HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: BARRIERS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Abstract: Secondary data that collected from print and online publications were employed to analyze the concept of human resources management and the university system in Nigeria. The paper also discussed the challenges facing human resources management in public universities in Nigeria. The paper concludes that; inadequate funding, ineffective capacity-building programme, poor manpower planning, poor motivation, political influence, corruption, and brain drain are the challenges facing human resources management in public universities in Nigeria. To solve the challenges, the paper advanced the following suggestions; increment in the budgetary allocation of the university system, implementation of a more robust capacity building programme, manpower planning, motivation packages, de-politicization of the university system, and deployment of human and ICT resources to combat corruption in the system.

Keywords: Human Resources, Management, University Education.

Introduction

The Nigerian university system is designed to operate with public, private and inter-university centres. The public universities are made up of state-owned universities and federal universities. Ogunode (2020) defined public universities as universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerians. Public universities are universities established by an act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public. Public universities in Nigeria were established to provide tertiary education for Nigerian citizens. The private universities in Nigeria are mostly owned by religious institutions. Private universities are institutions owned by private individuals or organizations for profit maximization. Universities globally deal with the provision of teaching, research and community services.

The objectives of University education in Nigeria are captured in the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) and shall include; the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment;

the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FGN, 2014).

The University system is structured and designed to function as a system that is made up of sub-units. The University is an organized institution saddled with the responsibility of teaching, research and community service. The University system is designed to operate a committee system and other well-established units, departments and faculties. The departments and units according to Madukoma & Opeke, (2013) include; Registry, Maintenance, Vice-Chancellor's Office, Deputy Vice- Chancellor's Office, Bursary, Student Affairs, Human Resource/Establishments, Cafeteria, Venture, Bookshop, Security departments, faculties, department and colleges.

The human resources department under establishment in most universities is a special department that handles recruitment, training, promotion, discipline, staff maintenance and transfer. Human resource management is domiciled under the establishment units of universities. Human resources management is done by the department of human resource management or division. Effective human resource management is crucial to the realization of the university's objectives. Omebe (2014) observed that human resource management in education especially in the university system is very important and toying with it would result in jeopardy. This is because education personnel (academic and non-academic) are the major instrument for achieving educational goals and consequently, national development. Human resources are the key to rapid socio-economic development and efficient service delivery.

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of the paper is to discuss barriers to human resources management in public universities in Nigeria. Specifically, the sub-objectives include;

1. To look at the concept of human resources department; and

2. To identify barriers to effective human resource management in the university system in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Data employed in this paper were derived from secondary sources which were made up of print and online publications: previous research and analysis of scholars, government documents, newspaper/magazines as well as journal articles that are related to the subject. This study involved an extensive literature review which critically analyzed the concept of human resources management and barriers to human resource management in public universities in Nigeria.

Concept of Human Resources Management

Human resources management according to Omebe (2014) can be seen as the design of formal systems in an organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of human talents to accomplish organizational goals. Griffin (1997), viewed human resource management as set of organizational activities directed at attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce. Human resource management concerns the procurement or recruitment, staffing, welfare, maintenance, training and retraining, placement, promotion, motivation relationship, compensation or rewards, transfer and

discipline of staff. According to Omebe human resource management can be put as the coordination of the activities and efforts of the workers in the educational organization so that educational goals are achieved. Hence, human resource management in education is the process of motivating workers to maximize their performance to obtain maximum output starting from the day they are recruited. Harry (2009) posited that personnel management is a form of Human Resource management. This area of management is concerned with everything about the staff and workers of the organization. It is fundamentally responsible for the hiring and staffing of employees in an organization. It also suggests the job description as well as the skills required for a particular job. Once a person is on job, the personnel management function looks after the appropriate training and development of the individual. Along with this, the personnel management decides what benefits and perks to give to a certain employee. It establishes operational policies and procedures, employment requirements, discipline procedures etc. Human resource management, according to Ikeanyibe (2009), encompasses those activities designed to provide for and coordinate the human resources of an organization. Organizational success depends largely on people. Thus, an organization must of necessity attract the right kind of human beings, and retain and maintain them in the right frame of mind to give their best efforts towards achieving the organizational activities directed to attracting, developing and maintaining an effective workforce.

Human resource management is a basic function of management that determines the performance of staff in any organization. This simply implies that when staff in the education systems are adequately recruited, selected, supervised, inducted, adequately rewarded, provided for, properly developed, appraised and promoted on the job, they will be committed to the job, remain dedicated and productive in the education systems (Omebe 2014). Cole (2002) sees Human resource management as decisions about the deployment and treatment of personnel taken by line units as well as personnel specialists. Human resources management implies an approach which recognizes that employees are only one group among several, such as customers and shareholders, who have a claim on the resources of the organization. Peretomode, & Chukwuma, (Undated) opined that manpower development has become an accepted phenomenon in organizations. In tertiary institutions, lecturers' development programmes are considered very critical. They have planned activities which focus on increasing and enlarging the capabilities, and improving the technical and conceptual skills of lecturers so that they can possess the necessary abilities to handle complex situations and better perform their job. Through renewal activities, lecturers avoid becoming rustic.

Functions of Human Resources Management in Education

According to Onah (2008), the goal of Human Resource Management is to develop the workers in the organization to contribute to goal achievement in the organization by managing improved productivity, quality and service. In addition, Human Resource management has some specific roles to play in an organization. These are strategic and operational roles. Human resources are critical for effective organizational functioning. Human resources must be viewed in the same context as the financial, technological and other resources that are managed in an organization.

Omebe (2014) observed that Human resource management in education is a set of practices and methods of integrating and maintaining the teaching staff in the school so that the school can achieve their purpose and as well as meet the goals for which they were established. It is the motivation and coordination of the activities and effort of the teachers in a school to obtain maximum output from them and consequently achieve the goals of education optimally. The functions include the following: Staff maintenance, Staff relations, Staff development, Procurement of staff and Job performance reward.

Staff Maintenance

This concern makes the work environment conducive for workers, pertinent practices include; promotion and transfer, motivation, staff safety, security and health services. It is pertinent that educational establishments have sound policies in respect of staff transfer and promotion to ensure that justice and fairness prevail in dealing with staff. As work to be performed in the school is important, the mood of the man to perform the job is equally important. For maximum and productive goal attainment, the school head must ensure the comfort and happiness of the workers. That can be done through prompt payment of salary, and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment.

Staff Relations

There must be a good communication network in the school to enable workers to be constantly informed of the progress being made in the school. Workers should be encouraged to participate in planning and decision-making in the school. Workers should be encouraged by recognizing the staff as human beings with feelings, interests, needs and emotions and treating them as such with fairness and respect.

Staff Development

This is the process of appraising staff performances and identifying their key skills and competencies that need development or training to improve their skills for better performance. It involves providing a development programme and training courses that are suitable for the programme. The success of an educational organization hinges on the strength and quality of the staff members. There is a need to change through training and to improve and grow in competence. This can be done through in-service training, conference, workshop and seminars.

Procurement of Staff

Human resource management functions start with the process of recruitment and selection by which educational institutions get the best personnel to interpret and implement the curriculum programmes. Staffing of schools is a job performed by the ministry of education through its agencies in the federal and state government. Procurement of staff in education deals with obtaining people with appropriate and necessary skills, abilities, knowledge and experience to fill the vacant teaching posts in schools.

Job Performance Rewards

This involves the design and administration of rewards for jobs performed. Management must take the issue of the reward system very seriously. Staff performance would increase substantially if they are adequately compensated according to the quality and quantity of work done (Omebe 2014).

Challenges or Barriers to Effective Human Resources Management

There are many barriers to effective human resource management in the Nigerian university system. Some of the problems include; inadequate funding, ineffective capacity-building programme, poor working condition, political influence, corruption, and brain-drain

Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding of the university system in Nigeria is a major problem in human resources management (HRM) in the various universities. The Nigerian university system is underfunded and this has affected effective human resources management in the institutions (Ogunode, Ayoko & Ezema (2022); Ogunode, Ugochukwu & Iroegbu, 2022). Human resources management is capital-intensive in every organization. HRM is taking a large sum of the institution's budgetary allocation every year. Salaries payment, allowances and training do take a lot from the university system. For instance, Vanguard (2022) observed that in 2022 Nigeria's budget, the Federal Government, allocated the sum of N355.47 billion to the 44 federal universities from the total budget of N875.93 billion given to the education sector. According to a document by a civic organisation, BudgIT, out of the N355.47 billion allocated to the federal universities, N326.9 billion would go for recurrent expenditure comprising N320.7 billion for personnel cost and N6.1 billion for overhead cost. Only N25.5 billion is slated for capital projects in the universities. Also, Adio (2022) quoted Professor Bello's submission on the 2022 budget that confirms: personnel provision alone will gulp 92% of the N22.57 billion allocated to Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), 94% of the N14 billion allocated to UNILAG, 95% of the N17 billion allocated to the University of Ibadan, and 96% of the N23.9 billion allocated to the University of Nigeria Nsukka. If experience is anything to go by, the personnel budget would be released 100% while the remaining 4% to 8% for overhead and capital would not be released in full. Poor funding of the university system in Nigeria has affected effective human resource management in the institutions. Fund budgeted for the system are inadequate for the implementation of the programme of the human resources department that will lead to effective management.

Ineffective Capacity Building Programme

One of the major responsibilities of human resource management is to ensure an effective capacity-building programme for all the staff in the university system. A capacity building programme can be defined as a special programme designed for staffers within an institution to improve their capacity. United Nations Environment Programme (2006) expressed the capacity-building program as the act of building abilities, relationships and values that will enable organizations, groups and individuals to improve their performance and achieve their developmental objectives. Ogunode & Oluseun (2020) observed that the importance of a professional development program for academic and non-academic staff cannot be overstated. Professional development program helps academic and non-academic staff to increase their knowledge and skills. Kulkarni (2013) suggested that training and development programs were key to improved employees' performance at work, updating their knowledge and improving their skills and development. Basil et al. (2013) observed that capacity building has three different dimensions, namely: building awareness, building analytical capacity and building decision-making capacity. Building awareness involves offering activities, presenting new topics or demonstrating new methods through workshops, seminars and conferences. The presentations are meant to create awareness about a particular

activity, topic or method to enable beneficiaries to apply them in their performance of assigned tasks. Building analytical capacity involves designing a capacity-building program using an interactive style of presentation. It uses exercises, case studies, field visits and other elements of experiential learning which promote critical thinking among the beneficiaries. Building decision-making capacity pertains to emphasizing learning by doing as well as formal education. In Nigeria, the federal government established Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). A government institution to handle training and retraining programmes in the universities. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) is the primary medium of sponsorship of training and development in Nigeria's Federal Universities. The TETFund has been operated in all Federal Universities in Nigeria but the issues of inadequate finance have affected its level of success (Halidu, 2015). Ogunode & Oluseun submitted that inadequate funding of Nigerian higher education institutions is a major problem facing the administration of professional development programs for employees across higher education institutions. Adequate funding is vital for the implementation of the professional development program. Without adequate funding, no professional development program can be fully implemented as planned. Inadequate funding has been a major challenge to the development of higher education institutions in Nigeria. Many programs for higher education institutions, such as the teaching program, research program and community service program have not been developed due to poor funding. The professional capacity development program for higher education institutions is not effectively implemented in many higher education institutions across the country due to the poor funding of higher education in Nigeria. The Nigerian government has failed to meet up to 15- 20% of UNESCO recommendations for education in developing countries such as Nigeria. The poor funding capacity building programme by the government institutions has made the programme ineffective in most universities because only a few academic and non-academic staff are captured yearly for training.

Government Embargo

The federal government's embargo on staff recruitment in the university system has affected the activities of human resources management in the universities. Human resource management is done by the department of human resources. The department has a manpower planning programme developed and planned for each university in Nigeria. Based on these plans, many public universities are due for massive recruitment in the year 2020 while others are for minor recruitment. Due to the embargo on recruitment in Nigeria from 2021 majorities of the universities were not approved to recruit. This recruitment embargo caused a shortage of academic and non-academic staff in most public universities. There is a shortage of manpower in Nigerian universities which is why the (National Universities Commission 2021) argued that universities should be isolated from the Federal Government's circular on the embargo on new employment owing to the shortage of lecturers. The commission noted that 100,000 academic staff members were attending to 2.1 million students in Nigerian universities. The NUC disclosed that the commission was supervising over 200 universities consisting of 48 belonging to the Federal Government; 54 states and 99 private institutions. NUC observed that ―The entire system has about 2.1 million students and staffs strength of about 170,000 non-teaching and 100,000 academic staff. ―Some of the problems facing the system include increased running costs, meagre budgetary allocations, issues of power shortages and shortages of

manpower. The federal government policy on embargo has affected effective human resources management in the universities.

Poor Working Condition

The working condition of staff in the university system in Nigeria is poor and not encouraging. Both academic and non-academic staffs in the Nigerian university system have been complaining about their working condition. Adio (2022) observed that the salaries are hardly enough to motivate the university staff to put in their best. When you combine poorly remunerated and poorly motivated staff with grossly inadequate allocation for overhead and capital, you cannot get anything different from the sorry state of our public universities today Ogunode & Adamu, (2021); Ogunode & Ndayebom (2022) and Ogunode, & Okwelogu (2022) agreed that both academic and non-academic staff in the Nigerian universities are poorly motivated. Omebe (2014) opined that it is not out of the way if staff expects to be paid financial rewards that commensurate with the services performed. The ideal thing is to have a systematic producer for establishing a sound reward system and structure. Good remuneration tends to reduce inequalities between staff earnings, raise their morale, motivate them to work for a pay increase and promotions, and reduce inter-group friction and employee grievances. Lecturers' salaries are not paid alongside other civil servants and in some cases, lecturers are owned many months of allowance and promotion areas. The situation makes it impossible for effective human resources management in the university system.

Political Influence

Political influence in the university administration has hindered effective human resources management in the areas of recruitment, training and discipline. Ogunode & Musa (2022) concluded that Political influence is manifesting in the following ways in the administration of public tertiary institutions: employment/recruitment, the appointment of school administrators (VCs, Bursar, Registrar) planning and establishment of public universities, location of universities, the appointment of council members, expansion of National Universities Commission power and admission of students. Ogunode & Musa also observed that many politicians in Nigeria are using their political influences to influence the employment of their cronies and friends in public universities. Nnenne (2011) and Pinga, Ivase, & Nomayu, (undated); Yawe, Ivagher, & Ijov, (2015) stated that government interference in school management to a large extent has influenced the management in different ways. It is observed that in areas of employment within the education sector, politics to a large extent determines who is to be taken and who is not to be employed. . Ogunode, Ajape & Jegede (2020) noted that politicians have at least a slot in any recruitment processes in the Nigerian higher institutions. Sometimes their candidates may not qualify; they influence their employment against the policies of the institutions. The activities of political officeholders and politicians in Nigerian higher institutions are a threat to the sustainability of higher education policies. The political influence in the various universities in Nigeria has prevented effective human resources management.

Corruption

Corruption in the university system in Nigeria has prevented effective human resources management in the institutions. Corruption has penetrated almost every department in the university system (Ogunode, Ohunene, & Olatunde-Aiyedun 2022; Godwin2017; Ahmodu & Sofoluwe 2018; Acho & Abuh, 2016; Asiyai 2015). Corruption has led to lecturers' absentee and ghost workers in the

institutions. For instance, PremiumTimes (2020) quoted an international organization report that stated that "Resource misallocation, corrupt procurement, exchange of sex for grades, examination malpractices, fake qualifications, teacher absenteeism, and corrupt recruitment practices" as the various corruption risks and challenges facing education systems in all the countries. Also, in 2018, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project claimed that there were allegations of corruption in several federal universities relating to the unfair allocation of grades; contract inflation; truncation of staff's salary on the payroll; employment of unqualified staffs; certificate scandal; examination malpractice; sexual harassment; and issuance of results for expelled students to graduate (Punch 2020). Dawood (2012) noted that the senior staff such as the Head Teachers, Principals, Rectors, provosts and Vice-chancellors who are in charge of their institutions' funds transfer these funds to their bank accounts for their personal use. They are also involved in placing ghost workers on salaries and over-invoicing of given contracts. Ogunode, Josiah, & Ajape (2021) concluded that one of the effects of corruption in the university administration is a shortage of academic staff. The corrupt practices in the recruitment processes in Nigerian public universities result in the employment of unqualified staff resulting in a shortage of professional teachers in the system. The problems of ghost workers in many public universities have also led to a shortage of staff in the system. Corruption in the university system has prevented effective human resource management in public universities.

Brain-drain

Brain drain in the Nigerian university system has frustrated effective human resource management in the universities in Nigeria. Ogunode (2020) defined brain drain as the movement of professionals from developing countries to developed countries for better job offers. Brain drain is a situation whereby professional individuals are migrating from their countries to another country to seek greener pastures. Many lecturers and researchers are leaving public universities in Nigeria for other parts of African countries and Europe for better job offers and conducive working environments. The in and out of academic and non-academic staff in the universities have made it impossible to effectively management of personnel in the various universities. The mass movement of academicians from Nigerian public universities is affecting the administration of the universities because academic staffs are very important for the implementation of universities' programmes. Ogunode & Atobauka (2021) submitted that the factors responsible for Brain-drain in Nigerian public universities include; poor motivation, an unconducive working environment, insecurity, underfunding and political interferences. The implication of brain drain in Nigerian public universities includes; a shortage of lecturers, poor quality of education and a high student-teacher ratio.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the barriers to human resources management in public universities in Nigeria. The paper concludes that; inadequate funding, ineffective capacity-building programme, poor manpower planning, poor motivation, political influence, corruption, and brain drain are the challenges facing human resources management in public universities in Nigeria.

To solve the challenges, the paper advanced the following suggestions;

1.   Increment in the budgetary allocation of the university system will help to reposition the establishment to effectively discharge and manage the human resources.

2.   Implementation of a more robust capacity-building programme. Adequate funding of the university system will help the division to implement capacity building programme in the university system;

3.   Effective Manpower planning will help to prevent shortages or overstaffing,

4.   There should be motivation packages for staff in the universities to prevent brain drain in the universities

5.   De-politicization of the university system will allow internal effectiveness and efficiency,

6.   The federal and state government should deploy both human and ICT resources to combat corruption in the system. This will help to prevent ghost workers in the system.

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