

'IGWEBUIKE' PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper discussed the relationship between 'Igwebuike' philosophy and human resource management. This philosophy emphasizes togetherness, collegiality and collaboration. HRM is concerned with administrators overseeing people within a particular organization using the rules and policies. Six parts of HRM processes were discussed - human resource planning, recruitment, selection, professional development, performance appraisal and compensation. In arriving at a connection between these two concepts, the work disclosed that they both deal with people and their affairs; working together and depending on others for achievements were identified as related. The links in the process of HRM were also acknowledged to be common to the two thoughts, which are important factors toward individual and general development. It was then recommended that HRM departments and administrators can use 'Igwebuike' philosophy to form policies for organizational goals. Phenomenological method of research was used for the purpose of this study.

Keywords: *Igwebuike* philosophy, Human Resource Management, Recruitment, Selection, Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony, Professional Development, Performance Appraisal, Compensation and Policies.

Introduction

This paper has its aim in discussing the link between *Igwebuike* philosophy and human resource management. Human resource management and personnel management are two terms that have always been used interchangeably until human resource management became more popular. Armstrong (2006) gives a clue to the transformation of the term, personnel management, to human resource management. Personnel management began around the end of the 19th century, when welfare officers (sometimes called 'welfare secretaries') came into being. They were women who were concerned only with the protection of women and girls. The creation of this welfare secretaries was a reaction to the harshness of industrial conditions, coupled with pressures arising from the extension of the franchise, the influence of trade unions and the labour movement, and the campaigning of enlightened employers, often Quakers, for what was called 'industrial betterment.' When men became part of this process,

personnel management, as a term, began to fade, and human resource management came to play.

Supporting this assertion, Lundy (2008) opines that the First World War accelerated change in the development of personnel management, with women being recruited in large numbers to fill the gaps left by men going to fight, which in turn meant reaching agreement with trade unions (often after bitter disputes) about 'dilution'- accepting unskilled women into craftsmen's jobs. During the 1920s, jobs with the titles of 'labour manager' or 'employment manager' came into being in the engineering industry and other industries where there were large factories, to handle absence, recruitment, dismissal and queries over bonuses, and so on. Employers' federations, particularly in engineering and shipbuilding, negotiated national pay rates with the unions, but there were local and district variations and there was plenty of scope for disputes.

According to Mello (2001), during the 1930s, with the economy beginning to pick up, big corporations in these newer sectors saw value in improving employee benefits as a way of recruiting, retaining and motivating employees. The Second World War brought about welfare and personnel work on a full-time basis at all establishments producing war materials, because an expanded Ministry of Labour and National Service insisted on it. The government saw specialist personnel management as part of the drive for greater efficiency and the number of people in the personnel function grew substantially; there were around 5,300 in 1943. This development, as in the view of Armstrong, brought human resource management into popularity because the term left the level of being use for women and girls to include management of people (men inclusive) and their affairs.

In the opinion of Cole (2002), while stating why HRM is preferred to personnel management states that, "use of HRM language also helps to bypass 'politically incorrect' terms used in the past, such as manpower planning" p8. Although Cole's distinction between the two terms has been shared by numerous authors, like Lunnernburg and Ornstern (2008), some scholars, like Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), are still of the opinion that personnel management and human resource management can be used to mean the same thing. Kamoche (2001) gives a simple closure to this discussion. To him, whether human resource management is called "personnel management, personnel administration or strategic human resource management is immaterial" (p.1). By implication, the four terms are the

same, since they are all about managing people and their affairs to achieve the objectives of organization; even Drucker (1986) calls HRM personnel administration and human relations.

Human resource management is a deliberate style of managing people or workforces in an organization for the accomplishment of company's goals. In an attempt to develop an adequate definition for human resource management, scholars came up with series of descriptions. To understand the exact meaning of the term 'human resource management' and its scope, the following definitions formulated by eminent scholars on management science, as put together by Miller and Miller (1973) will be very useful. They are as follows: human resource management is concerned with obtaining and maintaining a satisfactory and a satisfied work force. Human resource management is an extension of general management that promotes and stimulates every employee to make fullest contribution to the purpose of the business. Human resource management is that aspect of management having as its goal the effective utilization of the labour resources of an organization.

Manpower management is the function of activity aiding and directing working men and women in maximizing their contributions and satisfaction in employment. It helps workers, including all those who work, from unskilled common labourer to corporation president to public administrator, combine their efforts with those of others in providing the services and products we all want. The personnel function is concerned with procurement, development, compensation, integration and maintenance of the workers in an organization for the purpose of contributing towards the accomplishment of that organization's major goals or objectives. Therefore, the researcher feels that personnel management is the planning, organizing, directing and controlling of the performance of those operative functions.

According to Brech (2010), human resource management is that part which is primarily concerned with human resource of organization. It includes the function of employment, development and compensation. These functions are performed primarily by the human resource manager in consultation with other departments. Human resource management is an extension to general management. It is concerned with promoting and stimulating competent work force to make their fullest contribution to the concern. Personnel management exists to advice and assists the line managers in personnel matters.

Therefore, HRM department is a staff department of an organization. Personnel management lays emphasis on action, rather than making lengthy schedules, plans and work methods. The problems and grievances of people at work can be solved more effectively through rationale personnel policies. It is based on human orientation. It also motivates the employees through its effective incentive plans so that the employees provide fullest co-operation. HRM deals with human resources and all that has to do with them. In context to human resources, it manages both the individual as well as the organization.

Willie (2010) gives a picture of human resource management as the management of employees' knowledge, aptitudes, abilities, talents, creative abilities and skills/competencies. It is a continuous, on-going development function aimed at improving human processes. Human resource management follows the systems thinking approach. It is not considered in isolation from the larger organization and takes into account the linkages and interfaces. It is considered a strategic management function.

Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) define human resource management as "the careful selection of and placement of new employees and the development and effective utilization of existing ones with a view to attain the potential of individual employees and organizational goals and objectives" (p.152). In the definition of Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (2002), human resource management is a process "that tries to keep the organization supplied with the right people in the right positions, when they are needed" (p.376). To Akindutire (2004), however, personnel administration "is the process of getting qualified personnel to provide instructional services for the goal achievement of the school system" (p26).

The common factors in these definitions are the fact that the above authors focus on obtaining, using and maintaining a satisfied workforce. It is a significant part of management concerned with employees at work and with their relationship within the organization. Human resource management is the planning, organizing, compensation, integration and maintenance of people for the purpose of contributing to organizational, individual and societal goals. Simply put, it is about managing people, about working together for organizational targets, development of people and the company, and finally, HRM processes are connected, which means they are not separated as visibly shown in the model.

In describing the roles the Human Resource Management Department performs for an organization, Arum and Roksa (2010) agree with the following: conducting job analyses, planning personnel needs and recruitment, selecting the right people for the job, orienting and training, determining and managing wages and salaries, providing benefits and incentives, appraising performance, resolving disputes and communicating with all employees at all levels. These are what it takes to be a human resource manager. In line with this, Kamoche (2001) says that human resource management “is concerned with the management of people, the employer-employee relationship or labour regulation” (p.1). And Akindutire feels that the functional aspects of personnel administration are: placement of personnel, training and development and service activities related to welfare of personnel. The functions presented by Kamoche and Akindutire have recently been broken into ten responsibilities by Meich (2019) as planning for the future, recruiting top talent, succession (career) planning, evaluating job functions, incentives and rewards, employee engagement and internal marketing, employee wellness, general administration, employee off-boarding, safety and health standards. All these descriptions of the HRM department can be compressed to be getting proper staff to meet objectives, organize, motivate and communicate appropriately, evaluate and develop workforce, , all of which, to the researcher, will reflect in the HRM process.

Human Resource Management Process

Human resource management is a planning unit in any organization that has a manager and other staff that carry out the process of making the affairs of all personnel in the organization realizable. Therefore, Stoner et al have analyzed human resource process to be in seven parts as follows: human resource planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, socialization, performance appraisal and promotions/transfers/demotions and separations. In the same vein, Lunnernburg and Ornstern (2008) break the process into six parts in this way: human resource planning, recruitment, selection, professional development, performance appraisal and compensation. For the purpose of this work, however, Lunnernburg and Ornstern’s pattern will be adopted, taking for granted that socialization that is added to the first one is embedded in professional development or training and development of the processes, while, promotions/transfers/demotions and separations are entrenched in performance appraisal and compensation, because compensation is about reward, and if no reward, there will be demotions or lay-off. Below is human resource management model.

Human Resource Management Process Model

The human resource model is a reflection of what the human resource department does in the organization to make the affairs of personnel achievable. The model reflects connections or networks between all the phases, step by step. It must begin with **Human Resource Planning**- this is logical planning and forecasting to see that there are no dearth of personnel in an organization. It will pay attention to job analysis that is divided into two parts - job specification which is the outlining of the required qualifications of any interested person to take up a job. Job description, therefore, is the stating clearly of the job title, the superior of the staff to be employed, statement of job goals and duties /responsibilities. This exercise gives the organization reasons to be proactive and exist without fear that there can be disappointment in relation to manpower shortage.

Recruitment: This is referred to as “the process of generating a pool of competent applicants needed to fill the available positions in an organization” (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2008p.492). The HRM department has the responsibility of attracting, shortlisting, selecting and appointing candidates for permanent or temporary jobs in an organization. It can be done through internal or external sourcing, since there can be some qualified staff among the existing ones to fill in the gaps. If there are, it is a matter of deploying them to the given positions for new ones to occupy their places. It is a good way of motivation and a reliable method of improving the organization. Therefore, HRM department will get personnel to replace them. This stage is always preceded by an interactive session with the team approved by the organization to do it. This must be done by Human Resource Management department before selection.

Selection: This is a way of picking the best candidates out of the recruited ones. Mahek (2019) proposes the following as steps in the selection process in any organization - preliminary interview, screening of applicants, employment tests, selection interview, checking of references, medical examination, and final selection/hiring. This process, in the mind of the researcher, is combining the entire HRM process, not taking a step at a time. The first four processes should be left for the recruitment stage, while the selection phase should be concerned with checking reference, medical examination and final selection and hiring. Although Mahek insists that “the selection process varies from industry to industry, company to company and even amongst departments of the same

company” (p.2). After recruitment and selection, the next step is professional development.

Professional Development: This is a way of teaching administrators and professionals the skills needed for both present and future positions. It has dual benefits: confidence to perform better on a given assignment and ability to improve the standard of the organization, now and in the future. Nevertheless, Trammel (2019) suggests ten ways of professional developments for those who long to be few steps ahead of others as follows; hone a learning mindset, examine your decisions, read regularly, write regularly, attend training programs, teach what you know, build self-awareness, gather feedback, find mentors and cultivate peer relationships.

These proposals have merits because they include assessment, training and evaluation which have been the regular ways of developing workers in organizations. And to this, Drucker (1986) warns that apart from the fact that individuals should make regular efforts to develop their careers, the work environment must maintain this fact when he stresses that “the work therefore must encourage the growth of the individual and must direct it-otherwise it fails to take full advantage of the specific properties of the human resources” (p.266). There should be regular assessment of workers in HRM to see if they are responding to the needs of the organization. This can only be achieved through consistent performance appraisal.

Performance Appraisal: Performance appraisal is a method that HRM adopts to assess employee response and contributions to an organization. It is done for the following reasons: 1. to check the effectiveness of personnel selection procedure. 2. The outcome of it is used by administrators to make decisions for compensation, promotions, transfer, demotions and lay-off. 3. Also, it reveals areas in an organization where improvements and developments are needed. This exercise is often called annual review, performance review or employee appraisal, since it also focuses on how an organization is progressing through the workforce.

Compensation: Compensation is a vital part in HRM process. Employees develop serious anxiety if they are not adequately compensated. Apart from this, they talk ill about their organization and administrators. They can become less effective and committed, which will have adverse effect on the organization in question. Compensation includes fringe benefits or bonuses, profit sharing,

overtime pay, even promotions, responsibilities and recognition rewards are parts of compensation. These processes in HRM are to be followed step by step and properly planned. As it reflects in the model, the processes are connected with each other and none is less important as in the spirit of *Igwebuike* philosophy.

***Igwebuike* Philosophy**

According to Alalama (2018), while citing Kanu, "*Igwebuike* philosophy is based on the Igbo-African worldview of complementarity, that is, the manner of being in African Ontology. It is a worldview in which individuating differences must work towards a corporate existence where the "I" does not stand as the "I" but as a 'We', where life and living makes meaning. In a scenario of this kind, difference does not divide neither does it constitute a threat, but rather unites and gives hope that future existence would have meaning" (p.20).

Kanu (2017) had earlier explained this philosophy in this assertion. It (*Igwebuike* philosophy) "is anchored on the African worldview, which is characterized by a common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, shared race, colour and habits, common historical experience and a common destiny. Life is a life of sharedness" (p.17).

Igwebuike philosophy has its worth in paying attention to people and, by extension, the environment in which people live or work. It also emphasizes togetherness and sharing which can easily prompt the development of the individual and the entire group. Above all, it highlights being connected with a given group that can simply foster support and encouragements for improvement.

***Igwebuike* Philosophy and Human Resource Management**

The link between *Igwebuike* philosophy and human resource management is paramount to this work. The following important characteristics, which also explain the nature of human resource management, can be deduced from the various definitions and explanations given above. It concerns employees: it is primarily concerned with the efficient utilization and conservation of these human resources; it considers employees as individuals and also as members of a group; it is concerned with personnel policies in formulating policies with regard to recruitment, selection, training, promotion, transfer, job evaluation,

merit rating and working conditions. *Igwebuike* philosophy is also concerned with people being together for growth and development, and connected with other members in a group.

As human resource management is the strategic approach to the effective management of people in a company or organization such that they help their business gain improvement, so also is *Igwebuike* philosophy giving attention to people, and it emphasizes togetherness and sharing, with much importance on what you have in common. As Kanu explained, it is “characterized by a common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, shared race, colour and habits, common historical experience and a common destiny. Life is a life of sharedness” (p.17). Also, it has a connection or link with the HRM process as in the model where all the processes stand as one and none could be omitted at any point, if truly the HRM department must function as it should be, which is closely associated with the thought of Alalama “‘I’ does not stand as the “‘I’ but as a ‘We’” (p.20), in defining *igwebuike* philosophy.

Another common factor is development. Since development of staff is a must in HRM and indeed the system must be able to naturally develop personnel, so also will the association with a group in *Igwebuike* philosophy certainly develop every member of the group.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, the following recommendations are offered. That since human resource management is about people and their welfare, human resource managers are, therefore, encouraged to make the office to be more people-oriented and to be more preoccupied with their dealings as in the *Igwebuike* philosophy which stresses ‘we’ not ‘I’.

On the part of workers, however, there should be cooperation with the administrator or HRM manager to achieve all the laid-down rules. Attention should not be given to individual interest but to the group for the benefit of all. It is important to keep in mind that HRM processes are connected, so also is *Igwebuike* philosophy about life of sharing, as Kanu states “Life is a life of sharedness” (p.17).

Working together harmoniously must equally be underlined. Where ever you find people, there must be understanding for development. Therefore, managers are encouraged to lead their members in a manner that will enhance their

growth, as in the mind of Maxwell while citing Firestone that "It is only as we develop others that we permanently succeed" (p.112).

Conclusion

This work has been able to show the link between HRM and *Igwebuike* philosophy. Human resource management is an integral but distinctive part of management, concerned with people at work and their relationship within the enterprise, seeking to bring together inter-effective organization men and women who staff the enterprise, enabling each to make his/her own best contribution to its success, both as an individual and as a member of a working group. It seeks to provide relationships within the firm that are conducive both to effective work and human satisfaction. *Igwebuike* philosophy is about paying attention to one another and not being individualistic in a group. It advocates the idea that all members should always seek the growth and progress of the group, for the group. Like the saying goes, if you want to walk fast, walk alone and if you want to walk far, walk together. Walking together is always the focus of any organization. This brings about back-up and assistance for success, which is the view point of *Igwebuike* philosophy that HRM can also adopt.

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