

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT FOR HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This paper focused on personnel management: challenges and prospects. The concepts of personnel management, roles of personnel management were highlighted for higher productivity in secondary schools. The paper identified some challenges of personnel management to include poor planning, inadequate funding, poor management strategy, poor motivation and poor supervision. Also presented were the prospects of effective personnel management in secondary schools. It concluded that human resources (teachers) remain the most valuable asset for higher productivity in schools, hence adequate planning, supply and maintenance of staff personnel in schools were recommended

People are the bedrock of any successful organization, including the school. An organization can have the best technology and a huge chest of money but it will fail to achieve its goals if it does not value people. Livi (1988) described personnel management as the practice of managing people at work. It involves organizing and treating individuals at work so that they will realize their intrinsic abilities and thus attain maximum efficiency for themselves and their group. Personnel management is the function of all enterprises which provides for effective utilization of human resources to achieve both the objectives of the enterprise and

Human resources remain essential resources needed to achieve organizational goals; Obi (2003) maintained that a viable and veritable human resources must be available to enhance desired efficiency in an organization. Akpan (2003) forwarded that management of human resources in education is the establishment of procedures for the employment, retention, development and control of staff within the education sector. Nwaoku (2005) reported that personnel (teachers) management is the totality of the effort made at employing teachers and equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge and environmental conditions necessary for them to achieve their full potentialities. Akale in Umoh, Akpan & Udongwo (2012) pointed out that no matter how attractive, detailed and supportive new educational materials are, they cannot be effective unless school personnel are adequately managed to put them to use. Human resources management is the key to successful and lasting teachers' development viz-a-viz sustainable development. Without the right kind of teachers, the innate potentials of the populace cannot be tapped.

The Concept of Personnel Management

Personnel management is variously referred to as human resource management, staff management or manpower management.

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There abounds different definitions of personnel management from different authors; Riches and Morgan (1999) viewed human resources management as a part of the process of management that focuses on the people, seeking to ensure that the objectives of the organization are met. Michael (1983) defined personnel management as the identification of assessment of internal human resource capabilities in relation to the requirement, development or management succession framework.

Efanga and Ikpe (2007) described human resource management as a process of acquiring and equipping individuals with the capacities, skills and knowledge in meeting the demands of his country. In effect, human resource management is aimed at ensuring that the right quality and quantity of personnel are employed to do the work involved in meeting the national objectives. Human resource management means efficient and effective handling of organizational personnel to achieve greater productivity. The roles of personnel management involve human resources planning, recruitment and selection, interview, posting, orientation, retention, staff development and staff evaluation. All organizations must plan their manpower needs formally or informally. Rebores in Akpan (2003) believes that it is through the process of human resources planning that a school district ensures that it has the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right places and at the right time and that these people are capable of effectively carrying out these tasks that will aid the organization in achieving its objectives.

Personnel management is the sole responsibility of the organization head and others to whom he has delegated the responsibility. The principal and his vice take up this function in the secondary schools. In this management, the head concerns himself with assessing the needs of staff, satisfying these needs, motivating them, improving their services, retention, retirement and pension (Akpan, 2003). For Okolie (2009),

the roles of personnel management involve education and training, job definition, recruitment, skill development, remuneration, staff promotion and dismissal, mapping out of working hours and boosting staff morale. The school principal, school head or the school administrator as a human resources manager has numerous areas to effectively and adequately manage if he is to be successful. These include staff orientation, motivation, development and supervision.

Roles of Personnel Management

Personnel management according to Nnabuo, Okorie and Agabi (2008) is a line management responsibility and a staff function. Below are the different roles of personnel management.

1 Human Resources Planning

The process by which management tries to provide for its human resources to accomplish its task is called Human Resources Planning. A major problem that confronts management in any organization is the most effective way of matching people with jobs. Human Resource Planning translates the objectives of the organization into people's need. Rebores (1984) ascertained that it is necessary for one to know the number of personnel required for recruitment, to be reassigned, due for retirement, or that need to be retrained for better utilization. It also finds out the human resource requirements of the organization in terms of skills, level, age category and number for present and future, and forecasting possible areas of changes.

2 Staff Recruitment

This is sourcing for quality applicants with concern for present and future needs of the education enterprise. Once human resources planning have determined the number of personnel needed, their type and probably where and when they are needed, recruitment

exercise commences. Recruitment is aimed at attracting a handsome crop of prospective candidates to fill the existing vacancy. The main objective is to secure enough applications so that during the selection process they can be matched with jobs.

3 **Staff Orientation**

Nwaoku (2005) described staff orientation as a socialization process which tries to assist newly appointed staff towards meeting their needs for security, belonging, status, information and direction. Orientation assists newly employed personnel to adjust to his new environment else he will feel lost. This should be designed in such a way that the new staff derives job satisfaction and makes use of abilities to achieve goals. The principal is a key person to this orientation in the secondary schools. Teachers need information about school politics, and regulations, organizational patterns, instructional materials available and the type of students present in the school. Abraham (2003) posited that the principal should realize that one of the emotional needs of every employee is an organization environment with a reasonable degree of security and satisfaction. Thus, the newly recruited staff is apprehensive of many things- the community, his co-workers and his ability to succeed. Ogunsaju (1980) maintained that a good orientation programme removes frustration and motivates the teacher for the work ahead.

4. **Staff Retention/Motivation**

This is the ability of the organization to keep staff in their job and make them to stay on. Adesina (1980) opined that for a good retention process, management should be able to encourage workers and persuade them to remain in the job. The education manager should create and maintain a good organizational climate that gives a sense of belonging to his staff by adopting participatory decision-making pattern. Under

such situation, discipline and harmony among staff naturally emerge. Personnel harmony has a lot of implications for the education manager. This is because if he is able to carry his staff along, the organization runs smoothly. Staff commitment, high morale and satisfaction that usually result into high productivity and effectiveness, naturally come forth. Unyanga (1995) suggested that for principals to motivate and retain their staff, they should establish clear channel of communication, welcome and encourage new-ideas and provide facilities and equipment for work.

5. **Staff Development**

This is the provision made to educate and improve the performances of staff from employment to retirement. Anyanwu (2002) likens human resources development to industrial processing by which basic raw materials are converted into useful tools through moulding, tempering, sharpening and shaping them for some ultimate purposes. In the same manner human beings' can be fashioned to lead useful and happy lives and contribute to society by development of their potential abilities through education and training. The enterprise of human resource development therefore is the impartation of knowledge and skills to human beings through education and training for productive ends.

6. **Staff Evaluation**

This is a very important aspect of personnel management. Evaluation is carried out in order to help the staff to improve on their effectiveness; it helps to expose the talents or weaknesses of the staff. This can, thus, act as a pointer to those that require further training or promotion. Nwaoku (2005) forwarded that evaluation is one of the functions of the school administrator. In the course of administering the school, the principal inevitably makes judgements about the performance of the

personnel. It has been asserted that the goals of the school are achieved through the behaviour of the staff. Appraisal of the performance of the individual staff member is necessary for making decisions about the individual and about the program of the school. Effective evaluation may generate data for making useful decisions about one or more of these:

- (a) staff retention, promotion or dismissal
- (b) effective use of talents
- (c) in-service training and development
- (d) ways of improving performance
- (e) salary

Personnel Management and Productivity
Productivity is viewed as the ratio of output and also a measure of a manager's or an employee's efficiency in using the organization's scarce resources to produce goods and services. Productivity in education simply means the rate and possibility of a school to achieve maximum results with the limited resources. Efficient Management of human resources as the determinant of other resources guarantees greater output (Okolie, 2009), similarly inefficient management of human capital leads to low productivity and hinders attainment of set goals. Productivity and human resources management according to Anyamvu (2002) may not be far from the nascent realization of the primary and centrality of humans in economic development and growth process of a nation.

Akpan (2002) posited that a teacher or a school is said to be productive when it turns out graduates without wasting time and resources. Productivity relates to the performance of an organization and hence to the success of that organization. Akinwale (2007) asserted that an organization's ability to increase productivity depends on focusing on human resources issues like communication, training and evaluation. Effanga and Ikpe (2007) succinctly explained that human resources management ensures that the right quality personnel are employed to do the

work involved in meeting organizational goals. Uyanga (1995) submitted that human resources management enables the provision of highly skilled, highly motivated and efficient classroom teachers for all level of our educational system. According to Obi (2003), the goal of personnel management in the education sector is to redress the problem of manpower shortage and ensure quality output.

The economic benefits of human resources management arise from making people more productive by improving their nutrition, health, education and other social indices through adequate and proper investments. This is supported by Akpabio and Noah (2012) when they stated that human resources management encompasses acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experiences that are critical for higher productivity and sustainable growth of a country

Teachers' productivity according to Etudor in Oleforo and Akpabio (2013) is the measure of output of an effective teacher. It refers to producing good results. A productive teaching is one that results in students learning maximally what is taught them. To be able to do this, Akinwale (2007) explained that more teachers need to be employed, made to acquire new skills and knowledge, motivated, and properly supervised. This will increase their level of productivity and in turn contribute to the attainment of educational goals.

Challenges of Staff Personnel Management in Secondary Schools

1. **Poor Planning**

According to Akpan (2003) proper planning has been found to be the root of the success of any good educational policy or programme. Without proper planning, the best education policy is bound to fail. Teachers' personnel management of the past suffered from lack of proper planning. This problem is

associated with poor data base that is needed for manpower planning. Human resource management plan should therefore give meaning to the educational objectives.

2. **Inadequate Funding**

Funding is central to the overall development of education in general, no educational programme can be successful in the face of inadequate funding. Educational funding in Nigeria has been dwindling in recent times (Okoh, 2002). According to Okoh (2002), the inability of the federal and state governments to effectively sustain educational funding demonstrates lack of adequate government planning.

3. **Poor Management Strategy**

Some secondary school principals lack knowledge of management processes while others with managerial skills refuse to put them into practical use. Human resources management requires collaborative efforts to foster new ideas and attitudes.

4. **Poor Motivation**

One of the roles of human resources management is staff retention and motivation, yet evidence shows that most teachers in public schools are despondent, frustrated and inefficient in class management and even in subject delivery (Koko, 2000). According to the writer, motivation of workers and productivity are highly related. To him, "higher morale leads to improved productivity". This is a reflection of the popular belief that a happy worker is a productive worker and management can increase productivity by satisfying the needs of teachers. Motivation is not only conceptualized in monetary terms but also in areas such as provision of social facilities, good school environment, recognition for extra workload and facilities for career progression and professional development.

5. **Poor Supervision**

Ogunsaju (1980) asserted that the reasons for supervising schools include staffing, motivation and retention, programme development and evaluation of educational outcomes. These functions of supervision in human resources management cannot be displayed because of so many obstacles facing it. Such obstacles include confusion in the role of supervision, poor supervisors' attitude, lack of professional supervisors and lack of facilities.

Prospects of Effective Staff Personnel Management in Secondary Schools

When human resources are properly managed, the following benefits emerge:

1. Teachers are impacted with adequate skills, knowledge and competence that enable them to be productive in their areas.
2. The right quality and quantity of teachers are recruited into the teaching profession.
3. Teachers are motivated and committed to their duties
4. It reduces attrition tendencies in the teaching profession.
5. The level of indiscipline among staff and students will be drastically reduced.
6. The entire education sector will enjoy harmony coupled with higher productivity.

Conclusions

Human resources remain the most valuable asset for growth and development. To this end, proper personnel management becomes essential component of the entire educational management. Human resources management is a planned manpower development in a way which ensures that the right kind of

people are at the right place of work and at the right time and who are doing things for which they are most productive.

Human resources management undertaken by a good educational manager who is knowledgeable, firm, approachable and ready to help people solve their problems, certainly will encourage, stimulate and inspire teachers to work harmoniously and without coercion to achieve higher productivity in teaching.

Recommendations

It is a fact that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (human resources), therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1. The state government should properly plan for human resources in secondary schools by recruiting the right mix of professional teachers to run the affairs of education in the state.
2. Educational managers should ensure that data concerning teachers are regularly updated.
3. Teachers' professional development should be given priority by both educational managers and the state government.
4. Funds should be made available and used prudentially for staff personnel management in secondary schools.
5. The state government and school heads should make sure they provide favourable working environment to motivate teachers to put in their best.

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