face, ID cards and passports, which most organisations do. HR audit involves analysis of manpower demand and supply and determining manpower requirements and establishment from time to time. It is a means of measuring where the organisation currently stands and determines what it has to accomplish to improve its HR functions. A good HR audit generates data for effective HR planning in organisations. This should be made a regular affair in public organisations.

Systematic Training and Development

Most training programmes in public organisations are not systematic as they are neither based on the organisation's needs nor on the training needs of the individuals. Besides, the budgetary provision for training is considerably low; ranging from 1-5 percent of recurrent expenditure in public organisations.

The training and development of employees is an issue that has to be faced by every organisation. For a systematic training and development culture to be the case in

organisations, training needs must be identified; training activities must be designed in a rational manner; and results of training evaluated.

As a matter of fact, a systematic approach to training and development will generally follow a logical sequence of activities commencing with the establishment of a policy and the resources to sustain it, followed by an assessment of the training needs, for which appropriate training is provided, and, ending with some form of evaluation and feedback (Cole, 2002). Organisations should pay more than a passing attention to training, as training events ensure acquisition of contemporary skills, practices and right attitude to work. Besides, the competitive advantage needed for organisations to excel cannot be secured without training events.

Evaluation of Staff Training and Development

One of the training-related activities that is highly compromised is evaluation. Training is never complete without an evaluation. Talking about training and its evaluation, Ubeku (1975) feels that a company has to evaluate its training programmes in terms of

- ☐ the needs which were identified and which were expected to be met by the training
- ☐ the cost involved.

According to him, many companies do not consider it necessary to evaluate training. This apathy is believed to arise from the fact that management generally is reluctant to 'waste time' in testing something it has already convinced itself is good. But when management accepts training as one of the necessary tools for the efficient operation of the business, the question of evaluation must be given serious attention and action. It is from careful and critical evaluation that we can know:

- ☐ whether the money spent on training is producing the results needed by the company .
- ☐ what improvements can be made to the training procedure in order to reduce costs and improve efficiency.
- ☐ whether the type of training given is necessary to improve organisational effectiveness or whether the money, if spent on another activity, will contribute more effectively to the attainment of organisational goals.

However, the process of evaluation of training is not a simple one. What the evaluation is concerned with is to determine whether changes in skills, knowledge and attitudes have taken place as a result of the training. Furthermore, the process involves the determination of how far the skills and knowledge acquired and the change in attitudes have helped

individual employees to contribute more effectively towards the attainment of organisational objectives.

In discussing evaluation of training, McGormick and Tiffin (1977) note that it is probable that most organisations assume that their training programmes are achieving their intended objectives. Such paths, however, may sometimes be unwarranted. If an organisation really wants to know whether its training programme is accomplishing its purposes, it must go through a systematic evaluation process. There usually are a few shortcuts to this.

Even though training is usually evaluated in terms of "training" versus "no training", it is also appropriate to evaluate the relative effectiveness of different methods of training. The evaluation of training involves the use of an appropriate criterion. In the selection of the criterion, the same considerations that are pertinent to the selection of criteria for other purposes should be used. These criteria include relevance, reliability, and freedom from contamination.

Four steps are usually involved in evaluation of training. They are:

- 1 *Reaction:* How well did the trainees like the programme?
- 2 *Learning:* To what extent did the trainees learn the facts, principles and approaches that were included in the training?
- 3 *Behaviour:* To what extent did their job behaviour change because of the programme?
- 4 *Results:* What final results were achieved? (reduction in cost, reduction in turnover, improvement in production, service delivery, etc) Catalenllo and Kirkpatrick (1968).

In a sense, these terms can be viewed as four different types of criteria, but with the distinct implication that "results" are clearly the most appropriate criterion in most circumstances.

Strategic Reward Policy

As already indicated, one of the problems of HR management is the ineffectiveness of the reward system. Rewards, for example, pay are supposed to encourage the development of talents and skills. It is also directed at performance and ensuring that employees add value through increased effort.

Contemporary organisations are increasingly adopting the Performance Related Pay (PRP) system. The aim is to put a performance message into the pay package and thereby a more performance culture. PRP has received increased emphasis within reward strategies that seek integration with corporate strategies. Pilbeam and Corbridge (2002: 220) define PRP as:

The direct linkage of payment within the contract of employment to an assessment of performance based on the perceived contribution or value of the individual employee to the organisation at one point in time.

PRP has the advantage of rewarding extra and rare skill and encouraging others to put in efforts. It is also consistent with the assumptions of most motivation theories. More specific to PRP are the process theories of equity (Adams, 1965) and expectancy (Vroom, 1964). Pay system generates considerable controversies and tensions in the system. The university system in Nigeria is a typical example.

Whatever methods are used to determine pay levels and to decide what elements make up the individual pay package, employers must ensure that they are perceived by employees to operate equitably. It has long been established that perceived inequity in payment matters can be highly damaging to an organisation. Classic studies undertaken by Adams (1963) found that a key determinant of satisfaction at work is the extent to which employees judge pay levels and pay increases to be distributed fairly. These led to the development by Adams and others of equity theory. The equity theory holds that we are very concerned that rewards or 'outputs' equate to our 'inputs' (defined as skill, effort, experience, qualifications, etc) and that these are fair when compared with the rewards being given to others. Where we believe that we are not being fairly rewarded, we show signs of 'dissonance' or dissatisfaction which leads to absence, voluntary turnover, on job shirking and low trust employee relations. It is therefore, important that an employer not only treats employees equitably in payment matters but is *seen* to do so too.

While it is difficult to gain general agreement about who should be paid what level of salary in an organisation, it is possible to employ certain clear principles when making decisions in the pay field. Those that are most important are the following:

- a standard approach for the determination of pay (basic rates and incentives) across the organisation;
- maximum communication and employee involvement in establishing pay determination mechanisms;
- clarity in pay determination matters so that everyone knows what the rules are and how they will be applied.

These are the foundations of procedural fairness or 'fair dealing'. In establishing pay rates it is not always possible to distribute rewards fairly to everyone's satisfaction, but it

should always be possible to do so using procedures which operate equitably (Torington et al, 2005).

Managing Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is widespread and potentially disruptive in organisations. It follows that people and organisations should be concerned about environmental factors and how to manage stress more effectively.

A manager who has low sensitivity to the environmental factors that affect his workers is most likely to be a source of stress himself. On the side of the organisation, there are some common methods for helping employees deal with stress. These are:

- Institutional programmes undertaken to manage occupational stress through established organisational mechanisms (Schuler and Jackson, 1986). For example, properly designed jobs and work schedules can help ease stress. Shift work, in particular, can cause major problems for employees as they constantly have to adjust their sleep and relaxation patterns. Managers should therefore ensure that the design of work and work schedules are directed at organisational efforts to reduce stress.
- The organisation's culture can be used to help manage stress. For example, taking time off and vacation should be encouraged. Some Nigerian workers do not care for annual leave. Some avoid annual leave for some fears related to replacement, transfer or discovery of their lapses and corruptible behaviour. Management should ensure that staff take their annual leave regularly.
- There should also be periodic social gatherings; the organisation should show concern for individuals at all times; during times of sorrow as well as times of joy.
- Incentives should be appropriately used and encouraged by management, for lack of incentives is stressful, especially for willing workers.
- The open reporting system of staff appraisal that is in use in the public service should be reviewed. Emphasis should be placed on job performance targets rather than on personality traits, which is preponderant in the system. Rather than use the instrument to harass workers, it should be made to permit a more mutual exchange and feedback.

At the individual level, the following are useful strategies for coping with occupational stress:

- Exercise: People who exercise regularly are less likely to have heart attacks than inactive people are. More directly, it has also been suggested that people who exercise regularly

feel less tension and stress, are more self-confident, and show greater optimism. People who do not exercise regularly, on the other hand, feel more stress, are more likely to be depressed, and so forth (Folkins, 1976). The management's role in this regard is to provide sporting facilities and to encourage sports within and between organisations.

□ A related method individuals can use to manage stress is relaxation. As noted earlier, coping with stress requires adaptation. Proper relaxation is an effective way to adapt. Relaxation can take many forms, eg regular vacations. A study by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1986) found that people's attitude towards a variety of workplace characteristics improved significantly following a vacation. People can also relax while on the job. For example, it has been recommended that people take regular rest breaks during their normal workday.

□ Time management is often recommended as a method for managing stress. The idea is that any daily pressure can be eased or eliminated if a person does a better job managing time. One popular approach to time management is to make a list every morning of things to be done that day in order of importance and ensure that they are followed as such.

□ Somewhat related to time management is the idea of role management, in which the individual actively works to avoid overload, ambiguity and conflict. For example, if you do not know what is expected of you, you should not sit and worry about it; ask for clarification from your boss. This may even be unnecessary if managers ensure clarity in the schedule of duties of subordinates.

Environmental Scanning

One of the modern ways of dealing with HR management problems is environmental scanning. Organisations do not exist in a vacuum, they are subject to an avalanche of external influences, or environments which shape and heavily influence the way the organisation is managed. As indicated earlier in this lecture and in many of my contributions, politics, economy, technological development, social change and competition are examples of these external influences that provide a context for HR management.

Effective HR management is dependent on scanning external environments. Environmental scanning as seen by Preble et al (1988) is the strategic management process in which emerging trends, changes and issues are regularly monitored and evaluated as to their likely impact on corporate decisions. Scanning usually entails collecting data by

monitoring and forecasting changes in key variables and the interpretation and/integration of these informal inputs into an organisation's strategic planning process.

Environmental scanning is, therefore, about a sensitivity to the external environment within which organisations operate. In turbulent environment such as ours, HR managers need tools to constantly gather and feedback information about the environment to inform decision making on critical issues such as reward, resourcing, HR planning, appraisal, training, employment relations and service delivery. The development of a sensitivity to environmental influences through scanning the media and other information networks is therefore a skill worth developing for effective HR management.

Enhancing Staff Discipline and Control

We are concerned here with how to ensure that employees are disciplined, and their conduct confined within the limits of laid-down rules and policies of their organisation. The process of ensuring staff discipline represents their control and, as such, the issue of discipline and control will be discussed simultaneously.

i) Productivity Plan

One of the discipline-related factors in organisations is often the lack of a productivity plan against which performance will be measured. In the absence of any productivity plan, employees are left to determine their performance level, and because they are not under any pressure to meet targets, other matters that often lead them to being undisciplined attract them. Our public enterprises often float on broad organisational policies without specific targets for every employee against which their performances are measured. Consequently, organisational time is employed in activities that contribute little or nothing to the broad policy goals of the enterprises. When goals for which employees are hired are hardly given adequate attention by them, their actions culminate in indiscipline. To arrest this trend, employees need to be constantly focused through proper productivity planning and target setting backed by the periodic appraisal of real performance.

ii) Performance Review and Appraisal

Performance review and appraisal enables employees to gain information on their performance as well as the expectations of the organisation on their job performance. A proper appraisal system should generally review employees' performance, conduct, and all

aspects of their employment that need to be appraised. It affords the employees the opportunity to see themselves from the point of view of the organisation. Attitudes, conduct and performance behaviour that need improvement will be highlighted. This feedback process affords the organisation a good opportunity to, once again, refresh employees' memory on the organisation's standard and discuss possible constraints on the part of the employees. In the absence of proper appraisals, employees may go on for years without being aware of areas in their performance that require change, including disciplinary matters.

iii) Administration of Reward and Punishment

This simply implies that behaviour is controlled by its consequence and that the nature of the consequences affects the probability that the person will repeat the behaviour. The implication of this is that when an organisation effectively controls the consequences of employees' behaviour, it will have substantial control over their behaviour. Behavioural consequences can be effected either through rewards or punishment. While rewards have the effect of increasing the probability of repeating the behaviour, punishment makes it less likely that the behaviour will be repeated. For reward or punishment to be effective, it must be contingent on the desired or undesired behaviour. If it comes in a manner that does not emphasise the connection between the rewards or punishment and the behaviour, it will be ineffective.

Applying this concept to the issue of discipline in public enterprises, employees' behaviour can be conditioned by the application of reward or punishment by the organisation. In this way, employees are sufficiently made aware of the consequences of breaking the rules and the organisation's determination to follow such a breach with punishment. On the other hand, the organisation should also demonstrate its determination to reward desired employee behaviour whenever it is found.

If employees are convinced by experience that the organisation is ever ready to match employee behaviour by way of reward or punishment of desirable or undesirable behaviour, they are likely to engage more in that behaviour with a desirable outcome or consequences. There is, therefore, a need for public enterprises to shun socio-cultural and personal ties and apply the rules impartially where it is called for, if they intend to control the behaviour of their employees. A demonstrated determination by the organisation to respond in concrete ways to employee behaviour by way of reward or punishment is

required to enhance discipline and staff control in public enterprises. Generally, however, it is better to employ more of reward than punishment for better and more sustainable results.

iv) Training and Re-orientation

Intensive training, enlightenment and general re-orientation should be instituted for employees to obliterate the idea that the public service is the white man's job which should be attended to with half-hearted devotion. In the past, employees realised that public enterprises brought benefits to them and that they, directly or indirectly, reaped what they sowed. Employees should be made to see these enterprises as their own and should be made to contribute their best to their success. On the other hand, the organisation should in turn give employees a real sense of belonging, not just by lip service but by substantially giving them opportunities to effectively participate in decision-making and profit sharing as well as good and competitive conditions of service.

As long as employees do not see a positive correlation between the success of the organisation and their personal success, their sense of alienation from the organisation will persist. This naturally reinforces negative tendencies towards the organisation, which manifests in indiscipline.

Building Organisational Citizenship

Organisational citizenship refers to the behaviour of individuals who make a positive overall contribution to the organisation. Consider, for example, an employee who does work that is acceptable in terms of both quantity and quality. However, he refuses to work overtime, she will not help newcomers learn the rudiments of the job, and he is generally unwilling to make any contribution to the organisation beyond the strict performance of his job. Although this person may be seen as a good performer, he is not likely to be seen as a good organisational citizen.

Another employee may exhibit a comparable level of performance. In addition, however, he works late when the boss asks him to, he takes time to help newcomers learn their way around, and he is perceived as being helpful and committed to the organisation's success. Whereas his level of performance may be seen as equal to that of the first worker, he is also likely to be seen as a better organisational citizen.

The determinant of organisational citizenship behaviours is likely to be a complex mosaic of individual, social, and organisational variables (Moorhead and Griffin 1995). For example, the personality, attitudes, and needs of the individual will have to be consistent with citizenship behaviours. Similarly, the social context, or work group, in which the individual works will need to facilitate and promote such behaviours. And the organisation itself, especially its culture, must be capable of promoting, recognising, and rewarding these types of behaviours if they are to be maintained. While the study of organisational citizenship is still going on, preliminary research suggests that it may play a powerful role in organisational effectiveness.

Indicators of organisational citizenship behaviour are individuals who are vicariously and irrevocably committed to the organisation and its policies; individuals who appreciate and associate themselves with the policies and goals of their organisation at all times; individuals who perceive a balance between their contributions to the organisation and the inducements from the organisation; individuals who go beyond the boundaries of their units to solve problems in other units. It is common to see organisational citizens use the personal pronoun for their organisations; such as 'my organisation', our organisation, our product', our services etc. This is as against what appears to be common in some public organisations where people prefer to refer to their workplace as "their organisation' their policy "their services, etc.

A basic challenge faced by the organisation then, is to create a winsome organisational culture so that the growth of organisation citizens will thrive. It also calls for a proper attention to be paid to individual needs in order to strengthen his or her commitment to the organisations and make positive overall contribution to the organisation.

CONCLUSION

Public enterprises are decaying owing to some inadequacies and poor management of resources. Human resource is one so heavily mismanaged. This situation occasions unacceptably low level of service delivery in public organisations. The production and distribution of goods and services in the economy are carried out by private and public organisations. The extent to which the objectives of organisations are or are not achieved is reflected by such factors as job performance of individuals, turnover and absence rates, attitude and job satisfaction of personnel. The goods and services of the economy, are consumed by the public, and from their point of view, the extent to which the objectives of organisations, especially public organisations, are fulfilled are reflected by such factors as the effective use of products, the effective distribution and use of services, and consumer satisfaction. Effective HR management makes this possible.

The experience is that the production and distribution of these goods and services are nothing to write home about in public enterprises. The failure is largely attributable to human and individual problems in organisations. It is therefore, important that managers should not only understand these individual problems but also be familiar with individual and situational differences in behaviour and causation of behaviour. In dealing with problems that have a human twist, knowledge and understanding are convenient commodities to have on hand to apply as needed in order to minimize the problems.

As we reflect on human problems in organisations, it becomes obvious that they are really manifestations of certain undesirable forms of behaviour, such as poor quality of work, poor work attitude, and low morale. The key word here is behaviour, a term which in our usage embraces not only overt actions or activities, such as how well a person does on a job, but also covert aspects such as attitudes.

In order to gain some insight into the subject of individual and situational differences in behaviour and the concomitant problems associated with them in organisations, it is necessary to always take a look at the organisational man or what we refer to as *people in organisations*. A basic knowledge of the characteristics of *people in organisations* surely enhances the skill of HR managers. Every person in an organisation is fundamentally different from everyone else. Managers must recognise that these differences exist and therefore attempt to understand them if they are to be successful in optimising the resource in people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. Vice Chancellor Sir,

Permit me to use the remaining period of this lecture to pay some tributes to deserving individuals.

Firstly, I thank The Vice Chancellor for the opportunity of this lecture and his unending encouragement to all of us in the noble direction of elevating learning and promoting academic fumigation.

I want to appreciate my wife Francisca for her sustainable love that flows like milk and honey, and for her encouragements at all times. I also thank my children; Karl, Kelechi, Obioma and Dubem for their understanding and making things pretty easy for me.

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