

Biodun Akinpelu / Femi Adeyeye



Transforming
the
Nigerian
State

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Edited by

Biodun Akinpelu & Femi Adeyeye

transforming the nigerian state

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Human resource management models and effective personnel development in Nigeria's tertiary institutions

Olufemi J. Adeyeye

Abstract

The study examines human resource management models for effective personnel development in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, using the Southwest as case study. HR and lecturer are used interchangeably as the latter is the general name used to describe manpower within the educational system. Also used interchangeably are institution and education. A total of 100 lecturers, students, and senior labour officers of companies were purposively sampled for the study. Primary and secondary data were engaged and analyzed using SPSS model to calculate the correlation coefficient index. The findings show competencies, commitment, innovation, motiva-

tion that HRM practices can engender for sustainable and effective development of personnel in our tertiary institutions. Based on the findings, it is hereby recommended, among others, that lecturers/HR should review their models, curricular and strategies in developing personnel for the labour market as urgently as possible in order to make the products of our tertiary education/institution capable of facing the challenges of the contemporary socioeconomic environment.

Introduction

The academic world is experiencing series of knowledge-based revolutions, which is changing the economic, social as well as the political wellbeing of all modern societies, with Nigeria no exception. The changing nature of life and work is generating so much demand for new skills and competencies to ensure continual relevance of human resource and personnel.

More and more jobs are becoming technical for which the educational prerequisites are rising. The question here is, Are Nigerian tertiary institutions ready and capable of successfully adapting the new trend in academic arena? This question is necessary and demands an answer in view of the fact that recently the global academic society classified and ranked universities around the world. Unfortunately, no Nigerian university ranked in the first two hundred. Although not many reasons were given by the assessors for the gloomy performance of all our universities, the quality (competency) of the products would certainly form of one of the basis for the dismal outing.

Since universities form the core and the basis upon

which tertiary institutions operate anywhere in the world, what affect them would likely to have considerable impact on all other forms of academic institutions—polytechnics, mono-technics and colleges of education.

With this hypothetical stand, we intend to carry out an in-depth understanding and analysis of the academic setup of tertiary education vis-à-vis the effectiveness of personnel development, with a view to adopting suitable human resources management models to engender and ensure high-quality products. Their curricular, systems and strategies for impacting knowledge, as it were, will be reviewed, with the sole objective of closing the gap between performance and non-performance, between good and poor qualities, between effectiveness and ineffectiveness, and indeed efficiency and inefficiency in tertiary institutions.

As observed earlier, tertiary education in Nigeria is the education received in polytechnics, monotronics, colleges of education and universities. In some places, it is referred to as higher education. As far back as the colonial period, the bulk of the contents of tertiary education tilted toward theoretical patterns. Emphasis was mainly on the production of an educated elite to handle the affairs of the nation as well as providing the type of manpower suitable only for the office and civil service (Sofoluwe et al., 2011).

Thus over the years, the educational level has come under heavy criticism, having failed to achieve the aim of providing the kind of education that would solve the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, corruption, unemployment, mismanagement of funds (and resources), cultism and poor mar-

ketability of its products within and outside the country.

Ogunleye, Oke, Adeyemo and Adenle (2007) observe—

Many employers of labour usually complain that graduates are poorly prepared for work. They believe that academic standards have fallen ... and that a university degree is no longer a guarantee of communication skills or technical competence.

Education is a tool not only for the manpower development of a country, but also for the transformation of the lives of citizens. Unfortunately, tertiary education, which is the highest level of education in Nigeria, has been made so theoretical that it has failed to fully prepare potential graduates for the challenges in the labour market (Sofoluwe, 2004). Some of the goals of tertiary education as highlighted in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) are to embark on high-level manpower training, inculcate proper values in individuals, make individuals acquire both physical and intellectual skills for self-reliance, as well as promote and encourage scholarship and community service. These goals are meant to be achieved through adequate manpower planning.

The strategic importance of manpower to economic development was highlighted on several occasions. The World Bank Economic Mission which visited Nigeria in 1953 and prepared a report on the country's economy noted: "In the past, economic growth has been largely left to the efforts of expatriate entrepreneurs, administrators and technicians; the time has come to increase as speedily as possible the number of adequately trained Nigerians able to contribute effectively to that growth" (Folayan, 2006). Thus the commission ob-

served that the immediate needs and overriding priority was to train Nigerians with a view to overcoming the shortage of technical and managerial skills necessary to carry out an accelerated program of economic development.

Also, the Western Region in appraisal of its only major pre-Independence planning exercise, observed that,

During the implementation of the 1955–60 Development plan, the urgent need for certain category of manpower became manifest. In certain ministries, the targets were not achieved mainly because the executive capacity was inadequate.

Thus, with the worsening unemployment situation and the shortage of high-level manpower; that is, the simultaneous occurrence of surplus of unskilled labour and shortage of skilled labour manpower planning in Nigeria became a desideratum (Folayan, 2006).

Looking through all the development-plan documents from 1962 to date, we can summarize the main objectives of the nation's manpower policy as follows:

- a. Contain unemployment and underemployment, especially youth unemployment, through the provision of training and employment opportunities and the encouragement of self-employment;
- b. Correct existing imbalances in the educational system consistent with the changing requirements of the economy;
- c. Improve the quality and employability of formal education graduates and trainees of the various

- manpower development agencies;
- d. Introduce appropriate scheme of incentives, rewards and motivations other than salary and wage increase to raise the general level of morale and productivity of the country's work force;
- e. Reduce the proportion of expatriate participation in employment;
- f. Meet the manpower requirements of the economy;
- g. Lessen the degree of international brain drain.

In a nutshell, Nigeria's manpower objectives have been to reduce the level of labour underutilization (unemployment and underemployment), expand employment opportunities, indigenize the labour force, minimize skilled labour emigration, and provide adequate manpower for the economy.

In spite of these lofty goals, the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria has been on a downward trend over the past 25 years. Poor remunerations, poor conditions of service, inadequate funding over enrollment of students, and lack of infrastructural facilities have been blamed. This situation has led to the absence of jobs for the nation's teeming graduates as well as the low rate of employability of these graduates within and outside our shores. The low quality of graduates' performance on the job has been attributed to their appalling attitude to work as well as the lack of training in life-after-school courses (Umeh & Ikazoboh, 2008). Apart from the fact that most graduates feel that paper qualification is all they need to get a job, they are also ill-equipped in life-after-school courses or skills, thereby rendering them "grossly deficient in in-

terpersonal relationships and office attitude" (Umeh & Ika-zoboh, 2008).

It is important to stress that Nigeria has never had national policy on human resources management. Government business is seen as nobody's business; the desperation to succeed in business is left with the private sector. We believe government needs a rethink in this respect for effective development of personnel in tertiary institutions.

Human Resources and Management Models

Conceptually, HRM is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets—the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Armstrong, 2010). In general, as Storey points out (1989), the concept locates HRM policy formation firmly at the strategic level and insists that as a defining characteristic, as Hope-Hailey et al. (1998), comment, organizations should move away from bureaucracy of personnel management to feasibility and responsiveness of HRM.

For several years, managers of HRM have wrestled with the same issues and problems confronting labour and employment relationship. And in addressing the challenges, most managers operated strictly on a trial-and-error basis. Out of the great variety of ideas and models about how to improve management of people at work are systematic management, scientific management, administrative management, human relations, bureaucracy, quantitative management, organizational behaviour, system theory and contingency perspective. All of these models have been subsumed under two major ap-

uates of tertiary institutions.

From the foregoing, an HR within the classroom context of is somebody who has the capacity to identify educational opportunities, establish and run a training program successfully. He monitors the changing educational environment constantly and quickly takes advantage of new technology to enable him to improve on how he can serve the students better.

Sustainable development can be broadly defined as the ability of the economy to support the needs of a country over time, taking into consideration the economic, social and ecological constraints. Underlying this concept is a "sustainability requirement," namely that the fulfillment of the need of the present generation should not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Thus, sustainable development can be seen not so much as a technical concept but as an educational one, a process of learning how to think in terms of "forever" (Aderogba, 2011).

Skills, according to Hull (1992), are seen as manual dexterity acquired through the repetitive performance of an operation. Hornby (1980) defines skill as the ability or expertise needed to perform a particular job or a series of jobs, and of essence it must consist of habits that ensure adaptation. For an individual to be self-reliant or self-employed, he must have acquired the right habits, attitudes and marketable skills with which he can explore his environment, as well as means of surviving in the face of unemployment. Effective skills acquisition in education is an indispensable tool toward producing a self-reliant nation with a dynamic economy. The acquisition of skills involves formation of relevant habits, which is usual-

ly preceded with relevant knowledge, which facilitates correct thinking, leading to a correct way of doing things.

However, it has been observed that students who undergo studies in science and technical subjects that are supposed to have these skills still do not possess them. High rate of unemployment among school leavers and college graduates has been attributed to lack of skills and competencies required in the world of work. Soludo (2005) agrees that one of the main causes of unemployment among school leavers is lack of training and employable skills and competencies which the modern economy demands. Thus, we are faced with burdens on surpluses of unemployed manpower. The making of a civil engineer, doctor, accountant, architect, petroleum engineer, aircraft technician, food technologist or any other professional in the world of work begins with the determination to acquire skills and competencies needed for sustainable development in that profession or world of work.

Nigeria is a nation of about 167 million people with an explosion in student population in our tertiary institutions. These institutions are turning out millions of graduates into the market of unemployment. Therefore, market-driven curriculum HRM practices that are capable of enhancing skills and competencies needed for sustainable development of the students after graduation should be adequately developed while still in the institutions.

The world is currently in the jet and dynamic age of science and technology. Sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria can be harnessed through globalization via information and communication technology (ICT). Global-

ization ensures effective, efficient connectivity and interaction between various higher-education institutions across the globe. It also allows higher-education providers accommodate the specific needs of students in terms of pace, mode, place and time of study, as well as cater for different and new target groups and (niche) markets locally and globally. The quality and pace of technological advancement of a nation depend on the quality and efficiency of its higher-education instructional personnel. It becomes necessary, therefore, to identify the core features of HRM practices which emphasize the strategic management of people which achieves "fit," skills and competencies, the importance placed on gaining commitment to mission and values, and the provision of learning and development opportunities for lecturers toward the development of employable skills in students.

Objectives of the Study

Although tertiary education is being heavily funded, yet the marketability of the products of the system is still very low in recent times, with the attendant problem of low graduate unemployment. Also, while there has been a large increase in manpower production, the structure and content of education have not been linked in a qualitative way to the immediate job environment (Ajeyalemi, 1987).

The main objective here is to identify HRM practices that can enhance effective personnel development and engender marketability of the products of our higher-education institutions. More specifically, the study tries to:

- a. identify the competencies needed by lecturers

- toward the development of market-driven competences in students;
- b. determine the extent to which the attitudes of lecturers toward curricular affect the effective development of skills in students; and
 - c. determine whether or not there is a relationship between HRM and marketability of products of tertiary education.

Research Questions

Answers to the following research questions were attempted:

1. What are the competencies and attitudes needed by lecturers toward the development of marketable skills in students?
2. To what extent do the attitudes of lecturers toward curricular affect the development of skills in students?
3. Is there any positive relationship between HRM practices and effective development and performance of the products of tertiary education in Nigeria?

Methodology

This study employs the survey design, with tertiary education and students as (independent) and HRM practices (dependent) as the major variables. Tertiary education was further broken into its two components (namely, curricular competencies and manpower development) which formed the sub-variables. One hundred purposively selected respondents were drawn from a target population of 3,000 graduates and

products of tertiary education spread across Southwest Nigeria. Forming part of the population were the employers of labour within the sub-southwest region

Data Collection

Copies of structured questionnaire were distributed to the respondents individually and retrieved, resulting in a return rate of 100%.

Data Analysis Procedure

The correlation coefficient index was applied to determine the indices to be used as measures for identifying the relationship between human resource management strategies and practices and effectiveness of personnel development in our tertiary institutions

The correlation coefficient index is defined by the formula:

$$r = \frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Where

- r = correlation coefficient index
- x = independent variables, representing the various human resource management practices of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- y = effectiveness, marketability and sale ability.
- \bar{x} = mean of x variables
- \bar{y} = mean of y variables.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by the SPSS model. The model was used in calculating the correlation coefficient index.

Correlations

	HRM	Compe- tencies/ Skills	Effective- ness of Personnel	Market- ability
Spearman's rho HRM Practices Curricula Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N 300	1.000 000 300	..938** .020 300	962** 000 300	978** 000 300
Competen- cies/Skills Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2 - tailed) N 300	.938** .000 300	1.000 .001 300	939** .000 300	930** 000 300
Effectiveness of Personnel Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N 300	.962** .000 300	.939** .000 300	1.000 300	934** 000 300

Marketability Correlation Coefficient	.978**	930**	934**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	300	300	300	300

Nonparametric Correlations

**Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed)
 *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

The result reveals that HRM practices have a very strong positive and significant linear relationship with effectiveness, as reflected in the value of the spearman rho correlation coefficient of .962, with significant level 0.000. Also, there is positive significant relationship between competencies and marketability (spearman's rho 0.938 p=0.000 and spearman's 0.978 p=0.000, respectively

Findings and Discussions

The outcomes of this study reveal the skills and competencies identified to be needed by HR and lecturers toward the development of effectiveness of students were accepted by the lecturers as being needed for this development. This finding is in consonance with those of Armstrong (2010) and Wendy (2007), who are of the opinion that all identified skills and competencies are important for effective development of personnel in organizations.

The findings also reveal that some personality attributes and attitudes of lecturers affect the development of skills in students, in agreement with Brumback's (2003) identification of the attributes needed by trainers as: technical competence, mental ability, human correlations skills, high achievement drive and creativity.

The finding is inconsistent with Aladekomo's (2004) opinion that the concern for the organization of knowledge and skill in Nigeria's tertiary institutions is so common, to the abject neglect of its implication for employment, concluding that the higher education aspect of the national policy was absolutely silent on the issue of self-employment. According to Anyakoha (2006), the entrepreneur must work hard, maintain good relationships with customers, employees and other businesses such as banks, insurance companies and service firms. Therefore, lecturers who were the supposed mentors must possess these personality attributes and attitudes to be able to develop them in students.

Some of the skills and competencies that will be of need to lecturers toward the development of marketable products are also identified. Some of these, among others, are ability to communicate effectively, using oral and written skills, creativity and competitive skills. All these skills have positive relationships with effective development of personnel in organizations globally.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that man is strategically central to development, both as the means and as the target to be served by these efforts. In essence, all efforts to develop human re-

sources effectively and to make optimal use of those available to achieve set goals and objectives, at the national (macro) and at the organizational (micro) levels, form the core of human resource management.

The study reveals that the post-Independence curricular of tertiary institutions were mainly an academic exercise which did not make sufficient systematic effort in preparing students for marketability and self-employment, except in very few cases. According to Adeyeye (2007), all the efforts by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to enhance and ensure self-reliance of youths met with little success. The vocational subjects being taught in high schools lack emphasis on training for self-reliance. There is thus the need to quickly address these shortcomings in order to transform our educational system from that which has little relevance to the world of work today to one that ensures a ready market for the products of our tertiary institutions.

Recommendations

In order to develop marketable skills and competencies in our graduates, the following recommendations are proffered:

- a. Lecturers should change their approach and methodology of teaching various professional subjects and gear such approaches toward making the students acquire the skills that are marketable anywhere in the world.
- b. Tertiary educations curricular and our educational system should be reinforced by a deliberate and conscious attempt at formally introducing a compulsory course that will expose

students to the world of work before graduation. The "town and the gown" should be involved in this new orientation.

- c. More emphasis should be placed on practical training in all its ramifications.
- d. The linkage between employers of labour and tertiary institutions should be strengthened to allow for the establishment of job requirements and marketable skills by the former for the latter.
- e. Students and lecturers should be given opportunities to experience exchange programs as regularly as possible.

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NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**