MAKING JOB MORE INTELLECTUALLY INVOLVING: A CHALLENGE BEFORE MODERN MANAGEMENT

Omoregbe John Agbonhia

Abstract

Management in organizations has gradually assumed a level of paramount relevance as globalization has rendered attainment of set goals a matter of efficiency. This challenges management to assist in the accomplishment of high performance by designing jobs to arouse genuine interest, curiosity and commitment of staff. Many organizations have failed due to insensitivity or late realization of the importance of the relationship between job analysis and job description. With globalization empowering employees with latest developments and technology, management is now compelled to embrace only job designs that keep tasks attractive towards making staff more intellectually involved. This paper therefore examines job and modalities of job designs capable of arousing staff interests in assigned tasks.

Introduction

Every business organization operation centers on the management of financial, material and human resources to actualize set goals and objectives. The foremost of these is the human resources because all the other factors would be unproductive without the human effort to direct and transform them hence the observation that human resources are those who will manage other human resources, who will in turn, man the machines and program the computers (or latest technology) (Akinmayowa, -1999). Many organizations have failed due to insensitivity or late realization of the importance of the human factor in organization yet, globalization has exposed management to the challenges of ever-expanding industries alongside empowering workers with latest information in all spheres of development across the industries. This compels management to embrace only job designs that keep tasks attractive towards making staff more intellectually involved. High caliber manpower recruitment, application of modern technology, regular training, effective rewards programme and job analysis which are necessary to generate efficient work scheduling system such as job enrichment, job. rotation, flextime, home work and work sharing are essential activities of modern management to make the job more intellectually involving.

It follows therefore that training and development are essential ingredients towards making jobs exciting as they readily enhance dexterity on the job. One of the frontline organizations which have benefited from effective recognition of people at work, is Motorola, Inc., which led to a situation where the annual training and development budget exceeds $44 million, or 2.4% of the company's payroll in Motorola, Inc (Walter, 1990). In furtherance, Motorola underwrites employee education through universities for postgraduate degree programmes leading to MBAs and master's degrees in engineering and electronics fields (Holt, 1993).

The Nigerian government has also realized that improper human capital development is militating against the effective discharge of the principal responsibility of guaranteed security of lives and properties hence the Nigerian military and paramilitary institutions in 2007 charged officers to acquire more educational qualification or face promotion stagnation and early dismissal from service. This has drastically increased the number of officers currently in institutions of learning across the country.

In India, towards turning the fortunes of A. V. Birla Group around, it recognizes that while implementing strategies, companies often rely on personnel systems. Therefore, A. V. Birla Group took a comprehensive diagnostic exercise called *The Organization Health Study* through structured questionnaire administered to a cross section of managers and, this led to the involvement of top managers in Human Resource initiatives, setting up of self development centers, secondment abroad of high-potential employees, and developing managers for leadership roles in order to create a distinct group identity (Kazmi, 2002). He added that when Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) faced new challenges of oil sector deregulation it realized the need to reformulate their human resource system, which was accomplished by creating transparency in appraisal systems, reduced transfers to encourage specialization, and development of effective communication system. In this manner, it may be noted that competitive.success or failure could also depend on the manner in which personnel systems are designed (Kazmi, 2002). He concluded that Lakhanpal National Ltd, a maker of dry cells, emerged as a formidable competitor in a highly competitive market ... by adopting the Japanese principles in designing and operating its personnel system. This perception was corroborated by Richard and Anthony (3981) when

they wrote under the heading *The Japanese Mirror* that "man is limited not so much by his tools as by his vision". He added, while buttressing the emergence of Japanese among the top markets in the world, that "Our ability to compete rests on our ability to organize human beings in such a way as to generate opportunity and results, rather than impasses, stagnation, bureaucracy, and wasteful friction". In the *Matsushita Example (Japan)* as stated by Richard and Anthony (1981), the company came among the top fifty in the world through steady investment on human resource development by consistently investing 4% of sales on Research and Development, which amounted to $400 million by 1980. They added that similar strategy was adopted by Harold S. Geneen management of International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) in America, concluding that what makes both Matsushita and Geneen's ITT tick is that all the managerial pieces fit together … leading to extraordinary results. These form the responsibility of the modern manager towards making jobs more intellectually involving.

Elements Of Job

A job is a collection of tasks assigned to a position in an organization structure (Cole, 2002). Position in this sense refers to one or more duties performed by one person in an organization while a duty is a number of tasks and the task means any distinct work activities carried out for a distinct purpose like preparing a presentable paper. There are many positions in an organization as there are workers such that a job is a type of position within the organization (DeCenzo, 1988). Job therefore, is a constant or a fixed entity in any organization irrespective of the person on the job.

Commitment of staff is based on motivation, which is determined by the ability of staff resulting from (raining and development. This cannot be fully assessed without recourse to the management function of job design. Therefore, the pivotal role of management in staff commitment to the job cannot be over emphasized.

Job Analysis

This is the bedrock of purposeful human resource management and the foundation of job design. Job analysis develops the detailed compilation of tasks, relationship of job to technology and other jobs and examines the knowledge, qualification or employment standards and accountability the job entails hence job analysis can be defined as a systematic analysis of job within an organization (Griffin, 2003). This was further illustrated as the process of collecting, analyzing and setting out information about the content of jobs in order to provide the basis for a job description and data for recruitment, training, job evaluation and performance management (Armstrong, 2005). Therefore, job analysis enables vital information relating to the job in terms of the overall purpose, content, key result areas, responsibility, organizational factors, motivational factors, developmental factors and, environmental factors hence, effective job analysis gives rise to job description and job specification.

Job Description can be defined as a written statement of the roles of the jobholder, with how and why they are performed. It also contains job content, environment and conditions of employment, which are normally expressed under job titles, duties and characteristics including the authority and responsibilities of the jobholder. An effective job description is necessary to make jobs more intellectually involving because it stipulates and guides on what to be done with an inherent measure of effectiveness.

Job Specification is a follow-up to job description. It states the basic requirements or qualification needed for a jobholder to perform successfully, which includes the knowledge, skills and abilities. With effective job specification, staff selection must be devoid of sentiments towards ensuring that the right people are recruited that would readily find their tasks intellectually involving and, this needs to be backed with encouraging compensation after due evaluation.

Job Evaluation is the process of comparison of performance on the job. Job evaluation is very important towards making jobs more involving because it generates information on the extent of accomplishment of the set goals and set the basis for commendation and compensation. Job evaluation is more meaningful if organizations adopt equitable and equivalent compensation program for jobs demanding equivalent skills, education and other personal attributes. This challenges staff to be committed, based on assurance that contributions to the achievements of the organization are recognized. Therefore, job analysis is a fundamental activity in the development of a practicable job design.

Fig. 1: Relationship between Job Analysis, Job Description, Job Specification and Job Evaluation
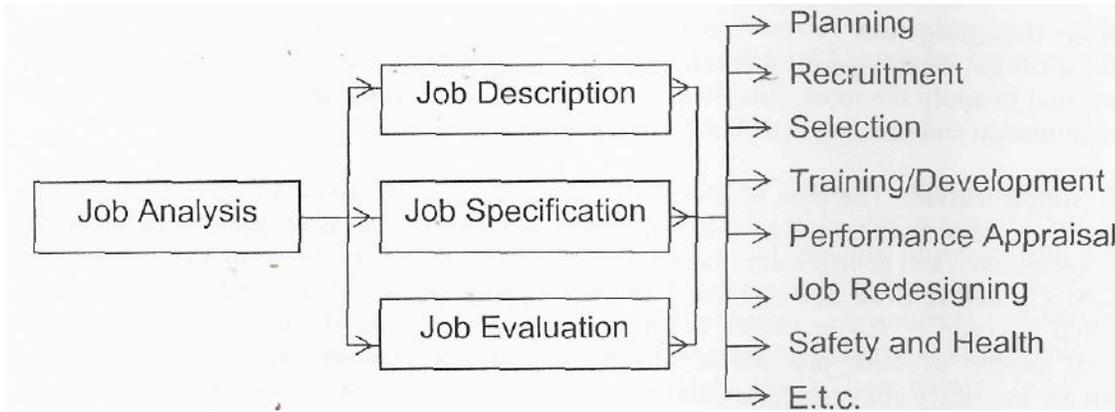
Source: *Adapted from DeCenzo and Robbins (1988)*

Job Design

Job design seeks to satisfy the needs of the organization and the individuals. Job design means the specialization of the content, methods and relationship of jobs in order to satisfy technological and organizational requirement as well as the social and personal requirement of the jobholder (Armstrong, 2003). Though, not explicitly stated that mode of job design determines job involvement or performance, it emphasizes the interests of the worker needed to be satisfied which when guaranteed would generate greater commitment of staff in their tasks. Therefore, job design is essential to make the job attractive and prevent workers from seeking social satisfaction off the job. Workers would generally find interesting a job design that allows greater freedom and challenge due to the inherent intrinsic reward, which is capable of gingering more intellectual involvement on the job. This thinking accounts for the increasing use of job designs that allows for specialization where activities are segregated into smaller parts to allow a worker perform routine activities through the day.

Principles of Job Design

Principles of job designs constitute all activities which seek to identify the characteristics of jobs that affect productivity, motivation and satisfaction hence they are sometimes referred to as job characteristics. The five dimensional characteristics of jobs, which lead to the functional principles influencing various aspects of job design are:

1. **Skill Variety** - This focuses on the extent a particular job can be performed in various ways thereby enabling workers to perform several tasks and combine tasks with a number of different skills and talents.

2. **1 ask identity** - This centers on the degree to which a job require completion of a whole and identifiable work entity.

3. **Task Significance** - This expresses the substantial impact of a job on the lives and work of others.

4. **Autonomy** — This explains the extent of individual freedom, independence and discretion in job scheduling and execution.

5. **Feedback-** This implies the degree of signals and direct information in the course of the job for self-examination and, evaluation of performance (Hackman & Oldman, 1975).

Techniques for Designing Jobs

After a careful establishment of basic characteristics for the efficient execution of a job, it becomes essential to apply the most suitable job design technique capable of challenging jobholders to greater commitment and involvement. The basic techniques for designing jobs are:

1. **Job Simplification:** The core of job simplification is the fragmentation of jobs to smaller sub-units which are analyzed and assigned to a designated staff such that less time and less skill are required to execute each and at efficiency wage which is one that minimizes the firm's labour cost per unit output (McConnell & Bruc, 2002). Though (his may lead to workers becoming bored, alienated and dissatisfied, division of labour, which is the resultant effect of job simplification, remains the most efficient means of bulk production. However, adequate supervision and commensurate remuneration are necessary complementary activities when challenging greater commitment based on skills variety principle. It must be noted that market wage is not efficient wage where cost of supervising workers is high or where workers turnover is high such that efficiency wage is higher than market wage but leads to low wage cost per unit output (McConnell & Brue, 2002).

2. **Job Enlargement;** Following the understanding of the personal qualities of some workers that they detest job simplification, job content can be enlarged whereby similar tasks in the earlier fragmented tasks can be combined. This enlarges the scope of jobs without necessarily enhancing responsibility. While job enlargement seeks to eliminate boredom that could be associated with job simplification, an effective job specification is essential to decide between jobs simplification and job enlargement with a view to achieving greater commitment of staff to the job in the spheres of task identity principle. According to Strauss and Say less (1988) this concept can also be described as horizontal job enlargement.

3. **Job Enrichment:** This job design technique is concerned with ensuring greater commitment of staff by allowing higher sense of challenge and achievement through direct participation of staff in job analysis and changes in the physical aspect of the work environment. It also creates the enabling environment for staff involvement in decision-making about work methods including acceptance and rejection of materials; and allows staff a clear understanding of the extent of their performance on the success of the organization. Job enrichment guarantees enhanced interpersonal relationship, direct feedback on staff performance and greater sense of personal responsibility for the success or failure of set objectives based on the job design principle of autonomy. This is sometimes referred to as *vertical job enlargement.*

Job Rotation: This is a method designed to kill boredom on the job by allowing for the systematic movement of staff from one job to another. This enables workers to perform variety of functions and broadens managers' and potential managers' knowledge. The attendant limitation of job rotation could be identified to include that some job rotation programmes do not allow participants managerial authority and enough time is not allowed for participants to prove their future effectiveness in the various aspects of the job where they may be rotated. However, trainers and

mangers arc afforded direct knowledge of difficulties across the departments, which is necessary in the holistic analysis of the collective responsibility to move the organization to higher levels.

Training and Development

The efficiency of any organization depends on the capability and commitment of its members. Good understanding of a job is enough morale-booster to motivate employees to stay on the job hence the importance of training and development to the success of any organization cannot be overemphasized. Training refers to the process of teaching new employees how to do the job for which they have been employed and usually associated with non-management employees. This is essential because of the differences in operations among organizations, even within the same industry, while development refers to the process of teaching managers desired skills to excel in their present job and to cope with future challenges on the job. Therefore, training and development are essential, particularly in dynamic organizations with regular technological changes. These changes are necessary to meet with customers need ahead of competitors but could be resisted by workers due to fears of incapability to handle new equipments and newly-created jobs. Managers must realize and be prepared for development because training is an on-going exercise in modern organizations. New challenges require new procedure and equipment coupled with fresh knowledge hence new jobs create room for new set of instructions.

Types of Training

Training usually refers lo efforts to upgrade employees' skills or focus on work-related topics that are beneficial to both employees and company (Holt, 1993). It prepares workers to effectively cope with work methods, processes and systems that could become obsolete with time. Thus, acquisition of competences

that could make individuals perform better within the work organization is very fundamental in dealing with changing technological environment (Adcbayo, 2008). Organisational training could involve huge expenditure as companies strive to keep employees abreast of changes in technology and productive in their job (Holt, 1993) These training techniques can be-classified as follows:

Classroom Training: This is usually a form of off-the job training that places the trainee in a classroom. This could be obtained through correspondent courses in nearby school in courses of relevance to staffs present job, by professional societies or training institutions. Consultancy bodies have gone into the business of providing courses for industries in recent times. Some organizations encourage employees to enroll in various courses and conference programmes with tuition or conference fees paid by the company provided the program is of direct relevance to the employees[1] job. The shorter the duration, the more acceptable to management due to pressure on production.

On-the-Job Training (OJT): This is an informal training encouraged by organizations for employees to enhance their skills through the direct supervision of a more experienced staff on special tasks relating to observed limitations. The supervisor may rotate the staff through several assignments for proficiency.

Vestibule Training: This is the process of combining both on-the-job and off-the-job trainings to develop employees towards meeting organizational objectives. It is normally done using simulation devices like the computer on which the trainee practices. This is necessary where the task is difficult, desiring no mistakes and cannot be performed slowly such that very special training is required and later perfected with the appropriate simulation devices.

New Age Training: Computers, projectors or films and closed circuit television are used in the teaching of latest technology and devices to update staff knowledge.

Evolving Job Involvement Concepts

Globalization has created the opportunity for unprecedented technological advancement and this has developed relatively complex but cheaper approaches in production and delivery of goods and services hence the group or team has turned a managerial discovery that is capable of making job more intellectually involving. The two most recent job design techniques are self-managing teams and high performance work design.

Self-managing Teams: This is a performance-oriented selection of people based on socio-technology systems theory, which suggests that the best results are obtained if grouping is such that workers are primarily related to each other by way of task performance and task independence hence, the self-managing group is also referred to as the *autonomous workgroup*. This results from the fact that upon allocation of an overall task, the group supervises itself and yields the desired results. Therefore, members of the autonomous work group must possess wide range of operative skills such that they can distribute tasks among themselves and agree on the most suitable method of execution and control. The major advantage .of (his system is that it takes account of the social or group factor and technology, including individual motivation.

High Performance Work Design: This method of job design is basically used where high level of performance is required. The concept enables managers to clearly define organizational needs and expected results by setting goals and standard for success; autonomous working groups are established with the desired multi-skills and given thorough training with the provision of flexible applicable equipment to eliminate job demarcation line such that managers and team leaders adopts a supportive role. A specially designed wage bill with employee participation is used to-meet both management and staff needs. However, payment may be related to team performance with peer performance review process to enable team members assess the performance of one another as well as the overall team performance. This job design technique subsumes the self-managing teams technique but it is also more expensive and more demanding on management.

Valuing Work

The organization can also assist towards higher staff involvement in their establishment by the establishment of a standard policy for valuing work. This could involve job ranking, job classification, points rating and factor comparison. This will guarantee the staff that efforts put into production are

adequately noted and appreciated (Howe, 1995).

Conclusion

To achieve set goals, the people in organization who co-ordinate the other factors of production must be effectively managed. The burden of management towards making jobs more intellectually involving is to create the feeling of accomplishment through job analysis, effective implementation of the resultant job description, job specification and job evaluation with a view to formulating a worker-friendly job design capable of meeting the social needs of staff and efficiently actualizing organizational goals. It takes a proactive management with timely information dissemination network and useful staff development programme to keep workers continuously intellectually committed. The challenges of modern technology and the inestimable value of social interaction in the overall involvement of staff in the performance of assigned tasks has placed premium on team spirit and thorough training as necessarily ingredients of high performance. Therefore, every proactive manager/management must continuously formulate policies to guarantee job safety and effective acknowledgement of individual and team effort as a basic tool for ensuring sustainable staff involvement for the efficient actualization of organizational goals.

References

Adebayo, Y. K, (2008). *The essentials of human resource management,* Benin City: Otoghagua Ent. Nig.

Armstrong M., (2005). *A hand book of human resource management practice,* India: Replica press PVT Limited.

Azhar Kazmi, (2002). *Business policy and strategic management,* New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited.

Campbell R. McConnell & Stanley L. Brue, (2002). *Economics: Principles, problems and policies,* New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Cerlo, S. C., (2000). *Modern management (Diversity, quality, ethics & the global environment),* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International.

Cole G. A., (2002). *Personnel and human resource management,* London: T. J. International, Padstow Cornwall.

DeCenzo D. A. & Robbins, S. P., (1988). *Personnel/human resources management,* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Falaja, Sola, (2002). *Human resource management: An introduction,* Lagos: Labofm and Company. Griffin, W.

Ricky, (2003). Fundamentals of management, *New York: Hoitghton Mifflin Company.*

Hackman, J. Richard & Oldman, Greg R., (1975). *Development of the Job diagnostic survey,* Journal of Applied Psychology, April 1975, 159-70.

Holt, D. H., (1993). *Management (principles and practice),* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Richard T. Pascal & Anthony G. Athos, (1981). *The art of Japanese management: Applications for American executives,* New York: Warner Books.

Sally Howe, (1995). *Essential elements of human resource management,* London: DP Publications.

Strauss George & Sayles R. Leonard, (1972). *Personnel: The human problem of management,* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Walter Kiechel, (1990). The Organisation that *Learns, fortune,* March 12, 1990 (pp. 133 - 136)