

## **Human Resources Management and Socio – Psychological and Welfare Needs of the Families in Nigeria: Issues in the 21st Century**

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### **Abstract**

*Human resources management is a term that is used to describe the employees and the department that is responsible for the staff employment, welfare, retention and other related issues. It is the act of hiring, training, developing and retaining the right personnel in the organization to achieve the organizational objectives. It is the process and method of making effective and efficient use of human and material resources of an organization to achieve the organizational objectives. The employees are very vital in any organization and country. Getting employees that are equipped with the right skills and capabilities is the first step towards efficiency and effectiveness in order to meet up with socio – psychological and welfare needs of the family in Nigeria. Deciding and planning for human resources management without considering the socio – psychological and welfare needs of the family involved is to ensure failure of the exercise and there are many critical issues*

*surrounding human resources management in this 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria. Thus, the important of this work cannot be overemphasized. The employees are the most important asset of Nigeria as a nation because the success and failure of Nigeria depends on them.*

**Key words:** Human, Resources, Management, Family, Issues and Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

Human Resources Management is that aspect of management that is concerned with the effective and efficient utilization of the human resources available to an organization in the achievement of organizational goals. Okoro (2020) emphasized that the role of management in our society is critical in human progress. It serves to identify a great need of our time, to improve standards of living for all people through effective utilization of human and material sources. According to Eze (2002:3) is defined as the “management of various activities which are designed to enhance the effectiveness of organizational goals”. Isaac (2016) defined human resources management as “the management of people to achieve individual behaviour and performance that will enhance an organization’s effectiveness”. Odinachi (2019) emphasized that human resource management is a method of applying and developing programmes that make the employees to be effective and efficient. Human resources management is a key function of management. Human resources management is relatively modern label for the range of themes and practices involved in managing people.

According to Egwu (2004) “Human Resources Management in the course of its

development acquired a long past but short history". This recognition of the importance of Human Resource Management is a recent development dating back only to the last three decades. Before this time, the dominant perception of work was that it was meant for slaves. It is the outcome of the research efforts of some sociologists and psychologists which came to place great emphasis on the workforce, morale and ways of achieving organizational goals effectively through job-satisfaction in work organizations. The modern view of human resources management first gained prominence in 1981.

According to Egwu (2004) in the last years of the short history of Human Resources Management, certain key issues have become of common concern taking due cognizance of the influence and functions of socio – psychological and welfare needs of the family and how these can help or hinder progress . Thus, it is the task of this work to examine critical issues in human resources management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century so as to meet up with family needs and welfare of the people in Nigeria.

### **The Emergence of Nigerian Human Resources Management.**

In the last decades in Nigeria, there was a quiet transformation from personnel administration to human resources management. This transformation according to Egwu (2004) involved the gradual change from the personnel record keeping job of the personnel office to the current high-profile function of human resources management with the central concern for the effective and efficient utilization of the human resources of an organization and involving effective and active functional managers. In Nigerian perspective according to Eze (2002), the birth of the Nigerian Labour Congress and restructuring of the Trade Union facilitated

the development of human resources management as a respectable specialism in Nigeria. Thus, human resources management calls for skill in the management of change in Nigeria.

### **Functions of Human Resources Manager.**

According to Odinachi (2019) the basic traditional functions of Human Resource Manager include:

1. **Planning:** Planning is the act of deciding in advance what to do and how to do it by using what the organizations have to achieve the set goals.

2. **Organizing:** this is putting down the frame work for execution. The human resource manager arranges and puts the plan into actions. It is the manager that puts in actions that will actualize the set goals.

3. **Directing:** In performing this act, the manager gives order on how to carry a specific plan. The manager has to be a good leader who can influence subordinates in order to perform this task.

4. **Controlling:** This is the act of cross-checking or monitoring the process taken to achieve results to know if it is in line with the agreed plan. In doing this he will be able to see any deviation from the original plans and make the necessary inputs to correct it before it goes out hand. Under controlling, he will examine the quality of goods and services that are rendered to the public to know if it meets the required standard. Controlling is the last but not the least of the work of a human resources manager. It is a bad image for an organization to give out substandard or poor-quality product to the public and it shows that the Human Relation Manager is not doing this aspect of his work very well.

Operative functions include:

**a. Recruitment and Selection:** The Manager is responsible for recruitment and selection of the best qualified employee. Recruitment is the process of seeking out prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for an existing job opportunity. The advertisement may be at schools, advertisement agencies centre's print media, labour unions or churches. The various steps taken in selection and recruitment include, preliminary interview, compilation of the application, selection tests, main interview, crosschecking of candidate's background, final selection interview by the Manager, medical examination, job offer and induction.

**b. Training and Development:** To increase an employee performance, there is need for increasing his skills and knowledge on the field of endeavour. Training and development is one key area that the employee needs in order to advance his career, initiate new ideas and gives his commitment and loyalty to the enterprises. It is under this umbrella that the employees get their due promotion too.

**c. Designing employee benefits:**

**d. Salary and Wages:** It is the duty of Human Resources Manager to determine the fair salary and wage to be given to every employee based on the reward system, individual performance and evolution.

**e. Industrial relations:** the Human Resources Manager helps to bridge the gap between the employer, unions and employees in the organization. He integrates their interest together.

**f. Health and safety issues:** The human resources manager does not assign roles only to employees, they make the working environment safe. The equipment and office should be built in such a way to

accommodate enough light, air and other security equipment like fire extinguisher in case of fire outbreak. Human life should be safeguarded first in every plan or decision making of the organization.

**g. Working conditions:** the working condition of an organization is the totality of the physical, legal and emotional issues, right and responsibilities that are obtainable in a work environment. Such include, amenities, health and safety provisions, security issues, working hours/rest hours, needs/stress management strategies. Poor working conditions can lead to depression stress, anxiety.

**h. Appraisal and assessment:** appraisal is a sound and objective review done on an employee to determine his usefulness and effectiveness in his job.

**i. Conflict Management:** the human resources manager helps to settle conflict in the workplace by working on issues that will likely bring confrontation or settling disputes before it gets out of hand. He also counsels the employees on job related issues.

**j. Maintenance:** The human resources manager does all the activities that promote continuation and willingness of the employees to remain in the establishment. Stands for the employee in getting all their benefits and services.

**k. Disengagement:** His activities include relieving a post from the employee and integrating him back into the society when he is old. This is a big challenge in Nigeria where old people retire without due gratuity and pension.

**l. Transfer of employees:** when employees are transferred to another branch of the establishment, the Human Resources

Manager ensures that all the necessary procedures are taken to give the employees their dues and rights.

**m. Record Keeping:** The human resources manager collects information from the employees and other line managers and keeps for future use. The information will help in decision making as in job evaluation and analysis.

**n. Discipline:** When a staff misbehaves, it behooves on the human resources manager to bring him to order.

### **Importance of Human Resources:**

**-Structure wages and salaries:** A manager with human resources management develop compensation structures that is realistic and competitive for his employees.

**-Strategic management:** He makes strategic plans for recruitment, development and long term plans for sustainability.

**-Reduces job turnover:** When the employees are motivated, they work for a long period in an establishment and this reduce cost and lots of organizational memory.

**-Liability Issues:** The organization will spend less on liability on unfair employment practices if they have a Human Resources that is abreast with the regulations, right and responsibilities that are obtainable in the environment the organization/ business operates.

**Training and development:** He conduct training and development to build a stronger employer/employee relationship. Without this training employees will not be efficient, loyal and committed. At worst

there will be constant resignation of employees from the establishment.

-Makes good hiring to provide the organization with 'human capital' (employees with knowledge, skills and abilities) according to the number and quality workers needed to suited the organization needs.

**-Training and development:** The human resources manager provides training that will help employees to grow

- **Employee satisfaction:** Motivate employees and conduct employee opinion survey to assess the attitude of workers. A low motivated worker is like a time bomb that will do nobody any good. He will not only be under productive but will also poison the minds of other workers.

### **Critical Issues in Human Resources Management and socio – psychological and welfare needs of the family in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Nigeria**

According to Odinachi (2019) managing people is one of the most critical aspects of organizational management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and there are many critical issues in Human Resources Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria.

The issues and their examination are as follows:

#### **1. The Concept of Human Resources Management**

There are many challenges and concern on the issue of Concept of Human Resources Management". What exactly is human resource management? According to Storey (2000) "many people found Human resources management to be a vague and elusive concept". It seems to have a variety of meanings. The confusion is reflected in the different interpretations found in

articles and books about Human Resources Management. Attempts to define human resources management too precisely have resulted in confusion and contradiction rather than clarity. It is evident that defining and accepting Human Resources Management comes down to a matter of opinion or vested interest. Similarly, the same problem of concept definition is reflected on what should be the supposed role of Human Resource Managers. Townley (2018) argues that much of the confusion over the role of human resource manager is due to two factors, namely: (a) the conflict between the welfare tradition of personnel management and the strategic orientation of modern Human Resources Management. (b) A gender divide between female or soft personnel management at lower management and administrative levels and male-hard-nosed Human Resources managers within upper management. Townley (2018) and Anowor et al (2013) contends that the gender issue should be taken further than counting the number of women in Human Resources Management.

## 2. People as Human Resources:

The people as Human Resource is another critical issue in Human Resources Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are different arguments on the issue of importance of people as human resources. For instance, Sparrow and Hiltrop (2021), Anowor et al (2013) emphasized on these diverse views on people as human resources. According to Sparrow and Hiltrop (2021) Harvard School of thought interpretation sees employees as resources. The school viewed the employees as being fundamentally different from other resources. The school of thought emphasized that employees cannot be managed as the same way as other resources. The stress is on people as human resources.

On the other hand, Michigan Business School had a different view on people as human resources. The Michigan School of thought has a harder, less humanistic view, holding that employee are resources in the same way as any other business resources. The employees must be (a) Obtained as cheaply as possible (b) used sparingly (c) Developed and exploited as much as possible.

## 3. The Impact of Technology

Technology is playing an increasing role in Human Resource Management particularly through the use of Intranets and Human Resources Information Systems.

**Adopting Human Resource Management around the World:** Human Resource Management is Primarily North American in Origin but, far from causing a revolution in people management techniques, acceptance of the new interpretation has not been universal in the USA. Why is this so? There are several possible explanations.

First, there is the issue of perception: many US businesses fail to see any difference between human resources management and earlier form of people management. This is reflected in many (most?) standard US academic texts which are mainly concerned with the functional activities of personnel specialists-their philosophy is little different from that of 1970s texts.

Second, there has always been a managerialist and anti-union tradition within personnel management in the USA – so that human resources management is not the radical alternative it seems to be for welfare-oriented personnel managers and industrial relations specialists in the other countries.

Third, the long-term perspective of human resources management - viewing an organization's people as investments for the future. This concept sits uneasily with the prevailing short-termist ideology of business in the English-speaking world.

Human Resource Management in the United Kingdom: when Human Resource Management was imported in other countries, it arrived with many of the contradictions inherent in the North American Practice. Further confusion was created as principles were considered in the light of local people management traditions. As many commentators in Britain and elsewhere have been quick to point out, there is a "central uncertainty" as to exactly what Human Resources Management is. The nature of Human Resource Management has been the focus of a particularly vigorous debate in the United Kingdom.

#### **4. Developing A Responsive Personnel System:**

This is another critical issue in Human Resources Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The issues under this according to Fuller (2021) include:

- i. Assessing Personnel Needs: in assessing personnel need; should the business owner base the firm's personnel policies on explicit, well-proven principles. Small businesses that follow these principles have higher performance and growth rates than those that do not follow them. The most important of these principles are:
  - a. All positions should be filled with people who are willing and able to do the job.
  - b. The more accurate and realistic the specifications of and skill

requirements for each job, the more likely it is that workers will be matched to the right job and therefore, be more competent in that job.

- c. A written job description and definition are keys to communicating job expectations to people. Do the best job you can is terrible job guidance.
- d. Employees chosen on the basis of the best person available are most effective than those chosen on the basis of friendship or expediency.
- e. If specific job expectations are clearly spelled out, and if performance appraisal are based on these expectations, performance is higher. Also, employee training results in higher performance if it is based on measurable learning objectives.

The best step in assessing personnel needs for the organization / business is to conduct an audit of future personnel needs. Ask yourself:

- a. Can the workload you visualize be accomplished by the present work force?
- b. Will more or fewer employees be needed? Consider seasonal patterns of demand and probable turnover rates.
- c. Can any job be eliminated to free people for other work?
- d. What balance of full-time or part-time, temporary or permanent, hourly or salaried personnel do you need?

- e. What does the labor supply look like in the future
- f. Will you be able to fill some of the jobs you identified? How easily?
- g. What qualifications are needed in your personnel?

Develop a method to forecast labour demand based on the answers to these questions. Once your needs are estimated, determine strategies to meet them.

The process of selecting a competent person for each position is best accomplished through a systematic definition of the requirements for each job, including the skills, knowledge and other qualifications that employees must possess to perform task. To guarantee that personnel needs are adequately specified, (1) conduct a job analysis (2) develop a written job description and (3) prepare a job specification.

#### **i. Job Analysis:**

Job analysis is a systematic investigation that collects all information pertinent to each task performed by an employee. From this, you identify the skill, knowledge and abilities required of that employee, and determine the duties, responsibilities and requirements of each job. But job analysis is not an easy task. Job analysis should provide information such as:

- (a) Job title
- (b) Department
- (c) supervision required
- (d) job description – major and implied duties and responsibilities
- (e) unique characteristics of the job including location and physical setting
- (f) types of material used
- (g) types of equipment used
- (h) qualifications
- (i) experience requirements
- (j) education requirement
- (k) mental and physical requirements
- (l) manual dexterity required
- (m) working

conditions (inside, outside, hot, cold, dry, wet, noisy dirty etc.)

#### **ii. Job Description:**

The job analysis is used to generate a job description, which defines the duties of each task, and other responsibilities of the position. The description covers the various task requirements such as mental and physical activities: working conditions and job hazards. The approximate percentage of time the employee should spend on each activity is also specified. The problem is that Job descriptions focus on what, why, where and how of the job.

There are two excellent resources the small business owner can use to develop job descriptions. First, ask employees themselves to describe their jobs. A good employee may know more about the job than anyone else. Second, consult the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, published by the Government Printing Office, which contains over 20,000 descriptions.

#### **iii. Job Specification:**

The job specification describes the person expected to fill a job. It details the knowledge (both educational and experiential), qualities, skills and abilities needed to perform the job satisfactorily. However, it is a very complex issue to determine. The job specification provides a standard against which to measure how well an applicant matches a job opening and should be used as the basis for recruiting.

#### **iv. Recruiting:**

According to Agwu (2020) “as a business owner-manager, you should be aware of the legal environment in which you operate. This is especially true when it comes to recruitment. Recruitment is a critical issue in Nigeria today. Being aware of legislation that will affect your organization is extreme

important to efficient recruiting. Recruitment should cover:

**a. Sources of Employees:**

Effective recruiting requires that you should know where and how to obtain qualified applicants. It is difficult to generalize about the best source of each business, but a description of the major sources follows:

**Present employees:** promotion from within to keep employee's morale high. Whenever possible, current employees should be given first consideration for any job openings. This practice signals your support of current employees.

**Unsolicited Applicant:** small businesses receive many unsolicited applications from qualified and unqualified individuals. The former should be kept on file for future reference. Good business practice suggests that all applicants be treated courteously whether or not they are offered jobs.

**Schools:** high schools, trade schools' vocational schools, colleges and universities are sources for certain types of employees, especially if prior work experience is not a major factor in the job specification. Schools are excellent sources for part-time employees.

**b. Screening:**

The screening process provides information about an individual's skills knowledge and attitudes, enabling a potential employer to determine whether that person is suited to, and qualified for the position. Experience has shown that hiring an overqualified person can be as harmful as hiring an under qualified person. The application form is the place to begin screening candidates for a job. It provides information on the person's background and training and is the first means of comparing the applicant with

the job description. This will ensure that you don't waste time on applicants who clearly do not meet the minimum requirements for the job.

Generally, the following information is asked on an employment application form: name, address, telephone number, social security number, kind of work desired, work experience, military service, education and references.

The personal interview is the second step in the screening process. During the interview, the manager learns more about the applicant through face-to-face contact, including observation of personal appearance. The interview should be guided, but not dominated, by the manager as it is important to let the candidate speak freely. Whenever possible, the interviewer should ask questions that are directly related to the job. Devise a list of questions that will adequately assess applicant's qualifications while meeting the specifications for the job. Three major errors often committed in personal interview are:

- i. Failure to analyze the requirements of the job in sufficient detail to generate valid questions.
- ii. Failure to ask candidates the right questions to determine their strengths and weakness, their fit with the job.
- iii. Too much reliance on gut reaction instead of evaluation of candidates based on criteria established in the job specification (Beach: 2019).

Interviewing makes the selection process more personal and gives the interviewer an overall idea of whether the applicant is appropriate for the job.

a. **Selecting and Hiring:**

If the screening process is thorough, selecting the best applicants for the job is easy. However, before making the final selection, one last step should be taken: the top candidate's references should be checked for accuracy and input. You should be aware of the tendency of references can be most constructive. At a minimum, checking can determine whether or not the applicant was truthful about his or her employment history.

b. **Orienting New Employees to your Business:**

An employee handbook communicates important about the company to the employee. The handbook should cover topics such as company expectations, pay policies, working conditions, fringe benefits and the company philosophy towards customers.

Once an individual is hired, he or she should receive a comprehensive orientation on the general policies of the company and on the specific nature of the job. Rule should be explained in detail, job expectations agreed upon and any question answered the new employee begins work. New employees should be introduced to other employees and made feel welcome.

c. **Compensation Issues:**

According to Mondy and Noe (2018), compensation takes two forms: (1) Direct compensation (wages and salaries) and (2) indirect compensation (fringe benefits). The problem of designing adequate or equitable system of worker compensation is a complex one.

**Direct Compensation:**

Wages and salaries are the compensation people receive on a regular basis (monthly,

biweekly or weekly). Workers paid on the basis of time (by the hour, day, week or month) on the basis of output (an incentive plan).

**Indirect Compensation:**

Fringe benefits are an important part of the overall compensation part in most small business. Employee benefits now account for about 40 percent of payroll costs. The profitability of the small firm is one of the primary determinants of what benefits are offered by the firm.

**Employee Training and Development**

**An Effective Training Programme**

The quality of employees and their development through training and education are major factors in determining long-time profitability of a business but this is not easy to decide. Hiring and keeping good employees is the key to the first factor. If you hire and keep good employees, it is good policy to invest in the development of their skills, so they can increase their productivity.

Training often is considered for new employees only. This is a mistake because ongoing training for current employees helps them to adjust to rapidly changing job requirements.

**Purpose of Training and Development:**

Reasons for emphasizing the growth and development of personnel according to Johnson (2000) include:

- i. Creating a pool of readily available replacement for personnel who may leave or move up in the organization.
- ii. Enhancing the company's ability to adopt and use advances in technology because of a sufficiently knowledgeable staff.

- iii. Building a more efficient, effective and highly motivated team, which enhances the company's competitive position and improves employee morale.
- iv. Ensuring adequate human resources for expansion into new programs.

Generally, they will receive a greater share of the material gains that result from their increased productivity. These factors give them a sense of satisfaction through the achievement of personal goals.

## 2. Building Employee Trust and Productivity:

This is another critical issue in human resources management. The most effective way to build trust in the workplace is to work together. There are no magic gimmicks or other simple solutions. Trust cannot be created by excessive wages, great company picnics or wonderful working conditions; it can only be generated through teamwork, honest and fairness. Although trust and productivity are complex issues and represent only part of the total fabric of interpersonal relationships in business, three attributed appears to have effect on trust in successful establishment:

- i. The owner-manager of the business is open and honest about the day-to-day business operations.
- ii. The owner-manager of the business is consistent and fair about personnel policies.
- iii. The owner-manager spends a great deal of his or her time concentrating on good communications with those working in the form (Roxe: 2019).

**3. Employee Motivation and Commitment:** on this critical issue, the managers are to discover how best

to motivate employees and thus, secure their commitment to the goals of the organization. According to Kuvaas and Dysvik (2019) if organizations must succeed in an increasing competitive and problem environment, they need the full commitment of all the participants. Human resources of an enterprise represent its biggest asset. Any failure to nurture this asset properly will lead to sub-optimal return on the resources of an organization. It is on account of the getting the best commitment of the workers that managers initiate how best to motivate the worker and secure his commitment. How best to motivate a worker is one of the critical issues in Human Resources management. This has made workers to abandon their work and often embark on strike actions. According to Steers and Black (2020) "motivation is the process of initiating and directing individual or group behavior. An individual worker produces and sustains behaviour when he finds it rewarding to do so. An individual worker in a work setting will be motivated to carry out his duties to the extent that doing so will satisfy his personal needs.

**4. Communication Problems:** communication problem is a critical issue in Human Resources Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. According to Odinachi (2019) "to communicate basically means to share ideas, information, opinions feelings or experiences between people.

Communication is the process by which the managerial functioning of planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling are achieved. Human Resources Management depends on this process. Communication does not

just consist of telling one to do something. It is a process which calls for detailed consideration of what is to be transmitted, ensuring that the environment conducive to full and correct understanding of the message transmitted exists, ensuring that the message has been received, that what has been received is correct information and the receiver as acted correctly on the message.

Communication is not an essay issue in Human Resources Management. Any gap in communication between the employers and the employees is a big problem to the smooth functioning of any organization in Nigeria.

### Conclusion

Human Resources Management has continued to attract debate and disagreement, especially in Nigeria as a developing nation as it relates to socio – psychological and welfare needs of the family and of the people. Thus, there are many critical issues in Human Resources Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Human resources management is a critical factor in the success or failure of any organization. Conclusively all the activities of any organization are initiated and determined by the persons who make up that institution, plants, offices and of all tasks of management. Managing the human component is the central and most important task because of the socio – psychological and welfare needs of the family. All these depend on how well Human Resources Management is done.

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