HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

Organizations in the Nigerian context have suffered supply shortage and this has remained an ugly reoccurring decimal in the nation’s Public Enterprises and Civil Service and one cannot therefore look askance at this trouble and wallow in the pretense that all is well with the sovereign entity wrongly called the giant of Africa. The persisting quagmire is the inability of organizations to attain the mission and purpose for which it stands for. Using secondary sources of data, the paper was poised to ascertain and demonstrate how human resource planning affects the nation’s organizational performance and thus relayed a dialectical correlation between human resource planning and organizational performance. As a way forward; human resource planning should be subjected to the rigors of HRP international best practices, civil service rules, morals, values and ethics of the profession. As its concluding remark, the paper added that, human resource planning is a key factor for optimum organizational performance, growth and sustainable development of any formal organization and the nation at large.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Human Resource Planning, Organizations, Organizational Performance, Philosophical Approach.

Introduction

Organizations are ubiquitous and none of them can perform optimally without efficient human resources hence the need for human resources planning cannot be underestimated. The principal purpose of acquiring human resources in any organization is therefore to aid in the actualization of the organizational objectives. However; in Nigeria, productivity targets vary from reality or actual performance because of range of variable such as environment;
human technology, organizational goals and so on. The task of management centres on these variables which have constituted themselves as obstacles for effective performance and actualization of organizational goals. This is because the bureaucratic setting does not and cannot exist in a vacuum. In other words, organization is an embodiment of divergent processes such as human resource planning, human resource recruitment and selection, professional development, performance appraisal/evaluation, retirement and compensation. In any ideal organization, human resource planning (HRP) is usually the first step in the human resource management processes and strategic business. Then suffice it to say that, “the focus of HRP is to ensure that the organization has got the right number of human resources, with the right capabilities, at the right times, and in the right places (Vineeth, 2019:1).” To this end, the logic is that maximum organizational performance would be guaranteed where the organization has got the right number of human resources, with the right capabilities, at the right times, and in the right places. However, the persisting quagmire is the inability of organizations to attain the vision and mission for which it stands for. Hence, the need for a philosophical approach towards unraveling the conditions for such quagmire and attendant escape route. We therefore bear in mind that, “The success of an organization depends on the competency of its leaders and the organizational culture those leaders create. The beliefs and values of an organization’s leaders will always influence its performance” (Soebbing, Wicker & Weimar 2015).

Organizations have increasingly acknowledged the fact that the company’s human resources are valuable and can be a unique source for competitive advantage, no wonder most companies have to pay dearly in terms of organizational performance for neglecting the fundamental principles of effective human resources planning. Through planning, organizational goals and objectives are determined and the resources available must be utilized as part of the strategies to achieve the organizational goals and objectives. Planning provides answers to what, who, when, how and their relationship to organizational activities. As germane as it could be; “Human resource planning is a process that identifies current and future human resources needs for an organization to achieve its goals. This planning should serve as a link between human resource management and the overall strategic plan of an organization (Leslie, 2018:1).” It is on record that, “Large numbers of employees, who retire, die, leave organizations, or become incapacitated because of physical or mental ailments, need to be replaced by the new employees. Hence this planning ensures smooth supply of workers without interruption (Benjamin & Anthony, 2014).” The point remains that, “In such manner, the organizations need wise, instructed, skillful, conferred and profoundly energetic employees to build up a way for boosting the organizational performance. Again, human resource management generally implies the undertakings of looking over employees welfare, counseling with them, instructing them, empowering them through training to shape their tenacity, accomplish their potential endeavors and to encourage the organizational destinations (Fahad, Nadeem & Samsaa, 2015).” This however cannot be achieved without human resource planning. When viewed from a philosophical viewpoint one could see that there is a relationship between human resource planning and organizational performance.

Historically, there have been two drivers to manpower planning: supply shortage and the need to improve labour utilization (Reilly, 1996:7). Organizations in the Nigerian context have suffered supply shortage and this has remained an ugly reoccurring decimal in the nation’s
public enterprises and Civil Service and one cannot therefore look askance at this and wallow in the pretense that all is well with the sovereign entity wrongly called the giant of Africa. How could she be the giant of Africa when the gamut of her human resource is not properly harnessed and positioned? And this drives us to the urgent need to improve labour utilization within our territorial space. Thus, we align with this perspective: “The most prominent problems limiting the progress and the overall development in most countries of the third world are related to incapability in fitting the human element (Subaie, 2016).” It is also noticeable within this territorial axis that, “Human resource planning is vital to any organization since it connects the business objectives of the organization to the human resources function (Lyimo, 2018:25).” Using a philosophical based approach, the paper is poised to ascertain and demonstrate how human resource planning affects the nation’s organizational performance. This paper will briefly relay conceptual analyses of varied variables in form of concepts that are manifestly sacrosanct to this work.

**Human Resource Planning (HRP): A Conceptual Definition**

To adequately capture and upload the true picture of human resource planning, we divide the terms that make up this terminology into two unequal parts and such division leaves us with: a. Human Resource and b. Planning. Simply put, human resource is the staff of organisation employed through the legal channel of recruitment and selection for the purpose of helping the organization to attain its corporate philosophy. With respect to planning; we see that, “planning entails mapping out policies to be executed and also proper means of carrying it out’ (Chioke, 2012:90). Again, one can say that planning deals creating areas of functionalities and the member of the organization’s labour force that would eventually carry it out.

Human resource planning is personnel centred activity. It duly takes into consideration the organizational needs with respect to manpower demands and adequate supply. From an earlier perspective of Vetter (1967:15), human resource planning is “the process by which management determines how the organization should move from its current manpower position to its desired position.” This notwithstanding, “Human resource planning can be viewed from micro and macro perspectives. Micro planning refers to the provision of the right number and calibre of people for the accomplishment of the organization. It involves all the dynamics of ensuring that an organization is adequately staffed for smooth operations. On the other hand, macro planning involves the labour force of a nation or state and how it can be productively used. Nations articulate human resource development policies with a view to producing skilled citizens that will man all aspects of their economy. The 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of education and the overriding emphasis on science education in Nigeria are as a result of deliberate human resource planning of the Federal Government of Nigeria to produce science based professionals needed for the economic growth of the nation. The establishment of several Universities, Polytechnics/Monotechnics, Technical Colleges and other lower level schools are meant to produce a healthy mix of educated people to handle all job levels in the Nigerian economy. The National Manpower Board established in 1963 was set up and charged with advising the Federal Government on all aspects of human resource of development and planning with a view to ensuring that the right kind and number of people are available locally to man all sectors of the nation’s economy (Eze, 2010:98-100).”
As part of our working conceptual framework, we align with this:

Human Resource Planning can be defined as a strategic process injected into the human resource management system which is geared toward the acquisition, utilization, motivation and improvement of the organization’s human resources. The activities involved in acquisition are recruitment and selection practices. Utilization itself is the actual deployment of a person to a particular task, department, field and so on. To improve the organisation’s human resources, training and/or development is at the forefront and consequently used as veritable instrument. Pay and rewards are basically for motivation and preservation of the existing employees. On the epistemological continuum, human resource planning aligns itself with a purposive, conscious, analytical, explicit, aggregate, futuristic, dynamic, qualitative and quantitative plan with respect to manpower acquisition, utilisation and training. These distinctive marks show that human resource planning is forward looking as it takes into account the future. In this lens, human resource planning is appropriately a thinking activity. Also, one could see that HRP stems from the need for skills that are in most cases in limited supply and the apparent complexity of the expertise required. Thus, human resource planning is change driven (Chioke, 2013:1).

The above roadmap duly brought to the limelight the important role of human resource planners in a formal organization. Additionally, Vetter (1967:15) as cited in Vineeth (2019:1) saw human resources planning as “the process through which management determines how the organization should move from a current manpower arrangement to a more desired arrangement.” Another definition of human resource planning proposed by Reilly (1996:3) is that it is: “a process in which an organization attempts to estimate the demand for labour and evaluate the size, nature and sources of the supply which will be required to meet that demand.” It is important that to “Recognizing the skills and understanding obligation to clearly identify workforce needs and attract and retain an effective workforce for an organization HRP is extremely fundamental. Understanding how recruitment and selection fits into the more extensive hierarchical structure, procedures, and objectives of the firm and how this capacity is identified with alternate elements of HRP is the obligation of firm’s HR planners of the association. Guaranteeing that the correct faculty is in the correct activity at the perfect time usually has been occupation of HRP (Lyimo, 2018:6).”

Human resource planning according to Walker (1992) is the process by which an organization analyses and forecasts its human resource needs in a dynamic internal and external environment and prepares itself to adapt to change. From Walker’s view, one can distill that the work of a human resource planner or manager would be to analyse and to forecast human resource needs. Commenting on human resource planning Vineeth (2019:1) opined that, “It is the process of analyzing and identifying the need for, and availability of human resources so that the organization can meet its objectives.” Human Resource Planning (HRP) involves defining an organization’s HR goals, establishing a strategy for achieving those goals, and developing a comprehensive set of plans to integrate and coordinate activities as part of the HR strategy (supra). Within this purview; we could see that, “HR planning specifies how
much personnel are needed by organizations in order to reach their strategic goals (Armstrong, 2012).

Classification of Human Resource Planning

Human Resource Planning can be complex or simple, implicit or explicit, impersonal or personal. For example, a human resource manager forecasting demand for the firm’s human resources may rely on complex econometric models or casual conversation with human resource personnel in the field (Vineeth, 2019:3). According to Cascio (1992:352), HRP itself can be either strategic (long term and general) or operational (short term and specific). HRP may be organization-wide, or it may be restricted to divisions, departments, or any common employee group. It may be carried out on a recurring basis (e.g. annually) or only sporadically (e.g., when launching a new product line or at the outset of a capital expansion project) (Cascio 1992:352).

These notwithstanding, we glean from the following types of human resource planning:

**Short-term or long-term:** Prasad, Lallan & Gulshan (2011:265 – 266) as cited in Vineeth (2019:8) maintained that, “The short-range plans take care of the immediate requirements and the supply of people and executive development schemes. Such plans are more useful for specific projects and programs. The long-range plans reveal management’s thinking for the next 3 – 5 years or even more. It may be based on the expected change in the corporate structure, business environment, personnel policies and the demand and supply of qualified people. The long-term plans aim at developing controls for future change. It also prepares executives to adjust gradually and painlessly with the changing environment in course of time and thus avoids the resistance to change.” In the task of human resource management, needs that urgent are often taken care of through short term plans, while the opposite is long term plans. Human resource planning that takes into consideration the immediate need of the organization in terms of human resources qualifies to be called short term human resource plan.

**Formal or informal:** Interestingly, Prasad, Lallan & Gulshan (2011:265 – 266) as cited in Vineeth (2019:8) are of the view that, “A formal plan is which comes into effect in the form of a plan document, management decision, statement, charts, graphs etc. An informal plan exists only in the minds of the managers. It may come out in the shape of ideas and suggestions and sometimes even in action without a formal declaration earlier. The succession plans for the top level personnel are usually not included in the formal plans.”

**Comprehensive or specific:** A comprehensive plan deals with all aspects of forecasting requirements, training and development programs, recruitment, replacement and succession plans for the organization as a whole. The specific plans may deal with a limited aspect or problem (Prasad, Lallan & Gulshan, 2011:265 – 266).

**Single choice or multiple choice:** The single choice plans permit little or no deviation from the procedures laid down, while the multiple choice plans provide for a series of decision points with alternatives. The multiple choice plans enable managers to decide about the strategy in accordance with the circumstances as is common, for instance, in the game of chess (Prasad, Lallan & Gulshan, 2011:265 – 266).
Characteristics of Human Resource Planning

There are many characteristics of human resource planning and these could be reckoned as the identifiable ingredients that may be used to pinpoint human resource planning in bureaucratic organizations. However, regarding these characteristics, we adopt the views of Durai (2012:64) as quoted in Vineeth (2019:6) as follows:

1. HRP aims at fulfilling corporate strategies and goals through effective utilization of human resources. As such, it is effectively aligned with the business strategies of the organization.
2. HRP is not a solitary act. Rather, it is a process involving a series of related activities carried out on a continuous basis.
3. HRP not only meets the short-term HR requirements of an organization, but also determines its long term strategies and future directions from the HR perspective.
4. HRP is a logical and efficient decision-making activity involving systematic analysis of data gathered in a scientific manner. Thus, it is neither a haphazard nor an ad hoc activity.
5. It emphasizes both the quantitative (number of personnel) and the qualitative (nature of personnel) dimensions of human resources at every stage.

Organizational Performance: An Overview

To better understand organizational performance, we begin by briefly explaining the word, performance. Interestingly, we note that, “…experts consider that for the definition of organizational performance we should take into account all the activities that take place in a different entity and the different interests of those involved. As an entity’s objectives are volatile, controversial and contradictory performance is a subjective phenomenon (Ion Elena & Criveanu, 2016:183). Performance has been the most important issue for profit and non-profit organization (Leslie, 2018:20). To this effect, we start by concisely and precisely looking at the term, ‘performance.’ Simply put; performance is, “the act of performing a task, an action, etc (Hornby, 2005:865).” Contrastingly, Mangkunegara (2008: 67) opined that the term performance comes from the word job performance or actual performance that is the performance or achievement to be achieved.” This definition appears to web and therefore quite difficult to digest. However, the author tried to convey what could be taken as a genealogical point of view as it was therein relayed that, performance comes from the word job performance… Philosophically, what this suggests is that when there is no job or task to be done, there is no performance. Hence, we herein align with that perspective and consequently espouse that performance is the fulfillment of an assigned job. Indeed, it should be stated that, “performance is a set of behaviors relevant to the goals of the organization or organizational unit of the workplace (Murphy, 1990: 74).”

The deducible logic and implication of the above view of Murphy (1990) is that any behavior that is not relevant to the goals of the organisation is not performance and thus not geared towards the performance of a function and would ordinarily negate performance. It should be borne in mind that there are irrelevant behaviours exhibited in the course of executing a task, but responsible for self aggrandizement in instances where there is no subordination of the individual interest to the general interest and these behaviours are responsible for project failures, inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of organisations here and there. This is where corruption comes into play in this analysis. Importantly, Bourguignon (1997) cited in Ion Elena & Criveanu (2016:181) relays the following main definitions:
• Performance is success. Performance does not exist in itself. It varies by representations of the "success" of businesses or actors.

• Performance is the result of action. This meaning contains only value. Performance measurement is understood as an assessment of achieved outcomes, in the course of a process, an activity.

• Performance is action. In this regard, performance is a process, and not a result that occurs at a particular time.

Often times, people confuse employee performance with organisational performance.

Having conveyed the above impulses in this quest; we note that the terms, 'employee performance' and 'organisational performance' are not synonymous. Sequel to this; while focusing on organisational performance, dichotomous impulses are shortly relayed to demonstrate a differentia of the two terminologies. Tomal & Jones (2015) see “organizational performance as the actual results or output of an organization as measured against that organization’s intended outputs.” Organisation performance is a general structure which refers to the operations of enterprise (Leslie, 2018:20). In the words of Cho & Dansereau (2010), organizational performance, refers to the performance of a company as compared to its goals and objectives. Pasolong (2007:176) sees organisational performance as, “the work achieved by employees or group of employees within an organization, in accordance with the authority and responsibility of each in an effort to achieve the objectives of the relevant organization legally, not violating the law and in accordance with morals and ethics (all emphasized by us).” What this means is that in performing organisational duties the following must be considered:

a. Authority and responsibility – Authority as I see it is a wheel of transformation and consolidation of our legal rights which bind the nation together in unity (Chioke, 2012:59).” Another strand of definition was given by Nwosu (2008) when he pointed out that it is, “the right to speak on behalf of the State and make binding decisions that controls the behavior of individuals and groups in the society.” The fulcrum of any task is authority and responsibility. We thus maintain that without authority and responsibility no meaning task will be achieved as people will naturally evade functions. So; when responsibilities are authoritatively assigned, performance follows suit in order to avoid sanctions. In this regard, “…authority makes transformation in an organisation possible (Chioke, 2012:59).” Suffice it to say that “The degree of authority one has shows the level of commitment or responsibility such a person has in that sector (Chioke, 2012:59).”

b. Legality – Performance of tasks must not violate existing enabling laws and the constitution of the land. Legality would help to ensure that the actions of organisations are not rendered nullity and declared ultra vires by a court of competent jurisdiction.

c. Morality and ethics – Organisational performance must be subjected to the rigors of civil service rules, morals, values and ethics of the profession. These as the superego would help check excess of the employees of the organisation.
Nevertheless, Silitonga & Widodo (2017:16733) is of the view that, “...organizational performance is a picture of the work of the organization in achieving goals that of course will be influenced by resources owned by the organization. The resources in question can be physical such as human and non-physical resources such as regulations, information, and policies, to better understand the factors that can affect an organization’s performance. The concept of organizational performance also illustrates that every public organization provides services to the public and can measure performance by using existing performance indicators to see whether the organization has done a good job and also to determine whether the established goals have been achieved or not.” On performance measurement, Stout (1993:112) noted that, “Performance measurement is the process of recording and measuring the achievement of activities in the direction of mission accomplishment through the results of products, services or processes.”

Mahsun (2006:31) proposed that the performance measurement of public organizations includes:

1. Input is everything that is needed for the execution of activities to run to produce output. Input is everything that is used to produce output and outcome.
2. Process is a measure of activity, both in terms of speed, determination, and accuracy of the implementation of the activity. This indicator contains a description of the steps undertaken in carrying out the service.
3. Output is something that is expected to be directly achieved from an activity that can be tangible or intangible.
4. Outcomes are anything that reflects the functioning of the output of activities in the medium-term that have a direct effect. Outcome indicators provide an overview of the actual or expected results of goods or services produced by an organization.
5. Benefit is something that is related to the ultimate goal of the implementation of the activity. This performance indicator describes the benefits derived from the outcome indicator.
6. Impact is the effect of either positive or negative. The impact indicator provides an overview of the direct or indirect effects resulting from the achievement of the program objectives.

Now, we proceed to conduct a dialectical nexus of the ideas under review.

**Human Resource Planning and Organizational Performance: A Dialectical Correlation**

To start with, dialectic has a philosophical inclination, undertone and thus, an integral part of philosophy. It is a method of observing or discovering the truth associated with a concept/idea under analysis via discussion, logical argument and consideration of ideas that are opposed (asymmetrical) to each other. Simply stated, dialectic is an approach deployed for the goal of examination and discussion of ideas in order to figure out the truth. Using this approach, two dissenting ideas are comparatively examined in a bid to finding a solution that encompasses the two ideas under comparison.

Based on the foregoing explication, it therefore becomes vital to write that human resource planning is an opposing ideology distinct from organisational performance. To refresh our memory on the distinction thereof, definitions of these concepts are quickly conjured. Human resource planning according to Graham (1980:21) is “an attempt to forecast the number and
the kind of employees that an organisation may require in future and the extent this need will be met.” But then again, organisational performance is the real output of a formal organisation when compared to the organisation’s set objectives and/or priorities.

Simply asserted, the establishment of the link between human resource planning and organisational performance is quite straightforward. With ease; one can maintain that in regard to Nigerian private and public organisations, the human resource planning process that has been fraught with unexpected bottlenecks and irregularities has been and is yet largely the causative agent known to have occasioned ineffectiveness of the nation’s bureaucracies and disappearance of sustainability of national values, democracy, good governance, growth, development and related indices. At this juncture, while bearing in mind the logic of this subheading, we shortly examine the visible correlation between the two ideas namely – human resource planning and organisational performance by revealing and explicating allied issues with respect to the dialectical correlation of the ideas aforesaid. They are:

a. **Lack of skilful manpower** – Human resource technical knowhow is a vital ingredient that would ensure organisational performance in the right direction. We are to note that, “Human resource planning can only be as good as the ability of the company to predict what will happen OUTSIDE the company, economic trends, upturns, downturns, what competitors are doing and raft of other things the company has no control over. Often HR staffs don’t have the skills and background to predict these events with any success (Roberts, n.d).” It is awful and regrettable that a lot of companies, public enterprises and even government agencies do not have HR staff with requisite technical knowhow. This is attributable to the problem of brain drain which has been spotted as a reoccurring cancer with obdurate footprints within the organisation and outside. With this hindrance, organisational performance will be poor when compared to the intended result(s) that the organisation is to attain through its human resource in the planning unit. The logic is therefore the more organisations parade unskilled/half-baked HR staff in charge of its planning role, the less the chances of the organisation performing optimally.

b. **Inability to forecast** – The part of the jobs entrenched in the human resource planning process is forecasting the skills and staffs needed in future in their right proportions. In this regard, a good human resource planner must be able to accurately forecast the amount of employees and requisite prowess which are profoundly the sine qua non for their (human resource) selection in future. However, this is quite the central problematic of the human resource planning endeavour. But what is the cause of this challenge? Roberts (n.d) aptly captured it when he reasoned that, “The pace of change is so quick in the work place that it’s hard to predict what skills and therefore, what employees, will be needed in even the near future.” The point is that if one does not know the skills needed in the near future, forecasting the kind of employees needed for future tasks becomes cumbersome and seemingly unachievable. Thereby constituting a major problem to effective organizational performance in an organisation fraught with such challenge.
c. **Inaccurate Data Analysis** – Inaccuracy associated with data analysis is yet another prominent web of complication that mars organisational performance in the course of human resource planning. To portray the matter, we harvest as follows:

As previously mentioned...the process of HR planning depends, basically, on preparing analyses of different issues (such as scenario planning, demand/supply forecasting, labor turnover analysis, work environment analysis, and operational effectiveness analysis). Inserting the wrong data into the analytical process of any of the issues causes inaccurate data analysis and wrong estimations and decisions. The most obvious examples of the consequences of “Inaccurate data analysis” concern unsound selection of HR programs, poor design of such programs, and misunderstanding of their objectives (Saad, 2013:343).

By implication the just stated consequences directly affects organisational performance. For instance, poor design of such programs will certainly distort and derail and plunge the organisation into an abysmal performance.

d. **Poor Evaluation System** – In Nigerian public service, evaluation has been poor considered in the course of human resource planning paving the way for unprofessional practice. “In HR planning process, it appears that organizations conduct HR program evaluation as a final step. The feedback out of such evaluation steps is designed to determine whether changes need to be made within the planning process (Saad, 2013: 344).” We therefore argue that evaluation should not just be seen as a final step. Rather, in the human resource planning process, there is the cogent need to appraise whatever measures/indices that have been inculcated or ensured in order to validate them. Through validation, employee performance evaluation will duly serve its need. Saad (2013: 344) further argued that, “Many tourism organizations face challenges when setting their program evaluation system. Such challenges, if not well treated, may result in unreliable or inaccurate feedback, which will lead to negative consequences on the HR planning process.” And once these (unreliable or inaccurate feedback) are orchestrated, poor organisational performance becomes the end product. This no doubt is the ugly nexus between the two ideas under consideration.

**Conclusion**

The truth left unequivocally espoused is that all is not well with Nigeria with respect to recent happenings in human resource (HR) and therefore it calls for a rethink and proper rejigging of the bureaucratic domain and the entirety of Nigeria’s public life and space. As a way forward; human resource planning should be subjected to the rigors of HR international best practices, civil service rules, morals, values and ethics of the profession. Based on the points raised, it is herein believed that the preceding suggestion is a roadmap to making human resource planning effective for organisational performance. Therefore, human resource planning is a key factor for optimum organisational performance, growth and sustainable development of any formal organization and the nation at large.
References


