
EFFECTIVE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS THROUGH PEACE EDUCATION

By

DR. IJEOMA R. ODOEMENAM
*Ebonyi State College of Education,
Ikwo,
Ebonyi State.*

Abstract

The wealth and prosperity of any nation depends upon the development and effective utilization of human resources. This is also contingent on the existence of peaceful environment. One of the goals of higher education is to develop high level manpower that will contribute to national development. This goal and others can only be achieved in peaceful environment. This paper identifies peace education as a panacea for effective human resource management. Peace education strategies that could be applied to effective human resources management include modification of curricular and pedagogy to encourage development and peace, sensitizing labour unions on the need to promote peaceful and industrial harmony in Nigeria tertiary institutions and encouraging staff to participate in various forms of peace action. Among the recommendations for improving human resource management through peace education include encouraging members of the academia to engage in research in new areas on conflict theories; revisiting of enabling laws and edicts of many tertiary institutions to be in tandem with the present realities as it concerns peace and government intervention in the frequency of strikes and industrial disharmony.

Key words: Peace Education, Human Resource Management.

It is widely known that a nation's human resource is a good measure of its development, wealth and supremacy. Therefore any country that does not take seriously the development of its high level manpower is toying with its destiny. This therefore underscores the importance of higher education. But this can only thrive in a peaceful environment. Nigerian educational system especially at the tertiary level has experienced one form of conflict or the other arising from disagreement between management and industrial unions and industrial unions and government on one hand,

students and management on the other. As a result of mismanagement or improper handling of conflicts and weak-school based security mechanism, Tor-Anyiin (2013) observed that many crises in tertiary institution in Nigeria over the years, have led to breakdown of law and order, disturbance of public peace, loss of lives and properties. Among such menace is the aggressiveness of cult-related activities. The extent to which managers of tertiary institutions and other stakeholders are able to resolve such crises amicably as Awonge (2010) rightly observed, will ensure peace and guarantee rapid economic development. Apart from students' crises, the quest to attain effective educational management as well as human resource management has been inhibited by many factors which include absence of peaceful environment both internal and external. In most of the tertiary institutions, there are cases of conflicts. This, Spillane (1992) observed, is a result of communication failure and misunderstanding. He noted that no educational manager can have a harmonious working atmosphere by suppressing conflict. There is therefore the need to create a peaceful setting by initiating action towards conflict resolution. To do this, Glaser and Staties (2007) posited that educational managers need technical acumen and practical experience as a guide for action. Also the authors added that managers need to use their professional experience with emerging trouble shooting issues in addition to reliance and facts and dependence on personal experience.

Human resource constitutes the most important of most production resources. Well trained, loyal and efficient team of workers brings success and stability in an organization. The readiness of any nation to optimize the interest benefits of education is largely dependent on the type and quality of human resource available (Okeke, 2006). Since peace has been identified as an important ingredient for achieving national development, it is therefore necessary for Nigeria to strengthen the foundation of her peace through the inculcation of relevant skills, attitudes and knowledge to live peacefully with one another and this will accelerate economic development (Fasokin, 2004). Herein lies the need for peace education. Generally, the objectives of peace education in institutions focus on increasing the knowledge of the recipients, helping them to develop positive attitude and acquire the skills to become peace builders in life (Gumut, 2004). It is fundamentally a process of engaging people in developing awareness of the causes of conflicts and ways to resolve these in daily life. It must be noted that when these conflict are not resolved, they will bring industrial disharmony.

Industrial disharmony in educational institution can take different dimensions. Nwaocha (1994) in Tor-Anyiin (2013) attributes it to the absence of definite and effective industrial relations policy that takes cognizance of the prevailing economic situation in the country. Gardiner & Simmon (1992) added that it can occur as a result of divergent interest, objectives or priorities between individual groups, employee/employers, non conformity to requirements of a task, activity or process. In

addition, Parkes, et al (2007) noted that strike, boycotts overtime ban and intimidations are also the other dimensions. These disputes or actions are bound to have severe consequence in the productivity of an educational institution. Particularly, Tor-Anyiin (2013) described the strike as the most unpalatable and potent weapon in the weapon store of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Non Academic Staff Union (NASU) and other employees of tertiary institutions. A strike or lockout when in force signifies a complete breakdown of collective bargaining.

In order to prevent, control or manage industrial disharmony in our tertiary institutions, creative management effort are required to avert the adverse effects as they may portend danger for the goals – attachment in our tertiary institutions. Peace education therefore becomes imperative. This is because knowledge of peace education will equip both the employer and employee the requisite skills to be able to tackle the challenges of conflicts and its resolution and create a peaceful environment. Since the middle of 2013, ASUU has been on strike for months. Failure to resolve the conflict has affected tertiary education and will no doubt affect economic development.

It is against this backdrop that this paper identifies effective strategies for human resource management in tertiary institution through peace education as well as makes suggestions on how to maintain industrial harmony in our tertiary institutions for effective economic development of the nation.

Conceptualization

The following will be conceptualized: Peace Education and Human Resource Management.

Peace Education is the process of acquiring values, knowledge and developing attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others and the national environment (Wikipedia, 2012). Gumut (2004) defines peace education as the deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and promotion of peace making skills in homes, schools and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization. Fasokun (2004) on the other hand sees peace education as an attempt to change the individual's perception of the other's collective narrative as in the latter's point of new and consequently about one's own social self, as well as come to practically relate less hatefully and more trustingly towards that collective other. From the foregoing definitions, peace education is an issue that has to do with changing the mindsets of people with the intention of promoting understanding, peace and tolerance especially to those perceived as enemies.

Peace education programmes focus on training individuals to resolve inter personal disputes through techniques of negotiations and (peer) mediation and improve communication through skills such as listening, identifying needs and separating facts

from emotion. Slyek, Stern and Elboden (1999) posited that its aim is to alter beliefs, attitudes and behaviours from negative to positive attitude towards conflict as a basis for preventing violence.

Human Resources can be defined as energies, skills and knowledge of people, which are potentially available for use in the production of goods and services (Awopegba (1999). Again it refers to the people, human initiatives aspirations and capabilities that will determine their benefits that can be drawn from the global system.

Human resource management (HRM) is the management of an organization's workforce, or human resources. It is responsible for the attraction, selection, training, and assessment and rewarding of employees, while overseeing organizations leadership and culture and ensuring compliance with employment and labour laws (Wikipedia, 2012).

Ulrich (1996) sees human resource management as involving the selection of the required manpower through the recruitment process, overseeing their training, and development during tenure, assessing talents through use of performance appraisal and then reward them accordingly in addition to employee termination.

Human resource is the most important resource in management, and needs to be used efficiently. This is because success, stability and growth of an organization depend on its ability in acquiring, utilizing and developing the human resources. In the educational sector, well trained, loyal and efficient team of workers brings success and stability to the system.

Effective human resource management will only be possible in an environment that is devoid of hostility, and where there is the existence of healthy and interpersonal and internal relationship. When there is communication gap between the employer and employees, obnoxious rules and regulations and poor motivation among others, disaffection may occur and this can lead to unrest, strikes and down-tooling among others. When these occur, they have devastating effects on educational management and usually affect the peace/national security with adverse effects on economic developments. The extent to which government educational managers and industrial unions and other stakeholders of our educational institution are able to resolve such crises amicably, will ensure peace and guarantee rapid economic development.

Theoretical Framework

A discussion of human resource cannot be complete without examining some of the theoretical perspectives that fall into the human resource camp. The theories that will be examined are the Human Resources Theories, Motivation Theories, Douglas

McGregor's Theory and Y and X as well as Rensis Likert's Participative Decision Making Theory.

The notion of Human Resources Theory was originally proposed by Raymond Miles, (1965), which posits that all workers are reservoirs of untapped resources. These resources include not only physical skills and energy, but also creative ability and the capacity for responsible, self-directed, self-controlled behaviour. Miles articulated a very clear theoretical perspective that was high on communication, high on tapping into employee resources and high on employee input on decision making.

Abraham Maslow (1943) in his theory of human motivation tried to understand what motivates people. He came up with five needs that need to be satisfied at one stage before moving to another stage. These needs according to their hierarchy are physiological needs, safety needs, esteem needs and self-actualization. In all, Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps us to understand how to motivate workers to strive for more work in an organization, hence communication becomes important. This is because we need to understand what employees' need in order to motivate them to work more proficiently and productively.

Fredrick Herzberg's in his Motivation – Hygiene Theory (1959) posited that motivation on the job should lead to satisfied workers but he theorized that satisfaction and dissatisfaction were not opposite end of one continuum. For the purpose of his theory, he called the factors that led to positive job attitudes motivators and those factors that led to negative job attitude hygiene factors. The motivators and hygiene factors include achievement, policy and administration, job security, work condition, potentials for promotion, and personal growth as well as status and salary.

Douglas McGregor's theory X and theory Y (1960) were based on the assumption that managers have about their workers. While the classical perspective felt that leadership should control and order subordinates, the human relations approach posits that superiors need to cultivate and support their employees (Douglas, 1960). While theory X managers believe that people want to have directives in order to evade responsibility; theory Y managers feel that people want to do what is best for the organization and can direct themselves under the right condition.

In Rensis Likert's Participative Decision Making Theory, his ideas were based in the notion that supervisors with strong worker productivity tended to focus on the human aspects of subordinate problems while creating teams that emphasized high achievement. (Likert,1967). Effective management required treating employees as humans and not just workers.

A summary of the review of theories shows that human resources encourage an environment where employees have the ability to be creative. It places emphasis on communication which is an important instrument for resolving industrial disharmony and maintaining peace. While Maslow's theory focuses on motivating individuals, Herzberg's stresses on factors that lead individuals to de-motivation at work. In most of the tertiary institutions, there are cases of conflicts as a result of communication failure and misunderstanding as well as not motivating workers through financial rewards and good working environment.

It must be noted that education is a critical socio-economic sub-sector; there is therefore the need to resolve internal conflict amicably to be able to achieve expected goals.

Application of Peace Education Strategies to Human Resource Management

Human resources are of great importance to a nation because it not only constitutes a useable commodity, but also decides how much can be achieved with the other resources. Uwazuruike, (1991) posited that human knowledge, skills and abilities constitute resources, not only in terms of productive labour, but in terms of constructive imaginative thoughts which yield other goods. Tertiary education has been identified as supplying the country with highly educated manpower needed for economic development. It then becomes imperative that a stimulating environment that is peaceful and devoid of rancor is necessary to the rapid economic growth and development. The following peace education strategies can be applied to improve human resource management:

1. Creating awareness to all and sundry especially academic and non-academic staff and students in tertiary institutions on the need for a collaborative efforts to build and maintain a tension-free environment.
2. Dismantling culture of violence. Our cultural differences are present barriers to effective communication (Nida 1954). Violence in higher institutions includes strikes, work to rule, physical damages to facilities and equipment. In most tertiary institutions, Umo (2001), posited that administrators spend a great deal of time managing conflict situations from both students and lecturers. Awareness talks in form of seminars and conferences are needed to enlighten the workers and students on the need to accept/tolerate other people's culture. This will make it possible for the workforce to be cohesive.
3. Modification of curriculum and pedagogy to encourage development and peace. Programmes should be included to foster a conflict-positive orientation in the community by training students to view conflict as a platform for creativity and growth. Through this way, peace will be maintained in the society.

4. Sensitizing labour unions for example, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU), and Senior Staff Association of Universities (SSANU) etc among others on the need to promote peaceful behaviour in school environment.
5. Forming Peace Corp Groups to serve as catalysts of peace.
6. Encouraging staff to participate in various forms of peace action, for example, writing against school violence especially in their school based journals and collaborating institutionalized peace organizations.
7. Use of construction actions in resolving conflicts.
8. Developing a constructive communication process.

Challenges of Peace Education

Peace Education is centred on raising awareness of human rights and typically focuses on the levels of policies that humanity ought to adopt in order to move closer to a peaceful global community. However, Galtung, (2004) posited that there are deliberate policies and structures that causes human sufferings and cultural violence that manifest in cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human sufferings. In tertiary institutions, such discrimination manifest in appointments of institutional heads, favouritism in the selection of staff for staff development and motivation. In addition, poor understanding of individual and collective self-identities, violence of human rights, bad governance which are manifested in corruption and injustice and failure to deliver service.

Insecurity is another threat to peace education. Security implies a stable, relatively predictable academic environment, in which students and workers may pursue their ends or objectives without disruption, harm, danger and without fear of disturbances or injury (Tor-Anyiin, 2013). Security challenges have been a source of worry, nationally and internationally. In Nigeria, security challenges include kidnapping, terrorism occasioned by the nefarious activities of Boko-Haram, cult activities, human trafficking, incessant industrial disharmony among academic and non academic staff of educational institutions, among others. In our tertiary institutions, particularly, some of these not only disrupt academic exercise but constitute threats to lives and property and hamper economic development.

Strategies for Achieving Effective Human Resource Management through Peace Education

Peace has been identified as a veritable instrument for enthroning an enduring academic environment on campus to guarantee uninterrupted flow of academic activities. It is only in a peaceful environment that employers and employees can build a cohesive work force to achieve organizational goals. The following strategies will help for effective human resource management through peace education:

1. Government intervention in the critical needs of tertiary institutions. These needs include provision of infrastructural facilities and equipment, adequate funding. The case of Nigeria not being able to meet the UNESCO recommendation of providing 26 percent of their annual budget to education, has adversely affected the provision of necessary learning facilities which has led to industrial disharmony. It is on record that education share of the national budget has never exceeded 11.5 percent (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). This is embarrassing when smaller countries like Ghana and Zimbabwe spend not less than 30 percent of annual budgets on education.
2. There is the need to review existing educational laws to make them more flexible and to be consistent with the security realities of the present day Nigeria.
3. Use of appropriate leadership styles by institutional heads and chief executives such as mediation, arbitration and reconciliation rather than taking sides.
4. There is the need for government to intervene early enough to reduce the frequency of prolonged strikes. Some of these conflicts can be resolved through use of constructive actions and involving influential conflict negotiators' and personalities.
5. There is the need for more research to review some of the conflict and peace resolution theories to be in accordance with the security situations of the contemporary society.
6. Focusing on interpersonal relationships and developing a constructive communication process. These will help to create a sense of belonging and strengthening relationships for achieving organizational goals.
7. School managers should engage in strategic partnership with different security agents – the Nigeria Police Force, State Security Service (SSS) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to step up the security situation in different institutions of higher learning.
8. Improvement in the general welfare of workers in tertiary institution for both academic and non academic staff to minimize industrial disharmony.

Conclusion

Peace Education has been identified as the application of positive peace content. It sets out to address the culture of violence and aggression and to inculcate values on non-violent change. Through peace education, workers in tertiary institutions will be taught to suppress their instinctive nature of being violent and this will pave way for a violent free environment. Also when opportunities are provided for personnel to get trained and retrained to acquire new skills; when potentials are recognized and rewarded and needed equipment and infrastructural facilities are provided, workers will be motivated to put in their best. There is therefore the need for government, employers and employees to reach agreement or compromise on any issue for the enthronement of peaceful environment which will guarantee rapid economic development.

References

- Awopegba, P. O (1999) Development and Management of Human Resources in Nigeria in Fajingbesi, Hiley and Jalilian (Eds) *Resources Mobilization and Management for Development*. NCEMA/DPPC.
- Fasokuu, T. O. (2004). "Cultural Values, Peace Education and Adult Education: Issues and perspectives" paper delivered at the 1st Annual NNCAE Conference.
- Federal Ministry of Education (2007). *Nigeria education sector diagnosis: A synthetic report*. Abuja. FME.
- Francis, J. O. (2004). Peace and Conflict Studies: An African Overview of Basic Concepts: In Best, S. D. (Ed) *Introduction to Peace and Conflict studies in West Africa*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Gumut, V.(2004). Peer Education and Peer Mediation" In Best, S.D. (Ed).*Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyder-man, B. (1959). *The motivation to work*. New York NY: Wiley.
- Likert R. (1967). *The human organization: Its management and value*: McGraw-Hill.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of Human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-381.

- McGregor D, (1960). *The human side of enterprise*. New York. McGraw-Hill.
- Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resource? *Harvard Business Review*, 43(4), 148-157.
- Nida, E. (1954). *Customs and Culture*: New York Holt: Rinehart and Winston.
- Okeke, B. S. (2006). *UBE and Human Resources Development and Utilization in Basic Education*. A paper presented at the 2nd Annual Conference of the Department of Educational Foundation at ESUT.
- Tor-Anyiin, T. E. (2013). *Peace and Conflict Resolution: Critical strategies for achieving effective and efficient management of education for Nigerian national security*. A lead paper presented at NAEAP 32nd National Conference for 2013.
- Ulrich, D. (1996). *Human Resource Champions. The next agenda for adding value and delivering results*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.
- Umo, U. C. (2001). *Impact of Culture on Violence: Implications for higher education* in A. U. Akubue & Enyi, D. Crises and Challenges in Higher Education in Developing countries: (A book of Readings) (pp 335-340).
- Uwazuruike, C. N. (1991). *Educational Planning and National Development: A Nigerian Perspective* Awka: Mekslink Publishers Nigeria.
- Van-Slyck, M. R; Stern, M; & Elbedon, S. (1999). Adolescents' belief about their conflict behaviour in A. Raviv, L. Oppenheimer, and D. Bar-Tal (Eds) *How children understand war and peace* (208-230) San Fransasco; Jossy-Basa Publishers.
- Wikipedia (2012). *The free encyclopedia* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace_education Retrieved 19/10/2013.
- Wikipedia (2012). *The free encyclopedia*: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/human_resource_management Retrieved 19/10/2013.