EMERGING TRENDS IN THE STUDY OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Okonmah I. Emmanuel, Ph.D
Department of Public Administration
University of Benin, Benin City

Abstract
Daily empirical discoveries from scholarly conducted researches have given room to the modification of views and the policies in public organizations, institutions and state on the need to mobilize and utilize human capital to achieve organization or state goals. There is old and modern view or traditional and contemporarily views etc. This paper tries to evaluate the emerging trends in the study of Human Resources Management (HRM). Methodologically, it draws evidence from primary and secondary sources of data, arguing that the traditional HRM represent the process of managing people at work while the emerging trends in HRM places a caveat on the existence of a complete HRM infrastructure in a public organization that will boost the efficiency and effectiveness of workers output.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Traditional Management, Emerging Trends, Scholars Research, Public Administration

Introduction

The management of people at work is an integral part of the process of management in every organization. As Okoh (2005:xiv) has noted the management of people at work is the hub of management in that, it focuses attention on human resources.

The whole essence of human resources management is to bring into the organization the right caliber of people, ensure they are doing the right type of jobs for which they are well suited, so as to realize the objectives of the organization and the individual objectives of the employees. The personnel staff has fundamental roles in these functions but once the workers have been employed, the problem of managing them at work becomes the responsibilities of every manager and supervisor including the personnel manager up to the managing Director. Hence, the way and manner to manage employees in order to get the best out of them have engaged the attention of management experts for many years.

Every work environment requires new management approaches and methodologies to tackle the emerging challenges as observed by Sparrow & Marchington (1998). This is essential because, the behaviours of people are not uniform even in a defined work environment, due to individual aspirations and goals. To this end, many organizations have collapsed because of the emerging confusions among the workers who could no long be managed at a productive level to meet organizational goals. According to Mishra A. K (1996), organizational goals may suffer projected targets if a modern method of generating management-development

information is absent or still at the traditional level. It is important therefore that, the many concerns of resource management as a field of study considered a "merit system reform" that will boost the efficiency and effectiveness of workers' outputs in organization include human resource service delivery in areas of staff recruitment and utilization, improving workplace environment and work form, creating equal employment opportunity and quality of work life, reviewing and improving non-profit human resource issues between human resource professionals and line managers, improving information technology and usage in workplaces, decentralization of duties, downsizing of staff as a result of low utilization or redundancy, deregulating and franchising work departments (Byars & Rue, 2008); grievances and appeals, staffing, recruitment, retention, classification and compensation, performance appraisal (target now MBO), training and development, leadership, motivation, employee benefits, diversity, labour-management relations, mediation, arbitration, public sector unions, human resource management in international organizations, and comparative human resources (Condrey, 2008).

Conceptualizing Personnel Management

Personnel Management refers primarily to the activities of specialist staff who are responsible for implementing the personnel objectives of the organization (NAPA, 1983: Cole: 1993:1). The institute of Personnel Management as cited by Okoh (2005) defined personnel management as that part of management, concerned with people at work and their relationships within an enterprise. The purpose of personnel management is to bring together and develop men and women into an effective organization, and to enable them to make their best contributions to the organization's success (Bottomley & Graham 1990: 141). Personnel management is therefore, simply defined as that branch of management that specifically deals with the management of human beings at work for the purpose of achieving organizational goals.

Personnel management is a specialist function of management which has responsibility of attaining the following goals:

- advise and guide the various departmental managers in an organization, on the implementation of personnel policies and strategies,
- Provide adequate personnel services for the organization through recruitment,levels of motivation, train and develop sufficient and suitable employees at all
- levels;
- Formulate, propose and secure acceptance of the policy and strategies from the organization board of directors (Blyton & Turnbull, 1992).

Traditionally, personal management is concerned with the development and application of policies in such areas as:

- man-power planning, recruitment, selection, placement and termination;
- training and career development
- generating terms of employment and standard of remuneration.

- setting of employee work condition and service
- decentralizing the channels of communication
- evaluate jobs and appraise staff performance
- initiate and suggest leadership styles to the organization.
- provide healthy and safe work environment.
- create avenues for negotiation during industrial disputes, among others (Okoh 2005; Armstrong, 1982).

Perspectives in the Study of Human Reource Management

There are two schools of thought in the study of human resource management. One is the traditional authoritarian school of thought or philosophy, as epitomized by Henry Fayol's "Unit of Command" or what Douglas McGregor's (1969) referred to as "Theory X". This school based its behaviour on a bureaucratic approach that every subordinate in a formal organizational setting must take instruction from his/her superior and fully utilized for the interest of the organization and management, first. The other school of thought is called the "modern" or "human resource school". Theory Y emphasized managerial leadership through motivation (informal relationships) by permitting subordinates to experience personal satisfaction as they contribute to organization's set goals with **less control**. The relationship of the two theories (X or Y) reflects system the four (4) management leadership according to Rensis Likert (1967) is that at any work circumstances, management can adopt the authoritative, benevolent, consultative or democratic leadership style for the obvious purpose of achieving organizational set goals (Edigin & Otoghile, 1994). This school of thought has "optimistic view of man" that managers who have this assumption behave differently to their subordinates in the work environment. While some managers clearly belong to the extreme poles, others hold beliefs derivable from both schools of thought. The views of each of above schools here follow:

Traditional Management (Authoritarian) Philosophy

The traditional view of man is that "he is selfish, rebellious and uncooperative" (Beach, 1980:34). Many classical political philosophers, sociologists and economists popularized this pessimistic view of man. Notable among them are Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Machiavelli, writing in the "Prince" (1513) asserted that, "the end justifies the means". He advised rulers (the Prince) to set aside integrity, morality and honour and adopt any means that will enable them hold on to and maintain power and preserve the state. He added that, rulers could "appear" to be "straight forward, humane, clement, and trust worthy" but, that they should always be prepared to follow the path of evil if the circumstance demand it. Thomas Hobbes, asserted also that, men are "acquisitive, seeking power and prestige. They want what their neighbours possess. For these, Hobbes posited that, man must be governed by a strong authoritarian government that can suppress these beastly instincts in man. Also, in the 19th century Herbert Spencer used Darwin's biological theory (social Darwinism) to preach the doctrine of individualism, liberty of action and survival of

the fittest. He argued that only the superior human being or the best run organization in terms of profit will survive in the society.

Similarly only the hard working employee will survive in an organizational setting. Rewards go to the hard worker who is retained and promoted. Those who are less efficient are demoted, laid off or discharged. Adam Smith in his "Wealth of Nations" (1776) also glorified individualism and pursuit of one's self-interest. He argued that although individual organizations seek their own private gain, unrestrained competition and profit maximization will ultimately result in the public good in the society.

These theories and many others portray man as self-centered and therefore must be controlled and supervised under iron hands. Managers and leaders who have this perception of man tend to adopt the authoritarian model of control.

The writing of Douglas McGregor in the 1960s helped to buttress these negative views of man. In his famous "Theory X"; he asserted that the average worker has "an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it if he can; avoid responsibility, and want to be closely directed but above all, he wants security". As a result of this human characteristics of dislike of work, most managers believe that people must be corrected, controlled, directed, threatened with sanction in order get them to put forth adequate efforts towards the achievement of organizational objectives. The dislike of work is so strong that even the promise of rewards is not adequate enough to overcome it. People will certainly accept the rewards and continuously demand higher rewards but these alone will only produce temporary efficient efforts.

Another characteristic of the traditional philosophy of management is that, the authority is synonymous with power and that authority comes from the top and is transmitted down the ranks in the organizational structure. Similarly, decision-making is centralized in the top management and all decisions made are transmitted down the ranks, through the organizational structure. Control of employees is also exercised through the command structure in the organization.

In this type of structure, a manager or supervisor is seen as an agent of top management. His/her job is to obtain orders from his boss and pass them on to his subordinates. He exercises very close supervision over their activities. He tells the subordinates what to do and in some cases how to do it. He is production centered because, he is expected to meet production goals and targets, control costs and maintain quality of goods and services. Jobs are carefully described for each worker and he is not expected to exceed his limit. In this way, efficiency is maintained and enhanced. The physiological and security needs of the employees are satisfied as long as they obey orders and perform their duties as required. Employees are induced to perform better by means of monetary incentives but work under threats of fear and specters of lay off. However, in some cases, management treats the workers well by providing job security, decent working conditions and adequate pay, in return for workers co-operation, loyalty and dedication to duty. In this way a type of dependency relationship is established. As long as they stay in their place and perform their duties, they will be taken care of and those that cannot measure up to

expectation are shown the way out. This type o control leads to either docile compliance or hostility on the part of employees.

Theory 'X' type of management is very commonly used today in some private organizations (one man businesses) and government bureaucracies. The model is capable of achieving satisfactory performance in the short run but can seldom elicit sustained higher performance level in the people for a long time. It kills worker's initiatives and contributes only the minimum efforts to organizational achievement. Planning and controlling are done by top management and the action is carried out by the employees.

This style of managing men at work does not permit union activities. Unions may exist but they are confined to a small role in the affairs of the organization. Unions may put an eye on the implementation of government directions such as minimum wages but can hardly initiate issues for collective negotiations.

Modern (Human Resource) Management Philosophy

The modern human resource philosophy of management is hinged on an optimistic view of the nature of man that is seen to be potentially reasonable and capable of creative and co-operative endeavours and is trust worthy. Man is not inherently mean or predatory. His behaviour is usually influenced by his personal experiences in life. He has potential for growth, achievement and constructive action with others when given opportunity. This school believes that it is the responsibility of management to harness these potentials in man and nurture them for productive use.

Many behavioural scientists have written a lot on this form of management philosophy. Some of these include Douglas McGregor (1960), Rensis Likert (1967), Chris Argyris (1957), Frederick Herzberg (1966) and Blake and Mouton (1964). For lack of space, the philosophy as enunciated by these writers cannot be discussed here. Students and readers can read this pattern of management in Douglas McGregor 'Theory y'; Rensis Likert "Supportive management, and management by self-control or system 4"; Hezberg's "The motivation-hygiene theory" or "work and the Nature of man" and Chris Argyris' "Impact of the Formal Organization upon the individual".

For a better understanding of this philosophy of management, the following basic assumptions of "theory Y" and its optimistic view of the nature of man is considered. The theory provides that:

- The physical and mental efforts expended in work are as natural as rest or play; work can be a source of satisfaction;
- Man will exercise self-direction and self control in the service of organizational objectives to which he is committed;
- Commitment to organizational objectives is a function of the reward associated with their achievements;
- The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility;

- The capacity to exercise a high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in solving organizational problems is widely distributed in the population and not
- restricted to top management staff;
- Under the conditions of modern organizations, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized (Pugh, 1971:315-316).

The synthesis is that, managers who believe in these assumptions hold that employees possess innate capacity to take initiative on any matter when given the chance; that they would want to accept responsibility as long as it will enhance their position in the organization. Above all, employees can make reasonable contribution to the achievement of organizational objectives as long as the objectives are compatible with their own objective and goals. The school believes also that the best control is self-control. Management should share information with employees and allow them take some decisions and control over their jobs. The use of management by objectives (MBO) is highly stressed and recommended. It recommends that managers:

- should build up a team of workers that has a strong sense of responsibility for getting work done. Every worker in a department should work as a team in the achievement of organizational objectives as they relate to that department (Maybey, 1998).
- should trust his employees as they trust him. He should understand their problems both private and organizational and proffer solutions where possible.
- should ensure that all motives of the workers are satisfied as far as the organization can afford. Unlike the traditional management theory that depends only on economic motivation, the modern management philosophy believes that all motives; economic, social, egoistic etc., must activated and employed. Studies and experience have shown that employees are most highly motivated to work harder when the motivation is intrinsic. That is the person derives satisfaction from doing the work itself. Emphasis should be on the attainment of the higher needs-recognition-achievement and innovation (Perry, Wise & Martin, 1994).
- should entrust higher responsibilities to their workers to see how they would perform. In this way, the workers would exercise self-control and get more committed to the work so that they would not fail.
- should allow the flow of information in all directions. That is upwards and downwards and cross-wise. In this way, the employees will be properly informed on the happenings in the organization and they will feel as part of the organization.

- should also ensure that workers take part in decision-making as far as such decisions would affect their job performance. The principle of management by objectives (MBO) is very useful in this regard and has been used with great success in many organizations.
- should recognize legitimate union activities within the organization. This management style recognizes trade unionism and believes that for many reasons, the union plays a very vital part in representing the interests of the employees. The Union helps to make mutually satisfactory decisions on such issues as wage rates, work loads, transfers, safety and health. Consequently employee suggestions are seen as legitimate ways of managing people at work (Bratton & Gold, 1999; Legge, 1995).

Some critics have asserted that this style of managing people is ineffective and that management seems to relinquish their responsibilities to subordinates. This is not correct, because, while this approach involves many people in planning, acting/performing and controlling processes, management still bears full and final responsibility for guiding the organization and achieving results. What this school of thought calls for is that workers should be taken into confidence, allowed to participate in decision-making on issues that affect their work and given a lee way in doing their jobs.

The Preferred Approach

As indicated before, these two approaches – the traditional approach and the modern human relations approach are two opposing extreme positions in a continuum. While some managers can be positioned into these two extremes, many others can be scaled along the continuum in many positions. Studies and experiences have shown that the traditional philosophy is much more in practice in small organizations particularly privately owned organizations and government bureaucracies. Many managers operate an admixture of both philosophies. As Beach (1980:39) succinctly put it, "Many managers profess to believe in self-discipline, self-control, participation, group method of leadership, management by objectives, development of subordinates' abilities… yet, they continue to deny their people true opportunities for assuming responsibilities and for growing in the organization". They might trust their subordinates and grant them more discretion in discharging their duties, yet they continue to keep vital information to themselves and centralize decision-making processes.

Managing people at work is a much more complex issue in modern day organizations as posited by Noon & Blyton (1997). It is only hoped that as the level of education of people in work organizations continues to improve and as more educated people get into managerial positions in organizations, managers/supervisor will grant greater autonomy and discretion to their subordinates. Furthermore, as younger people get into managerial positions in organizations, they would gradually apply more of the principles of modern management philosophy, which by all

standards appears to be a better approach. The traditional approach has some elements to commend it. At least, it is useful in the army, government and other private organizations. Like leadership, situations could determine the usage of any of the philosophy under certain prevailing circumstances (Redman & Wilkinson, 2001). However, participatory or democratic style of management is better in that it is not only contemporary but, the best management approach as it promotes unity and spirit of team work among the staff. Also, it can be adopted in any work environment and circumstance.

Functions of Personnel Management

As the hob of every organization, the personnel department operates in a "coordinator relationship" with other departments as a specialist management unit with expertise functions as designing:

Job Analysis (Job Description & Specification)

Job analysis is a process of examining jobs in order to identify their main features. These include the duties they fulfill, the results they are expected to achieve, the major tasks undertaken and the job relationship with other jobs in the organization. The products of job analysis are job descriptions and job specifications. Job description is a broad statement of a particular job while job specification is a statement of physical and educational requirements of a job. The description and specification of a job is therefore an important function of the Personnel department. It is a pre-requisite to many other personnel functions such as recruitment and selection, man-power planning, training and development, rates of pay, performance appraisal, safety and health programmes among others.

Employment Activities

This function includes recruitment, selection, induction and placement. The initial decision to add a new staff to any department comes from the line manager concerned. He writes to the personnel manager, stating the type of person he wants (that is stating the job descriptions and job specifications). The personnel department on its part can also initiate the filling of a vacancy. Thus, it keeps adequate employee inventory statistics of all departments in the organization.

Wages and Salaries Administration

This function is also known as compensation administration. Through job evaluation and cost-of-living indices, wages and salaries are fixed for each particular job. However, the decision to adopt a particular pay structure with pay grades and fixed minima and maxima for each grade is the responsibility of top management and Board of Directors or the National or State Assembly in the case of the public services in Nigeria. The regular work of job analysis and evaluation is the work of personnel department.

Annual Performance Appraisal

This function is performed in close collaboration with line managers and supervisors. Towards the end of the year, the personnel department distributes the annual appraisal forms to all sectional heads for distribution to all members of staff in their sections. The forms are completed as required and returned to the personnel department. The department thereafter, processes the forms by presenting those recommended for promotion to the appropriate committee for consideration. Those qualified for annual increments are also processed and sent to the accounts department for necessary action.

Transfer, Promotion and Lay Off

The personnel department serves in these functions in a co-coordinative capacity. When management decides to transfer one staff, the personnel department carries out the action. Also when a person meets all criteria for promotion and he is so recommended, the personnel department implements the decision. However, the department can advise management after due consultation with the line manager, that a vacancy be filled by promotion. Equally, in times of rationalization of staff, it is the responsibility of personnel staff to ensure that the criteria for lay off is meticulously followed and writes to convey management decision to those concerned.

Personnel Research

This area is not popular in many organizations in Nigeria as an important function of personnel management. It is increasingly becoming important that to up-date information in many areas of human resources management is imperative. There exist areas essentially which research findings can help to improve the organization's strength. These include the labour market, cost of living indices, improving workers productivity, increasing the working and living standard of employees, motivation and attitude to work of employees, predicting success in management and organization relationships etc.

Benefit and Welfare Services Administration

These functions include pension schemes, group life insurance, medical insurance, annual leaves, sickness leaves, maternity leaves, loan schemes, credit unions, recreation facilities, transport services, canteen services, tuition refund fees, bonuses, long service awards etc. The actual decision to establish or expand these services is made by top management upon the advice of personnel officers. Some of these services require specialist knowledge, which the personnel department can consult before making its recommendations. But once these services have been installed, the day-to-day administration of the services is the responsibility of personnel department.

Organizational Planning & Development

Organizational Planning means to develop the concept of **organizational** structures and systems. The personnel officer gathers the relevant data, does the

research, prepare plans and give necessary advice to the top manager who has the overall responsibility to adopt a particular structure. He also develops the organization chart and position guides. This eventually will lead to the concept of decision-making in the organization. Organization and Development (O.D) is also a major personnel activity or function. The personnel manager is in position to interact with all departments of the organization and get acquainted with their problems. Organization and Development is a general approach for improving the effectiveness of an organization that uses a variety of knowledge, methods and techniques. It aims at increasing the level of trust, understanding, communication, inter-personal skill and mobilizes all knowledge in solving problems within the organization.

Human Resources Planning

The main elements of human resources planning are, the determination of the goals and plans of organization, current staff and skill inventory, human resource forecast, designing programmes for implementing plans, and personnel audit and adjustment. In these functional areas, the personnel department is very much involved and the information generated in these processes are used in other departments of the organization.

Training and Development

Training and development of existing employees is important in a dynamic environment as Nigeria. Workshop and seminar request from consultants are usually made to the personnel department. In such cases, the department in close association with the relevant department makes nominations and recommends to the Managing Director for approval. Where an organization has their training school, the management of such training school becomes the responsibility of the personnel department. For example, the establishment of Industrial Training Fund by the Federal government is set towards achieving the need for systematic training of employees and students.

Health and Safety Administration

In every organization, there exist some agents that can cause diseases or accidents and other health hazards. Such agents include gases, dust, fumes, cold, heat, toxic chemicals, noise, radiation, bad ventilation and stress etc. Other health areas are pre-employment medical examination, periodic medical examination of workers prone to health hazards due to their work, first aid or minor treatment for headache, administration of clinic facilities (where they exist in organizations), administration of medical bills and health allowances to workers. The safety programme is directed towards the prevention of injuries in the work place. This administrative function propels the safety officer in the personnel department to work closely with other managers in departments that are prone to accidents.

Discipline and Discharge

Discipline represents the maintenance of good and acceptable behaviour in an environment. It is also an adherence to code of conduct in the organization. Discharge means a punishment for wrong doing. Every manager or supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that the workers working under him/her obey the rules and regulations of the organization and where they deviate from the norms, they are instantly corrected. It is the responsibility of the personnel department to initiate and formulate these rules of conduct and seek management approval. It communicates such rules to all departments and sections of the organization. The personnel department also ensures that an offender is given opportunity to defend himself before he is punished or discharged, and discharge must receive approval of top management (Okoh 2005, Cole, 1999).

Union-Management Relations

The Director of personnel or his accredited representative is the liaison officer between management and the union. All labour issues must pass through him to top management. During collective bargaining sections, he is the chief spokesman for management but must be dynamic to the extent that he is not seen to be defending the management position by union representatives. He ensures that work rules and collective agreements are implemented to the letter by the employees and the management alike. All employee grievances and complaints that cannot be settled by the line managers or supervisors are referred to the personnel department for appropriate action.

Modern Human Resource Service Delivery Techniques and Purpose

The approaches being used to streamline HR delivery processes involve re-engineering and the more intensive use of technology, for example through the creation of 'service centers' for transaction processing. According to Bach & Sisson (2000), the approaches being used to improve service levels and costs include the use of service level agreements and internal charging, the outsourcing of some non-core processes, as well as the decentralization or centralization of certain HR functions.

In recent time, organizations find themselves under great pressure due to challenges in global competition and rapidly advancing technology. The human resource management function and department is expected to contribute to strategy, champion change and make sure that operational processes are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. According to Beard Well & Holden (2001), many human resource departments are trying to shift from an administrative to a strategic emphasis. Hence, the approaches being used to streamline human resource service delivery processes involves; re-engineering and more intensive use of technology through the creation of 'service center' for transaction processing.

Recruitment Techniques

Innovative strategies are currently being implemented to enhance recruitment and retention efforts. For example, some organizations have successfully used

recruitment and retention bonuses as ways to encourage talented applicants to join the organization and to keep high performing individuals from seeking other employment. Also, many organizations are combating the struggle to obtain highly qualified employees by offering sign-on bonuses. These bonuses are usually restricted to highly skilled professional and technical positions, particularly those for which there are shortages of skilled personnel. Where recruitment bonuses are paid, some organizations require the signing of service agreements to ensure that the employees remain with the organization for a specified period of time. Timely hiring is a key issue for human resource managers. In some countries where the supply of available workers continues to decline, the battle for talent will become even more intense requiring approaches so that well-qualified people can be rapidly hired. Employers are in turn increasingly applying electronic technology to find and place employees. Recruitment departments in private organizations have realized that attention should not be solely concentrated on developing the most precise selection system possible. Today's challenge is developing a valid approach that is also timely.

The organizations use a variety of methods to increase hiring speed. These approaches include:

- **Decentralized hiring** – Instead of the central human resource office performing hiring tasks, operating agencies do this work. In some instances, applicant tracking systems are maintained by the central human resource agency, but departments generate their own lists and screen candidates.
- **On-line continuous application** – To improve timely hiring and provide user-friendly hiring systems, organizations are using on-line application systems for most or all vacancies. This enables the organizations to hire quickly. The system also allows applicants to apply 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Due to costs and low utilization rates, this may not be a viable option in all countries.
- **Shorter application periods/immediate hiring** – Some organizations are shortening application periods or immediately interviewing candidates and making job offers. Where this occurs, some organizations have increased the probationary period.
- **Aggressive recruiting** – Organizations are recruiting aggressively to attract enough qualified candidates so that good hiring decisions can be made. Organizations are using the Internet to recruit and are communicating directly with organizations that are good sources of potential applicants. The use of the Internet and electronic technologies are becoming the prevalent practice.

Use of Technology

Technology is significantly impacting recruitment today. Resume databases are becoming more affordable. Databases can track, store and retrieve resumes in electronic format. The introduction of Web based resume management systems and email have made multi-location recruiting a lot more efficient. From an employer's standpoint this means that the market for employees can be expanded and, potentially, the quality of applicants can be enhanced (Bramson, 2004).

The best way to become familiar with the recruiting resources available on the Internet is to review the various services yourself, keeping in mind that you want to find one that is most advantageous for you. This may not necessarily mean one of the major commercial sites like the Monster Board. Smaller, more specialized services may be more appropriate for your needs depending on the type of position you are attempting to fill. When recruiting online you need to have the same familiarity with these services as you would with any technical or professional journal you were advertising in. Who are the users of the site? What are their characteristics? How frequently is the site accessed? How widely do they advertise? Is the profession you are recruiting for well represented?

Centralization/Decentralization of HR systems

As with the issue of centralization and decentralization in the recruitment process, the decision to centralize or decentralize is closely tied to establishing a structure that allows for a more efficient service delivery process. In taking on a more strategic role, many organizations have decentralized more routine human resource functions to line managers and now maintain more of a "consultancy" type role.

In a number of cases, delegates indicated that their HR department establishes the policies and guidelines, and officials in line departments carry out the various activities, such as recruitment. HR however still monitors and evaluates activities to ensure conformity and that standards are maintained.

Decentralization speeds up the process of decision-making. For example, vacancies can be filled more quickly when the hiring department is in control of their own recruitment needs. However, a disadvantage to the decentralization of some HR activities is the difficulty in ensuring the conformity to standards.

Human Resources Management and ICT

In the recent past, organizations have invested so much in human resources systems and web-based technologies to support growth and help transform human resource department into a more strategic role in organization. According to Perrine and Watson Wyatt (2006), because organizations have continued to web-enable their delivery of human resource service at a rapid growing rate, the introduction of interaction and internet-based technologies has led to a new wave human resource technology know as e-HR.

There are two elements behind the electronic human resources, e-HR, One is the use of electronic media while the other is the active participation of employees in the process. e-HR combines these two elements to provide technology that helps to lower administrative cost, improve employee communication, provide quicker access to information and reduce processing time. With Human Resource portals, some organizations can connect employees electronically with all other people or staff responsible for the provision of Human Resources services to wit; the HR Department, departmental managers and outsourcing providers/shared services. The essence of transforming the Human Resource department is, to reduce administrative

workload and allow organizations to devote more time and energy to strategic business issues.

Before the mid-1990s, Human Resource departments, or personnel and Administrative departments, were largely seen as "gatekeepers" whose role was to enforce policy and perform the essential administrative tasks that arise when managing a workforce. With these objectives in mind, human resource information systems were highly centralized with access typically restricted to the Human Resource department.

The advent of client server technology coincided with a change in emphasis in the goals of the Human Resource department. Hence, the Human Resource departments became more focused (as aligned by Stephen Condery, 2008) on adding strategic value within an organization and to business partners. For example, an operation/business unit manager could be granted or availed access to Human Resource information without stress if the organization is networked electronically.

However, many organizations have also viewed technological solution (at any price) as right. This is unfortunate in that, many lack sound returns on investment analysis as part of their decision-making. This is because, current economic conditions faced world wide are forcing organization to refocus attentions on the need to make a cost-conscious and financially sound business case for their e-HR initiatives.

There are basically six key issues that organizations must consider before developing a business case for technology according to Robert Lavigna (2004). Every organization must:

- Understand and leverage the link between technology and the business strategy. HR services and systems must be viewed in the context of helping achieve business objectives;
- Quantify the current cost of delivering HR. services.
- Define how the technological transformation can change the deliver of HR services. The organization must be able to establish a vision and articulate what the vision will mean in terms of people, process and technology.
- Work closely with the finance of the organization to develop required analysis. These factors may include a combination of measures such as net present value, rate of return, and payback period;
- Establish measures/targets to maintain focus and assess progress. Here, it is necessary to get results by concentrating on cost reductions, improved transaction accuracy, or improved service delivery, and measure against that focus;
- Educate key decision makers along the way of using and connecting to electronic links within the organization.

The Attitude of the Nigerian Worker to Work

Who is the Nigerian worker? Is he different from other workers in other parts of the world? To the first question, the Nigerian workers in this context are those who are employed directly by government (civil servants) and those employed by

government agencies such as parastatals (public Servants) and those employed by multinational and other private companies. In addition to this group, over 60% of Nigerians engage in their own private businesses of various types such as commerce, farming, mining, transportation and many others. To this group of privately engaged individuals, we have no serious problem as to whether their attitude to work is negative or positive. They work for almost eighteen hours a day to keep their businesses going. Our emphasis in this section will be essentially on government employees-the civil servants and other public servants in government agencies and parastatals. To the second question, experience and studies have shown that the Nigerian worker is not different from any other worker except that he works in a different environment with varying cultural backgrounds and value systems. These differences have significantly affected his attitude to work (Kettel, 1996).

Attitude to work is a critical determinant of productivity in any organization, public or private. It has to do with the feeling, habits and beliefs that affect the individual behaviour at work. These may pre-dispose a positive or negative attitude to work. Some beliefs, habits, feelings and motives are supportive of positive work ethics and behaviour and therefore are necessary for the performance of specific jobs. On the other hand, there may also be experiences and behaviour that are supportive of negative attitudes to work. The work attitude affect the way a workers relates to, conceives and views his job. It shows how committed, dedicated, hard working and performing a worker is in relation to the objectives of the organization.

The work attitude of the Nigerian government employees (Civil Servants and other Public Officers) has lately been characterized by inefficiency, poor achievement of results, shoddy handling of activities and programmes, poor rendering of services, abuse of office, lack of initiative, lack of maintenance culture, conflicts of interests, delays, corruption, high cost of projects and services, unsatisfactoriness, irregularities, poor quality of work output, poor commitment, low morale and low productivity. Others include callousness, insensitivity, non-responsiveness, poor commitment to duties, poor devotion, truancy, lateness to duty, idleness, laxity, indiscipline, sleeping on duty, rudeness to superiors, insubordination, drunkenness, use of foul language, gross negligence, disobedience, dishonesty, lying, false claims and many others. Bad or unethical behaviours and misconduct now pervade the workforce in the public sector and some private organizations (Okoh, 2005). This is however, not to say that there are no conscientious workers in Nigeria. There are but they are in the minority when compared to the bad ones.

The governments in Nigerian are aware of these problems and several attempts have been made and are still being made to check them. Some of these palliative measures include massive purges of supposedly bad eggs, in 1975, 1984 and 2000, civil service reforms 1988, 1997 and 2000 as to cutting down the size of work force, launching of the War Against indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC), the setting up of tribunals to try corrupt public officials including contractors and the most recently, the introduction of the computerized bio-data identification of workers. The federal government has now established anti-corruption and other related offences commission to deal with corrupt officials

Conclusion

Organizations are re-thinking the ways in which human resources operations can be delivered as part of a process of transforming the public personnel functions. As organizations explore various options to increase the effectiveness of human resources service delivery, it is important to ensure that an HR infrastructure exists that provides the appropriate support for the chosen option(s) and which embraces these necessary components:

- Structure: Organizing the HR function to enable effective collaboration, workflow, and customer focus.
- Processes: Determining which processes add value to the organization and redesigning them to deliver more efficiently or outsourcing them to someone who can.
- Technology: Identifying and implementing the technologies that are not only right for now, but are also adaptable to changing organization and operational needs.
- People: Assessing the resource levels and skill sets required for the function to deliver required policies, services, programs, and information.

It is through improving the operational efficiency and effectiveness of workers that HR functions can be able to concentrate on fulfilling their strategic roles.

References

Argyris, C. (1957). Personality and the Organization. New York, Harper Publishers.

Armstrong, Michael (1982). Personnel Management: A Handbook for Employers and line Managers. London: Kogan Sage Ltd.

Bach, S. and K. Sisson (2000) Personnel Management: a Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice (third edition). London, Blackwell.

Beach, Dale S. (1980). Personnel: The Management of People at Work (4th Ed.). New York, MacMillan Publishing Co. Inc.

Beardwell, I. and L. Holden (2001) Human Resource Management: a Contemporary Perspective (3rd Edition). Harrow: Pearson Education.

Blake, R. & J. S. Mouton (1964). The Managerial Grid. Houston, Gulf Publishing Company.

Blyton, P and P. Turnbull (1992), Re-Assessing Human Resource Management. London: Sage.

Bottonley, M. & H. Graham (1990). *Personnel Management*, London: Pitman Publications.

Bramson, R.(2004). Shaking up the State Workforce: An HR Shared Services Model, IPMA-HR News, February 2004.

Bratton, J and J. Gold (1999). *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.

Byars, L. Lioyd & Leslie W. Rue (2008). *Human Resource Management*. NY, McGraw-Hill/Irwin

Cole G.A. (1993). *Personnel Management: Theory and Practices* (Third ed). London, DP Publications Ltd.

Condery, Stephen (2008). Review of Public Personnel Administration. The Journal of Public Human Resource Management- condrey@cviog.uga.edu.

Edigin, Lambert & A. Otoghile (1994). Theoretical Approach to Public Administration. Benin City, Nationwide Publication Bureau.

Herzberg, F. (1966). The Motivation-Hygiene Theory: Work and the Nature of Man. New York: World Publishing Company.

Kettel, D., Ingraham, P. W., Sanders, R., & Horner, C. (1996). *Civil service reform: Building a government that works*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.

Lavigna, Robert (2004). Human Resource Service Delivery: The e-track Method. Conference Paper Presented at the Public Personnel Management, Florence, Italy. May 9-13.

Legge, K. (1995), *Human Resource Management: Rhetoric and Realities*. Basingstoke: MacMillan.

Likert, R. (1967). *The Human Organization*. New York, McGraw Hill Book Company.

Maybey, C., Salaman, G and J. Storey (1998). *Strategic Human Resource Management: A Reader*. London: Sage

McGregor, D (1969). *The Human Side of Enterprise*. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Mishra, A. K. (1996). Organizational responses to crisis: The centrality of trust. In R. M. Kramer & T. R. Tyler (Eds.) *Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and Research* (pp. 261-287). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). (1983). *Revitalizing federal Management: Managers and their overburdened systems*. Washington, DC: NAPA.

Noon, M and P. Blyton (1997), *The Realities of Work*. London: Macmillan.

Okoh Anthony (2005). *Personnel and Human Resources Management in Nigeria* (2nd ed). Lagos: Amfitop Books.

Perry, J., Wise, L. R., & Martin, M. (1994). Breaking the Civil Service Mold: The Case of Indianapolis. *Review of Public Personnel Administration 14* (2),40-54.

Pugh, D.S. (1978). *Organization Theory*. London, Pengiun Books Limited.

Redman, T. and A. Wilkinson (2001), *Contemporary Human Resource Management: Text and Cases* (ed). Harlow: Pearson Education.

Sparrow, P & M. Marchington (1998). *Human Resource Management: The New Agenda.* London: Financial Times Management.