

Maximising Talent: Strategies for Effective Human Resource Management

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ABSTRACT: Human resource management is indispensably the basis of all management activities, and it is a means of making things happen through people in a productive way so that the organisation can fulfill its mission and goals. It is the organisational function that deals with issues related to people such as hiring, compensation, performance management, organisation development, safety, wellness, benefits, employee motivation, communication, administration and training. Human resource management is also a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment. Effective Human Resource Management enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall organisation direction and the accomplishment of the organisations goals and objectives.

It is no secret that the way in which entities operate and engage with each other, locally, nationally and internationally, will be profoundly influenced by the factors that are rapidly gaining attention with respect to the activities of human resource management. If not well managed, human resource management can result into disaster.

KEYWORDS: Human Resource, Employees, Optimizing, Management, Organization

INTRODUCTION

Human resources are the most vital resources for any organisation. They are involved with all the activities in the organisation, they are responsible for each and every decision, work done, work ignored and all the results. As the mode of operation in every organisation changes, as a result of advancement in technology and paradigm shift in the ways of doing business, strategic attention has been given to the aspect of human resource management of organisations, as they serve as the life blood for effective performance.

The constant change in today's business environment has led to the adoption of human resource management, for obtaining competitive advantage. An organisation requires the utilization of complex array of resources to succeed, survive and achieve the ultimate vision and mission that informed the existence of the organisation.

The failure or success of any organisation is dependent on many factors but on top of the list is the human resources (human beings). Both in public and private organisations, profit/non-profit, it is the human component that sets the agenda, objectives, and strategies. The human resources, create, design, produce, supply the goods and services and control their quality and quantity. They also procure, allocate and distribute other resources. The end product is also marketed and sold by the people in the organisation.

The success of human resource management process will be complete for organisations that will appreciate and involve their employees in the development strategies. Organisations if they would succeed, would have to manage their human resources in conjunction with their own development directions, to encompass the meaning of planning and holistic approach of designing in order to gain a competitive advantage by utilizing human resources as strategic resources. For the effectiveness and efficiency of organisations, every organisation must hire, train, re-train, pay, motivate, maintain and empower the human resources. They also need to separate employees, and the human resource management function should be constituted in the organisation to fit the nature of the organisation.

For the organisation to thrive, effective employee relations should be promoted, through the adoption of a human resource strategy that places high value on employees as stakeholders in the organisation. These employees are directly affected by the organisation's success or failure. When employees are treated as more than paid hands/labourers, instead as real stakeholders, with the power and right to affect the outcomes in the organisation, it gives them a sense of belonging and they feel more valued for the duties they perform.

Effective Human Resource Management enables employees to contribute effectively and meaningfully to the overall organisation's objective and productivity. It helps in the direction and accomplishment of the organisation's goals and objectives. Human Resource Management deals with the organisational function that handles the issues related to people in the workplace,

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things like hiring, pay, compensation, performance management, organisation development, safety, wellness, benefits, employee motivation, communication, administration, training and pension. It is also a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment. Human Resource Management has moved away from the traditional personnel administration, and transactional roles. It is now expected that the new order should add value to the strategic utilization of employees and that employees programmes should impact the business in measurable ways. In this new role, human resource management involves strategic direction and Human Resource Management metrics and measurements to demonstrate. (Ulasi, 2012).

The term Human Resource Management evolved from Personnel Management. Its roots is in the traditional thinking in the filed of personnel management and administration, but it represents contemporary sophisticated views and ways of managing people at work, especially in the public sector. It assumes a different position and tackles organisational problems from a different direction, taking into account activities like planning, monitoring and control, rather than mediation between employee and management. It then means that the new approach involves every aspect of the employee as a resource.

Enoch *et al* (2016) views were in line with personnel functions or human resource functions, in that, they stated in their work that human resource management involves every aspect of dealing with employee as resources, taking into account planning, staffing, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation. Human Resource Management can also be seen as that which involves all management decisions and practices that directly or indirectly affect or influence the people who work for the organisation, it is in that domain, that Human Resource Management is defined as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation's most valued assets; the people working in the organisation, who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

Storey (1989) stated that, Human Resource Management can be regarded as a set of interrelated policies with an ideological and philosophical underpinning. He suggested four aspects that constitute the meaningful version of Human Resource Management.:

1. A particular constellation of beliefs and assumptions;
2. A strategic thrust informing decisions about people management;
3. The central involvement of line managers; and
4. Reliance upon a set of 'levers' to shape the employment relationship.

Utilization of the right human resource practices are instrumental in helping and shaping departmental objectives and the enhancement of productivity. Human Resource Management is a planned approach to managing people effectively for performance. It aims to establish a more open, flexible and caring management style, so that employee will be motivated, developed and managed in ways that will inspire them to give their best. Susan (2016) opined that Human Resource Management (HRM) is the function within an organisation that focuses on recruitment, management and provision of direction for the people who work in the organisation. It can also be performed by line managers. HRM is the organisational function that deals with issues related to people, such as compensation, hiring, performance, development, safety, wellness, benefits, motivation, communication, administration and training.

The Objectives of HRM: The overall aim of human resource management is to ensure that the organisation is able to achieve success through people. The business environment is highly competitive. HRM systems can be the source of organisational capabilities that allow firms to learn and capitalize on new opportunities. HRM is concerned specifically to achieving objectives in the following areas.

Organisational Design: developing an organisation that caters for all the activities required, grouping them together in a way that encourages integration and cooperation, operating flexibly in response to change, and providing for effective communication and decision making. Distinctive human resource practices, shape the core competencies that determine how firms compete. Such practices can make a significant impact on firm performance. The strategies aim to support programmes for improving organisational effectiveness by developing policies in core areas like talent management, knowledge management, development and successful implementation of high performance work practices; particularly, those concerned with job and work design, flexible working, re-sourcing (recruitment, selection and talent management), employee development (increasing skills and extending the skills base) reward and giving employee a voice.

The formulation and embedding to a dear vision and set of values; the development of a positive psychological contract and means of increasing the motivation and commitment of employees; the formulation and implementation of policies which meet the needs of individuals and create a great place to work, through the provision of support and advice to line managers on the role in implementing human resource policies and practices.

Human Capital Management: Salina (2021) sees Human capital as representing the human factor in the organisation. The Human capital of an organisation consists of the people who work there and on whom the success of the business depends. The combined intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the organisation its distinctive character. The human elements of the organisation, are those that are capable of learning, changing, innovating and providing the creative thrust which, if properly motivated can ensure the long-term survival of the organisation, of course without ignoring the short-term needs of the

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organisation. HRM aims to ensure that the organisation obtains and retains the skilled, committed and well motivated workforce it needs. It means taking steps to assess and satisfy future people needs and to enhance and develop the inherent capacities of people, their contributions, potential and employability, by providing learning and continuous development opportunities. Human capital is regarded, as the prime asset of an organisation and businesses need to invest in it, so as to ensure their growth and survival.

Organisational Development: Through stimulating, planning and implementing programmes designed to improve the effectiveness with which the organisation functions and adapts to change, advising on the development of work processes that will promote motivation and commitment.

Knowledge Management: Aims to support the development of firm specific knowledge and skills that are the result of organisational learning processes. It is any process or practice of creating, acquiring, capturing, targeting, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organisations.

Reward Management: HRM aims to enhance motivation, job engagement and commitment by introducing policies and processes that ensure that people are valued and rewarded for what they do and achieve and for the levels of skill and competence they offer. This can be done through; pay system; developing pay structures and systems that are equitable, fair and transparent; contingent pay; relating financial rewards to results, competence, contribution, skill and effort; non-financial rewards; such as recognition, increased responsibility and the opportunity to achieve and grow.

The Employment Relationship: Improving the quality of the employment relationship by creating a climate of trust and also by developing positive psychological contracts. The aim is to further a climate in which productive and harmonious relationships can be maintained through partnerships between management and employees and their trade unions.

Re-Sourcing

- **Human Resource Planning:** assessing future people requirements in terms of both numbers and levels of skill and competence, and formulating and implementing plans to meet those requirements.
- **Talent management:** Provide for the attraction, retention, development and reward of high quality people.
- **Recruitment and selection:** Obtaining the number and type of people the organisation needs.

Performance Management: Obtaining better results from the organisation, teams and individuals, by measuring and managing performance within agreed frameworks of objectives and competence requirements; assessing and improving performances identifying and satisfying learning and development needs.

Meeting Diverse Needs: HRM aims to develop and implement policies that balance and adapt to the needs of its stakeholders and provide for the management of diverse workforce, taking into consideration, individual and group differences in, employment, personal needs, work style and aspirations, and the provision of equal opportunities for all.

Human Resource Development:

- **Organisational and individual learning:** Systematically developing organisational and individual learning processes; providing employees with learning opportunities, including e-learning, to develop their capabilities, realize their potential, and enhance employability.
- **Management development:** Providing development opportunities that will increase the capacity of managers to make significant contributions to achieving organisational goals.
- **Career Management:** Planning and developing the careers of people with potentials.

Employee Relations

- **Industrial relations:** Managing and maintaining formal and informal relationships with trade unions and their members.
- **Employee voice:** Giving employees the opportunity to have a say in management decisions that affect them.
- **Communication:** creating and transmitting information of interest and concern to employees.
- **Health Safety:** Ensuring that a healthy and safe working environment is provided and protecting employees from health hazards and accidents.
- **Welfare services:** Providing employees with individual services concerning problems, as prolonged illness, and group services, such as restaurants and recreational facilities.

Human Resource Impacts on Organisation Performance: The assumptions underpinning the practice of Human Resource Management, are that people are the organisations key asset and that organisational performance largely depends on them. If, then, an appropriate range of human resource policies and processes are developed and implemented effectively, human resource will make a substantial impact on organisations performance.

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Productivity is the amount of output obtained per unit input employed in form of labour, capital, equipment, and time. There are varied ways of measuring productivity in relation to the organisation under consideration. Productivity is built on the pillars of teamwork and zeal for achieving the shared vision of the organisation and its employees. High productivity can only be ensured and obtained, if there is a willingness to keep learning and upgrading one's skill at all levels. Every individual's role is valued and they are given a sufficient opportunity to express their ideas for the betterment of the organisation.

Human Resource Management and Organisational System:

Every organisation, has different forms of organisational systems and processes and the human resource management is one of them. Fisher *et al* (2007) stated that human resource management, as a system involves all management decision and practices that directly affect or influence the people, or human resources, who work for the organisation. The organisational system refers to the HRM system which is an integrated and interrelated approach for managing human resources that fully recognize the interdependence among the various tasks and functions that must be performed. Those tasks and functions are accomplished through the aid of human resource or personal capability factors which include, recruitment and selection, compensation practices, training and development, as well as labour management relations. Mossholder *et al* (2011).

The excellence in Human Resource Management System is characterized by the following; having a human resource vision oriented to the strategic needs of the organisation; having a philosophy and values consistent with those of the organisation; being seen as a business within the organisation and operating in the same way as other units; having customers and quality management; being organized in a way that brings maximum service to the customer and maximum motivation to the human resource staff; having the best human resource products available to customers; championing human resource programmes that fulfill the agenda of the human resource professional and customers; having a human resource vision that is actively shared by the human resource professionals in the organisation; being a proactive, not a reactive group; being involved in the key business discussion, and being seen as successfully creating a great place to work. Setton (2011).

Training and Development and Organisational Performance: Training enables the employees to acquire the necessary skills needed to perform their jobs. Development as related to personnel is the process by which employees are made to assume additional responsibilities and attain the position of importance in the organisational hierarchy.

Training and development may however, be defined as the process of improving employees skill, knowledge and attitude in a desired direction, assumption of additional responsibilities and attaining the position of importance in the organisational hierarchy. Training is an important step in the effective stage of personnel administration. There are two schools of thought on the advocacy of training. One school of thought opined that training should come before recruitment and selection, while the other school of thought are of the opinion that it should be recruitment, selection and promotion before training.

Training and development are parts of education. Training is that which is directly concerned with the job. Some set of management thinkers believe that training and development are same. For them, training is meant for lower level staff, while development is for managers. Development is wider in scope, as it involves overall development of the personnel, while the technique of training is quite limited in the field for acquiring proficiency. Training is a conscious attempt on the part of management to inculcate skills, habits, knowledge in a particular employee, depending upon his needs and requirements.

William G. Torpay, defined training as "the process of developing skills, habits, knowledge and attitudes in employees for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of employees in their present government positions, as well as preparing employees for future government position. For Harbison and Myers (1964) they see human resource development as enhancing the skills, and the capability and capacity of all the people in the society, since the Human Resource Management involves among others, providing personnel services for the organisations to facilitate the recruitment, motivation and development of sufficient and suitable employees at all levels.

Managers of organisations, be it private or public, get involved with human resource development in a number of ways as they note the shortcomings or training needs. The scope of human resource development activities, as in most other policies and strategies of the organisation is wide and all new employees, regardless of their previous experiences, education and training, need to be introduced to their new employer's work environment and to be shown how to perform specific tasks. Large organisations often have development programmes which prepare existing employees for higher level responsibilities within the organisation.

Cole (1996), asserted that there are many organisations in the commercial field that carry out the minimum of staff training and development because as a matter of policy, they prefer to recruit staff that are already trained or professionally qualified. He however, reiterated that the majority of organisations do have a positive policy on human resource development. In some cases, this may be no more than to state that the company will provide resources to ensure that key skills are maintained within the organisation and in other cases, the policy may refer comprehensively to the various actions it will take to ensure not only a regular supply of skills, but also a high degree of personnel motivation through development opportunities provided by the company. Human resource programmes provide useful means of assuring that employees are capable of performing their job at acceptable organisational level and specific occasions, for retraining often arise when employees are transferred or promoted, or when jobs change and new skills must be learned in the work environment.

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Human resource development policy should be figured as an integral part of organisational policies, which should not be isolated but viewed in the context of organisational development, resulting in effective organisational performance. The development of Human resource is highly crucial to the development and growth in all ramifications of human endeavours. The people of vision, energy and experience, according to Ationo (2000), can only be obtained principally through human resource development. Such development is not a once-and-for-all activity. It is an ongoing process, as new employees are trained, so also are long serving employees who are transferred to other jobs promoted or when new equipment are acquired.

Anyanwu (2002) opined that Human Resource Development, is the development of human skills and knowledge, both physical and mental faculties of the human resources. In the extreme case, it includes all investments in human beings in the form of education and training, improved social services, health and on-the-job training. This particular paradigm is appealing from the perspective of macro-economic development and growth. He further said that, a nation that develops its human resources will be able to plan and sustain its production and services, and ward-off all forms of external and internal aggression against its people.

Armstrong (1999), reiterated that while the concepts of staff training and manpower development are closely interrelated, it is possible to identify a number of basic differences between the two. It should be borne in mind that these differences are a matter of degree. Three notable areas of difference are: objective, time, scale and focus of responsibility. Ladonni (1988) said, human resource development is concerned with getting the best possible staff for the organisation and taking care of them, so they will want to stay and give the best to the jobs. Obviously, it focuses on obtaining, training and motivating employees in the work, making for the right organisational climate, fitting appropriate individuals to jobs in the organisation and caring for them. It paves way for mental development of employees through training and development policies and programmes in order to make for better qualified employees. Development programmes, are more directed at the whole person, and consequently, are more appropriate for individuals who are moving towards assuming more responsibility for more people in a wider range of work.

The objectives of training are relatively narrow, focusing on enhancement of knowledge and skills, either to rectify a recognized deficiency or to prepare individuals for new roles. On the other hand, the objectives of manpower development, are relatively broader, in the sense that they are concerned more with improving the performance and long-term goals of the organisation. Human resource training and development are at the heart of employees' utilization, productivity, commitment, motivation and growth. Over time, many employees have failed in organisation because their needs for training were not identified and provided for, as an indispensable part of management function.

Nwachukwu (1988), training and development are the organisational effort aimed at helping an employee to acquire basic skills required for the efficient execution of the functions for which he was hired, as well as the activities undertaken to expose an employee to perform additional duties and assume positions of importance in the organisational hierarchy. Employee activity, is a function of ability, will and situational factors. An organisation may have employees of ability and determination, with appropriate equipment and managerial support, yet productivity fall below expected standards. The missing factor, in most cases, is the lack of adequate skills and knowledge which are acquired through training and development. Nwachukwu opined that, there are certain conditions that will serve as pointers to the need for training. These symptoms manifest themselves in a variety of ways, such as: lack of interests in one's job, negative attitude to work, low productivity, tiredness, excessive absenteeism rate, excessive complaints, high rejects or low quality output, high incidence of accidents, insubordination, low morals, etc. when a company starts experiencing some of those warning signs, it should consider training and development. He however warns, that, training could be a waste of time and resources. If the area of emphasis in training is not properly isolated. He asserted that, nothing can be more frustrating and demoralizing as teaching a person what is already known. Concerted efforts must also be made to clearly identify areas of stress in a training programme.

THEORETICAL INSIGHT

The world in which human resource management is practiced is continually dynamic and generating new issues in response to the major trends. Dugguh (2007), the environment in which human resource management takes place, is much in a state of flux. Changes are occurring rapidly across a wide range of issues. Some of these challenges include economic and employment shifts, education and training, organisation restructuring, demographic diversity, reengineering, downsizing, outsourcing and layoff, and balancing work and family. The environmental and contextual changes present a number of competitive challenges to organisations, which mean that human resource has to be involved in helping to build new capabilities. Theories help in making meanings of various phenomena happening in the society, they help in understanding the scenario better.

Organisational Behaviour Theory: A focus on organisational behaviour helps to explain why certain different behaviours impact workers efficiency and discretionary effort, as well as how to consider and forecast the effects of different policies on managing human resources. The study of organisational behaviour is applied to human resource management functions and its related subjects help us understand what people in organisational environments think, feel and do. This knowledge helps to anticipate, recognize and monitor organisational events for human resource and realistically, all employees. Organisational behaviour study includes research areas dedicated to improving performance at work, increasing job stability, fostering creativity and leadership.

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Pfeffer (2007), illustrated three important aspects from the viewpoint of organisational behaviour. According to the illustration, people are social beings and as such are concerned with their interactions with one another and affected by what others say and do; people are worried about equality and justice, both, the distributive results and the mechanisms by which those results are decided. Because of this equal role in both systems and results, people will be gradually known as economists, in reality, spend money to 'punish' people who violate fairness standards; organisations, as entities are also embedded in a social context and are influenced and imitated by the other organisations, partly in accordance with social expectations and standards. So, organisational behaviour is an area of study that examines the impact those human beings, groups and structures have on behaviour within organisations, in order to apply this knowledge to improve the effectiveness of an organisation.

Decision-Making Theory: The basic thrust of strategic-decision making is to make a choice regarding courses of action to adopt. Most aspects of strategic formulations rest on strategic decision-making. Decision-making theory was credited to Herbert Simon (1945), Charles Lindblom (1959), and Etzioni (1967). Decision-making is purely a management function, while strategic decisions are made by the top management of organisations. Strategic decision making is based on choice of a mission. Choice of a mission, relates to answers to questions, such as; What is the business of the firm? What will its business be? What should the business be, are basic concern in strategic management. Kazmi (2008). In the process of rational decision-making, Kazmi, argued that management makes strategic decisions based on certain criteria, which include, maximization of values, this relates to decision-making based on personal values or economic gains. In this case, decision-making is focused on the means and less attention given to the ends. So, to achieve objectives, set priorities are misplaced and by so doing maximizes returns for personal gains. In other words, a rational comprehensive model does not take into account the constraints under which the decision-making operates. Judging from this theory, optimization implies a satisfactory utilization of available human and personal capability factors like, employment of the right staff, attractive compensation, systems, encouragement of training and development of employees, maintaining mutual, peaceful and a stable management and labour relations.

Human Capital Theory: Human capital theory, rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and necessary to increase production capacity of a population. It is a theory that illustrates people's investment in themselves, improving skills that eventually increases their economic productivity. The theory is based on the idea that human capital leads to creativity which results in receiving higher personal income. The supporters of human capital theory believe that educated people are productive people, meaning that, people who are educated earn higher personal income than the rest of the population. Some researchers do not share this opinion. Blair (2018) suggests that the correlation between income and education is weak. Human capital theorist claim that productivity and efficiency of employees increases by education, through raising the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human ability, that is an outcome of innate capability and investment in human beings. The logic behind investing in human capital is built on three points of view, which are; the new generation must be provided with the knowledge that previous generations also had; the new generation should be trained in the ways in which the existing knowledge can be used to develop and invent different products or social services; the new generation should be encouraged to discover entirely new approaches in fulfilling the community's needs through creative approaches. (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

The failure or success of any organisation is dependent on the human component in the organisation. Above any other resource, human beings are the most important resources in organisations. It is the people in the organisations that set the agenda, objectives and strategies; they create, re-create, design, re-design, produce and deliver goods and services. They also control the quality of goods and services. Furthermore, they procure, allocate and distribute financial resources, as well as market and sell the end products or services of the organisation. The constant change in today's business milieu has prompted the adoption of human resource management for achieving competitive advantage. Human resource management has been recognized as a tool, essential for organisational profitability and sustainability. Organisations require the utilization of complex array of resources, to grow, survive and achieve the ultimate mission and objectives that informed its creation.

Human resource management is the basis of all management activities, and it is a means of making things happen through people in a productive way so that the organisation can fulfill its mission and goals. Workforce management in both public and private organisations has become increasingly complex. The growth of human resource management is closely linked to people's attitude towards work, the evolution of employment-related laws and sociological trends. The human resource field, recognizes the dynamic relationship between strategy, people, technology, and the processes that drive organisations.

The success of human resource management process will be useful for those organisations that will appreciate their employees in the development strategies, because, organisations have to manage their human resources in tandem with their own development directions and to encompass the meaning of planning coherent approach of designing in order to gain competitive advantage by applying human resources as strategic resources. For the effectiveness and efficiency of organisations, every organisation should hire, train, pay, motivate and maintain its human resources. The human resource management function should be constituted in the organisation. Organisations should promote effective employee relations, through the adoption of human resource strategy that places high value on employees as stakeholders in the organisations.

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