Strategic Optional for Sustainability in Human Resources Management in Tertiary Institution

Akpoyovwaire Samuel Mukoro
Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, College of Education, Warri, Delta State, Nigeria
Phone No.: 08038292196
E-mail address: mukorosam@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Efficient human resources management in any human organization has a tremendous impact on employer’s morale, achievement of organizational goals and maximal productivity. Thus, the degree to which an organization achieves its goals depends greatly on how the human resources are effectively managed and utilized. Therefore, this paper examines the concept of human resources management, rationale for human resources management and the relevance of human resources in tertiary institutions. Finally, the paper discusses how best human resources could be managed and maintained to enhance personnel efficiency in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human Resources Management; Sustainability; Tertiary Institution; Effective; Staff

1. INTRODUCTION

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are established primarily to provide its recipients with the knowledge, skills and intellectual capability required by the individual to contribute to sustainable economic and national development. As such, tertiary institutions are places where the country’s young men and women cultivate knowledge in solid principles of services and are equipped to play leading roles in society (Alos in Akpochafo, 2002). The Nigeria National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) stipulated the national aims and objectives of tertiary educational institutions to include the following:

a. Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
b. Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society;
c. Develop the intellectual capability of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment;
d. Acquire both physical and intellectual capability of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
e. Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
f. Forge and cement national unity; and
g. Promote national and international understanding and interaction.
Based on the first aim, Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education produce graduates that could meet the manpower need of the various sectors in the country. Therefore, graduates of tertiary institutions of learning have been subjected to character formation, development of skills among others in the courses of educational training. However, for the tertiary institutions to perform these functions effectively, it would require various calibers of staff that would ensure effective realization of these aims. Proper management of valuable personnel in the institutions is paramount if the institutions are to succeed in retaining their personnel and making them perform their duties effectively (Emoefe & Alokha, 2012).

This is because human resources provide the major ground on which meaningful organizational growth could be based. Although all the resources in the school work together to ensure the achievement of goals, human resources can be considered the most important in the process. In this regard, the achievement of the aims of tertiary education depends, to a large extent on the type of human resources available, and how they are effectively managed and utilized. Thus, the way and manner in which the institutions management according to Emoefe and Alokha (2012) develops and interacts with staff can make or mar such staff with regard to performance of their duties. Whether individually or collectively, they opined, the staff of the school all contribute to the growth and development of the institution and to the achievement of the institution’s objectives and goals. It is, therefore, the primary objectives of this paper to review the basic issues in human resources management.

Specific objectives are to:

i. Look at the concept of human resources management;

ii. Highlight the major rationale for human resources management;

iii. Discuss the relevance of human resources;

iv. Examines the strategic options for sustainability in management of staff personnel of tertiary educational institutions;

v. Presents conclusions and recommendations.

2. CONCEPT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The concept of human resources management has been given by Glueck as cited in Ogunu (2000) as that function of all enterprises which provides for effective utilization of human resources to achieve both objectives of the enterprise and the satisfaction and development of the employee. This means that human resources management forms an important responsibility of the organization as regards the workers needs and concerns in a bid to achieving the goals of the establishment or system. Cuming (1968) was a little more explicit. He saw human resources management as being concerned with obtaining the best possible staff for an organization and having got them, look after them so that they will want to stay and give of the best to their jobs. Hence, Onah (2003) averred that getting the right caliber of people by the process of recruitment to meet the organization’s need is not just enough. Conditions, he said, have to be created which would make them stay on the job, happy on the job and cope with the demand of the job. In effect, it concerns the organizational employees and the way they relate to management and other employees.

In much the same way, Yesufu (1984), presented human resources management as everything which affect the relations between the worker’s and the management of a business whether individual or collective. It embraces the formulation of policies and the planning and
all the parties that underly or are expected to promote the efficient utilization of labour. In a simple explanation, it is geared towards the management of staff and labour relations in the organization. The basic functions of the human resources manager include: planning for human resource needs, staffing the organization’s personnel need, appraising and compensating employees, training and developing employees and establishing and maintaining good work relationships and effective utilization of staff (Schuler & Huber, 1990).

3. RATIONALE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The goals of human resources management are to develop the workers in the organization to contribute to goal achievement in the organization by improved productivity, quality and service (Onah, 2003). Therefore, the knowledge of human resources management will enable the education manager become abreast and acquainted with various ways to manage staff to achieve improved productivity, and the danger that is common with poor human resources management in the educational institutions. In effect, the good knowledge of human resources will enable the chief executive or manager of tertiary educational institutions employ the right caliber and quality staff that possess the required training, skills and expertise to carry out the job successfully at any time. Furthermore, the knowledge of human resources management will ultimately, aid the educational manager to manage the system very well in his day-to-day activities or administration. Thus, a manager who is versatile in human resources management will know when to recruit and how to take care of his employees to enhance performance. It equally ensures that adequate training programmes are put in place to enable the recruited staff become abreast of recent development in technology (Obi, 2004). This is because, the efficient staff have great impact on the productivity of the institution.

4. RELEVANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

The caliber of human resources in the tertiary educational institutions like any other social organization determines the level of efficiency of the institutions. According to Onah (2003), human resources easily recognized for the production of goods and services, are the key to rapid socio-economic development and efficient service delivery. It was in this regard that Oshioebe (1992) quoted Likert as stating that all activities of any enterprise are initiated and determined by the people who make up the institution. Plants, offices, computer, automated equipments and all else that a modern firm uses are unproductive except for human effort and direction. Ndiomu (1992) emphasizing this point further stated that the human resources of a nation, which comprises men and women, young and old who engage in the production of goods and services are the greatest and indeed, the most precious assets of the nation. The indices for measuring national growth and development hinge on the condition of human resources a nation possesses. Thus, human resources influence the overall growth, efficiency, and productivity of an organization. In this sense, the success of any human organization is mainly anchored on the quality and efficiency of its workers that carry out the various functions imperative for the attainment of stated objectives and aims. This is consistent with Onah (2003) view that human resources must be viewed in the same context as financial, technological and other resources that are managed in organizations. As such, human resources should be given a pride of place than other resources since the management of other resources (such as plant, and information resources) depend wholly on the staff. Without diligent, devoted and dedicated
staff in the educational system, the attainment of the aims and objectives of education will be elusive (Imhabekhai, 2000). Therefore, education managers should try by all means to manage their staff in more tactical and efficient manner.

In addition, staff are required in large number and quality to ensure maximum productivity in the tertiary institutions. The staff must be skilled professionals in various fields of learning. Akpochafo (2002) classified the human resources in the tertiary institutions into lecturers, librarians, top administrators, and other non-academic staff like the clerical staff, secretarial staff, security men, drivers, coaches, laboratory workers and so on. This means that the staff comprises the most vital kind of resources in these institutions of learning (Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education). They influence the quality of teaching, research and learning that takes place in the tertiary institutions. According to Nakpodia (1998), the extent to which the quality of education succeeds will depend strictly upon the quality of personnel engaged in the educational process and upon the effectiveness with which they carry out individual and group responsibilities. This perhaps, suggests that in the tertiary educational institutions, a well managed personnel will enable the realization of the goals and aims of the institutions. Accordingly, every tertiary education manager must give prominence to the role and importance of people in goal attainment in order to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning.

5. STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF STAFF PERSONNEL OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

It is considered that tertiary institutions should emphasize more active role in teaching and research to ensure technological, academic and national development. Thus, for the tertiary institutions to achieve the cardinal aims of teaching and research for technological advancement, economic, national growth and development, must devote much attention to how their staff are being managed and utilized. Various techniques, programmes and managerial mechanism and human relations should be adapted to help ensure successful and efficient management of the staff of the institution. This is because the staff are the immediate reference groups of any educational institution and, therefore, they determine the extent to which an organization realizes its set goal (Odor, 1995).

Human relations strategies would make the workers feel kike human beings within the various institutions and this will invariably, lead to peaceful co-existence and enhanced productivity. As noted by Mullins (2007), for people to work well in an organization, there should be cordial relationships. The efficiency and performance of staff and their commitment to the objectives of the organization are fostered by good human relationships at work. This demands that proper attention be given to human resource management and harmonious employment relations. The manager needs to understand the importance of good managerial practices and how to make the best use of people. The promotion of good human relations is an integral part of the process of management and improved organizational effectiveness. What is being said is that tertiary institutions should adopt various human relations mechanism such as motivation (recognition) and communication in the process of human resources management. Therefore, the tertiary education institutions manager should adequately motivate staff to enhance their productivity. As such there is need to satisfy the human need. In this view, Oboegbulem in Mgbodile (2004) maintained that a staff who has no house to live in, should be given accommodation, as well as, financial assistance to those who have financial problem by management. Also, organizations according to Emoefe and Alokha (2012) must
take care to motivate employees depending on available resources so that while motivating the employees, the cause of the organization is also being advanced. They stressed that a kind word or compliment from a manager or supervisor to employees for instance, boosts the morale of such employees and spurs them to give more. It can also build employees’ interest in the organization’s work.

Management of tertiary institutions should also give recognition to those who distinguish themselves in various endeavours that are beneficial to the institution. This should take the form of special responsibility, the right behavior (individual rewards, performance bonuses) and services awards. Some universities are known for recognizing the best teacher every year, while students are given honorary award of excellent performance every year (Akpan, 1997). Other means of motivation include quality of work life in an organization.

This entails creating a conducive work environment and working conditions through job enrichment in which the employee is given more control and accompanying responsibility and discretion as to how the job is to be performed. This gives the employee confidence and a sense of being appreciated as one who has initiative and has something to contribute to the development of the organization (Emoefe & Alokha, 2012).

Also, tertiary institutions management should re-evaluate their communication process and channel and develop appropriate information network. There should be communication channels that could be employed to reach out to the various categories of staff at a time as well as receive feedback from them. Thus, workers should be frequently informed of the state of affairs in the institution, every happening should not be covered up in order to facilitate peaceful and mutual understanding to enhance the achievement of a common purpose in the system. Administrators in tertiary institutions should also encourage constant upwards flow of information in addition to downwards communication so that the opinion and perception of the subordinates staff can get to the management, and probably, be incorporated when making decisions. Emoefe and Alokha (2012:85) contended that:

> Everyone should be schooled in the existing links of communication: who to report to, who to give instructions to, where to get what from and who is to be given what. Memos, e-mails, notice boards, telephones, etc all aid communication. In a nutshell, if employees know what is expected of them at any point and know that they can share their opinions on issues and be listened to, they would more likely have better interactions and consequently, make better contributions to the organization.

In addition, tertiary institutions should always make available training and re-training programme to their staff to facilitate learning which may contribute to the realization of the institutions goals. Onah (2003) who justified the importance of training as it enhances staff personnel productivity, argued that employees should be helped to grow into more responsibility by systematic training and development, for it is only then that he will feel confident to carry out the responsibilities of the job. Training and re-training helps staff to keep abreast of technological advancement in today’s changing society. Nwagwu (2004) remarked that the personnel and professional advancement of staff are predicated on the raising of awareness of the personnel so that they can improve on their productivity and quality of outcomes and assume new responsibilities.

Furthermore, tertiary institutions should encourage leadership behaviour that enables the provision of staff welfare scheme to satisfy the staff needs in the system. This has direct impact on the individual staff. If this could be put in place, the overall impact is that staff will derive
job satisfaction or be in good frame of minds that will enable them give their best to their duties in the system.

In summary, it could, therefore, be said that the best way tertiary educational institutions could effectively manage their human resources in the present situation and future depend on the management ability to establish a cardinal relationship, create peaceful co-existent and mutual understanding with the subordinate and other interest groups (unions and associations) by adopting leadership behaviours that will enable satisfaction of needs of the individual and group in the institutions.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has advocated some strategic options in the management of human resources in tertiary educational institutions as a means of enhancing staff personnel efficiency and increased performance. Management of tertiary institutions should, therefore, employ these options as a means of influencing their staff to perform their functions efficiently. Therefore, there should be need to continuously retrain staff and motivate them through incentives and recognitions to encourage enhanced productivity in tertiary institutions.

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