

Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Effectiveness in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

¹Ekpe, Osim James, ²Enyiegor, Emmanuel Enendem, & ³Owan, Kejie Zita

¹*Department of Management Sciences, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar-Nigeria*

²*Department of Policy Studies and Administration,
International University Bamenda, Cameroon, Central Africa*

³*Department of Mass Communication,
International University Bamenda, Cameroon, Central Africa*

Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ijargpgm.v3.i1.07

Abstract

Human resource management (HRM) practices are a process of attracting, motivating, and retaining employees to ensure the survival of the organization. This paper examined the level of effectiveness attained in the conduct of the HRM practices of public universities (University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology, Calabar) in Cross River State, Nigeria. The objective was to determine whether human resource management practices influence organizational effectiveness in Public Universities in Cross River State. The paper utilized content analysis methodology. It was found that a tremendous difficulty exists in sustaining and strictly adhering to HRM practices in the public universities in Cross River. As government agencies, the public universities in Cross River State are at the mercy of politically appointed leadership teams. Findings also shows that HRM practices in public universities in Cross River State need to be far more effective and tailored to the current labour and societal needs. It was therefore concluded that, the problems encountered by the employees include the lack of management support, and lack of involvement of employees in decision making process. Thus, the study recommended among others that public universities in Cross River State need to take account of new issues concerning their HRM for effectiveness, such as, training, promotion and encouragement, evaluation development support and systematic planning for future needs.

Keywords: *Human Resource, Management Practices, Motivation, Training/Retraining, Employees, Organization*

Corresponding Author: Ekpe, Osim James

Background to the Study

Organizational effectiveness is the main concern of all higher education institutions. A body of literature abound on organizational effectiveness along with the criteria for measuring organizational effectiveness. In the view of Henry (2011), organizational effectiveness in the 1980's became more prominent and switched to being a concept from the status of a construct. Thus, this concept is related to issues such as the ability of an organization to access and absorb resources and consequently achieve its aims. As stated by Eriglioti (1987), "a unit which is individually ineffective in terms of cooperating with the rest of the organization" is doomed to fail. Organizational effectiveness is the proficiency of the organization at having access to the essential resources. Organization effectiveness is the criterion of the organization's successful fulfilment of their purpose through core strategies.

In order words, organizational effectiveness refers to how an organization is doing things and establishing the environment and conditions necessary to achieve the outcome the organization intends to produce. This is measured by key drivers of organization effectiveness such as: mission, vision and strategy; governance, technology, process and suppliers' effectiveness; innovation; enterprise risk assessment; corporate social responsibilities and organizational and environmental sustainability; global perspective; approach to financial planning and reporting (Howard, 2012).

Other key drivers of organizational effectiveness are; senior leadership team, culture, organizational structures, systems and processes, work force excellence, performance measures and reward systems, as well as taking a holistic approach to organizational effectiveness. The organizational effectiveness may be measured on Human Resources Management (HRM) Practices – a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in organizations (Armstrong, 2010). HRM Practices include among others, job/role analysis and design; people resourcing, learning and development, managing performance, reward management, employees' relations and, providing for the well-being of employees (Armstrong, 2010).

Mensah, (2014) has recognized the importance of human capital as one of the most important parts of any organization because organizational goals can be achieved through them. Employers are considered to be the key resource of an institution to gain competitive advantage over the competing universities, universities rely on skilled workers, lecturers to be productive, creative and innovative, and to provide high quality service. Mensah, (2014) also asserts that businesses sustain and increase competitive advantage through strategic management of human resources which is dependent on the quality and effectiveness of its employees.

In the view of Lochhead and Stephens (2004), replacing workers is very costly, training new employees are less secure and finding skilled employees can be difficult. Similarly, Cascio (2006) also observes that the expense incurred in recruiting, selecting and training new employees is high as it exceeds 100% of the annual salary of the position being field. In today's talent based global economy, organizations have to acquire, develop and accordingly manage

world class human resource management competencies and practices if they wish to survive and compete. This paper therefore examines human resource practices and influence on employees' effectiveness in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess human resource management practices and organizational effectiveness in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To evaluate the concept of human resource management (HRM) practices;
2. To define and assess organizational effectiveness;
3. To assess the impact of human resource management practices (HRM) on public universities effectiveness.

Literature Review

Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices

Human Resource Management plays an essential role in determining the survival, effectiveness and competitiveness of organizations which is critical as gaining profit. It is the term used to describe formal system (such as universities) systems devised for the management of people within an organization (Liu, Rhodora, Ngolob and Thelma, 2020). The responsibilities of a human resource manager fall into three major areas; staffing, employee compensation and benefits and defining/designing work. In today's talent based global economy, universities have to acquire, develop and accordingly manage world class human resource management competencies and practices if they wish to survive and compete (Alshaikhly, 2017). Indeed, investing in human resource management could yield long-term financial benefits to organizations (such as universities) as employees would prefer to stay in an organization rather than move to other organizations or competitors if they are motivated (Bakker and Denierouti, 2008).

Employees are motivated if there is work engagement which could be induced by human resource management practices for instance, job analysis, training and development, performance feedback, social support and supervisory coaching, role analysis, human resource policies, reward management, employee engagement, employee wellbeing (Klein, 2014).

Job analysis and design of jobs and roles is one of the most important techniques in HRM Practices. Job or role analysis provides the information required to produce job descriptions, role profiles and person and learning specifications. It is of fundamental importance in organization and job design, recruitment and selection, performance management, learning and development, pay structures. These constitute most of the key HRM practices. Job or role design is the means by which jobs can be made intrinsically motivating (Armstrong, 2010).

A job is an organizational unit which consist of a group of defined tasks or activities to be carried out or duties to be performed. A role is a part played by individual and the patterns of behaviours expected of them in fulfilling their work requirements. A role has been defined by Ivancevich et al (2008) as an organized set of behaviours. Roles are about people as distinct from jobs, which are about tasks and duties: it is recognized more generally that organizations consist of people using their knowledge and skills to achieve results and working cooperatively together, rather than impersonal jobs contained in the boxes of an organization chart.

Job analysis produces the following information about a job:

- i. Overall purpose why the job exists and in essence, what the job holder is expected to contribute.
- ii. Organization – to whom the job holder report and who report to the job holder.
- iii. Content – the nature and scope of the job in terms of the task and operations to be performed and duties to be carried out. The essence of job analysis is the application of systematic methods to the collection of information about job content – obtain document such as existing organization, procedure or training manual which gives information about the job, obtained manager's fundamental information concerning jobs, and obtained from jobs holders similar information about their jobs.

Role analysis uses techniques as job analysis but the focus is on identifying inputs (Knowledge, and skill and compliancy requirements) and required outcomes (key result areas or accountability) rather than simply listing the tasks to be carried out. It encompasses job description - providing information require to produce a job description, which defines what job holders are required to do in terms of activities, duties or task (Ivancevich et al 2008).

Role profile defines outcomes, accountabilities and competencies for an individual role. Job design specifies the contents, methods and relationships of jobs in other to satisfy work requirement for productivity, efficiency and quality, meets the personal needs of the jobs holder and thus increases levels of employee engagement. People resourcing is about the acquisition, retention, development and effective utilization of the people and organizational needs. It is based on a resourcing strategy which is linked to the business strategy, and is the basis for human resource or workforce planning activities (Armstrong, 2010). HRM plans are implemented by means of the key resourcing activities of recruitment and selection, retention planning and talent management, and by learning and development programmes.

Learning and development is the process of acquiring and developing knowledge, skills, capabilities, behaviours and attitudes through experience, event and programmes provided by the organization, guidance and coaching provided by line managers and others, and self-directed or self-managed learning activities. It is concerned with ensuring that the organization has the knowledgeable, skilled and engaged work force it needs. Learning is the means by which a person acquires and develops new knowledge, skills, capabilities, behaviours and attitudes.

Learning has happened when people can demonstrate that they know something they did know before (insights, realization as well as fact and when they can do something they could not do before (skills) Honey and Mumford (as cited in Armstrong, 2010). Development is concerned with ensuring that a person's ability and potential grows through the provision of learning experiences or through self-directed (self-managed) learning. It is the unfolding process which enables people to progress from a present state of understanding and capability to a future state in which higher level skills, knowledge and competencies are required.

Training involves the application of formal processes to impact knowledge and help people to acquire skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily. Managing performance involves taking systematic action to improve organizational, team and individual performance. It enables performance expectations to be defined and creates the basis for developing organizational and individual capability. For individuals, performance management processes are associated with both financial and non-financial rewards. Organizations exist to meet the needs of their stakeholders. They do this in five ways:

- i. by delivery high quality goods and services
- ii. by acting ethically (exercising social responsibility) with regard to their employees and the public at large
- iii. by rewarding their employees equitably according to their contribution
- iv. in the private sector by rewarding shareholders by increasing the value of their holding, as long as this is consistent with the requirement to meet the needs of other stakeholders and
- v. by ensuring that organization has the capability required to guarantee continuing success performance is indeed often regarded as simply the outcomes achieved: a record of a person accomplishment (Armstrong 2007).

Human resource policies and procedures are required to ensure that human resource management issues are dealt with consistently in line with the values of the organization on how people should be treated and that legal requirements are met, HR policies can be expressed formally as overall statement of the value of the organization or they can apply to be specific areas of people management. The values expressed in an overall statement of HR policies may be explicitly or implicitly refer to the following requirements; equity, consideration, respect, organizational learning, performance through people, quality of working life; working conditions.

Specific HR policies are: Age and employment, HIV/AIDS, bullying, discipline, diversity management, E-mail and use of internet, employee development, employee relations, Employee voice, among others. HR procedures include; disciplinary procedure, capability procedure, grievance procedure, redundancy procedure etc. Human capital management (HCM) informs decisions on issues critical to the organization's success by systematically analyzing, measuring and evaluating how people policies and practices create value. According to Armstrong (2007), HCM is concerned with obtaining, analyzing and reporting on data which informs the direction of value-adding people management strategic, investment and operational decisions at corporate level and at the level of front-line management. It involves intellectual capital, social capital, organizational capital.

Knowledge management is concerned with the storing and sharing the wisdom, understanding and expertise accumulated in an organization about its processes, techniques and operations. It treats knowledge as a key resource. As Wrich (1998) point out, knowledge has become a direct competitive advantage for organizations selling ideas and relationships. Knowledge management is more concerned with people and how they acquire, exchange and disseminate knowledge as it is about information technology. Knowledge management is any process or practice of creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, whenever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organizations.

Employee engagement has attracted a lot of attention recently. Reilly and Brown (2008) note that the term job `satisfaction', 'motivation` and `commitment` are generally being replace now in organizations by 'engagement` because it appears to have more description force and face validity. The conference board in the United State, (2006) defines employee engagement as a heightened connection that an employee feels for his or her organization. It is a positive attitude held by the employee toward the organization and its values. It is a strong desire to remain a member of the organization.

Reward management is concerned with the strategies, policies and processes required to ensure that the value of people and the contribution they make to achieving organizational, departmental and team goals is recognized. It is about the design, implementation and maintenance of reward systems, interrelated reward processes, practices and procedures which aim to satisfy the need of both the organization and its stakeholders and to operate fairly, equitably and consistently. Employees relations are concerned with generally managing the employment relationship and developing a positive psychological contract. In particular, they deal with terms and conditions of employment, issues arising from employment, providing employees with a voice and communicating with employees. Employee relations cover a wider spectrum of the employment relationship than industrial relations, which are essentially about what goes on between management and trade union representatives and officials.

Employee well-being of employees depends on the quality of working life provided by their employers – the feelings of satisfaction and happiness arising from the work itself, and the work environment, including the provisions made for their health and safety (Armstrong, 2010). Reasons why organizations should be concerned with the well-being of their employees are: they have a duty of care; employers need to concentrate on creating a good work environment and it is the interests of employers to do so because this will increase the likelihood of their employees being committed to the organization and help to established it as a "best place to work".

In a study, Mensah (2014) reports the facts that the HRM practices such as compensation, work life balance and employee engagement are vital to employees and indeed influence employee retention. Compensation is imperative for the employees as a sense of security, autonomy and improved self-worth that could lead to employee commitment and productivity (Dockel, Basson and Coetzee, 2006). In a similar study, Liu, Rhodora and

Thelma (2020) found that HRM practices are effective in maintaining the productivity of the employees which implies that the Long Hope Communication Limited Philippines is invested in their employees, providing opportunities for promotion, positive feedback, clarity of information, designation to whom the employee reports to and opportunity for employees to be responsible with the quality of their work. The study however found that the conduct of HRM practices of Long Hope Communication Co. Ltd. is moderately efficient which implies that the employees perceive the management in lack in providing opportunities for employees to be promoted, to be appraised, and to participate in the administration of tasks.

The study indicates that the major problems encountered by the management of HRM practices are; lack of interest of employees, lack of management support and lack of involvement of employees in decision making. In brief, HRM practices of Long Hope Communication Co. Ltd. could still be improved to effectively and efficiently maintain the productivity of the employees.

In another study, Alshaikhly (2017), investigated the impact of HRM practices on employees' satisfaction of employees in Jordaman Telecommunication Companies. 302 employees participated in the study. The study found that there is a significant impact of human resource management (planning and recruitment, training programmes, compensation and performance appraisal) on employee's satisfaction. The result also indicate that the compensation variable has the most impact on employee's satisfaction.

Hassan (2016) conducted a study on the impact of HRM practices on employees' performance in the textile industry in Pakistan. The results of the study revealed significant relationship between HRM practices (compensation, career planning, performance appraisal, training and employee involvement) and employee's performance. The result also showed that employee's performance can be increased by giving employees an opportunity to make effective decisions. Also empowering employees could also contribute to the success of the organization as it saves time in decision making, leaves the gap between subordinates and encourages a strong sense of team work among employees.

Organizational Effectiveness

Until now, evaluators have used four major approaches to define and assess organizational effectiveness (Kim, n.d.). The first and most widely used approach defines effectiveness in terms of how well an organization accomplishes its goals. Using this perspective, evaluators usually focus on the outputs of an organization. That is, the closer the organization's outputs come to meeting its goals, the more effective it is.

A second approach to effectiveness is the system research approach. Under this approach, an organization's effectiveness is judged on the extent to which it acquires wedded resources an organization can obtain from its external environment, the more effective it is. Organizational inputs designed to achieve a competitive advantage in the market replaces the emphasis on outputs in this model.

A third approach to effectiveness focuses on the internal processes and operations of the organization. That is, effective organizations are those with an absence of internal strain, whose members functioning into the system, whose internal functioning is smooth and typified by trust and benevolence toward individuals, where information flows smoothly both vertically and horizontally, and so forth.

The fourth approach of effectiveness is the strategy constituencies approach or the participant satisfaction model. This approach defines effectiveness as the extent to which all of the organization's strategies constituencies are at least minimally satisfied. A strategic constituency is any group of individuals who have some stake in the organization's output, groups whose cooperation is essential for the organization's survival, or those whose lives are significantly affected by the organization. In this approach, the effectiveness of an organization is based on how well it responds to the demands and expectations of its strategic constituencies. Managers must focus on achieving a balance among them.

In line with this thinking, organizational effectiveness may be defined as the extent to which an organization as a social system, given certain resources and means, fulfils its objectives without incapacitating its means and resources and without placing undue strain upon its members. This conception of effectiveness subsumes the following general. Organizational effectiveness models at higher education is an extensive researched topic (Rojas, 2000, Karogoz, 2008) assert that research on organizational effectiveness started in the 1930s and later expanded by many theorists in the 1970s. These theorists and theories include Anita and Cuthberts (1976) qualitative model; Kleeman and Richardson (1985) Effective Field Criteria; Pounder (1999) introduced aspects or dimensions for organizational effectiveness as productivity – efficiency; quality, cohesion; adaptability – readiness; information management communication; growth; planning – goal setting; human resource development and stability control (as cited in Giti & Suhaida, 2012). Other theorists and theories include An, Yom and Ruggiero (2011) and Cameron's (1978) model for organizational effectiveness. In Cameron (1978) proposal for the organizational effectiveness of 4 years colleges there are nine dimensions and a 57-item questionnaire to secure the members' perception about the effectiveness of their institutions on these aspects. Selection of these dimensions is based on the careful study of the criteria, institutions and constituencies, and an in-depth analysis (Siddiqui, 2010).

Human Resource Management Practices (HRM) and Public Universities Effectiveness in Cross River State, Nigeria

It is expected that human resource practices do need to support commercial outcomes; it also exists to serve organizational needs for social legitimacy. This means exercising social responsibility, or in other words, being concerned for the interests of (well-being) of employees and acting ethically with regard to the needs of people in the organization and the community. As Guest (1997) argues, the distinctive feature of HRM practices is its assumption that improved performance is achieved through the people in the organization. If therefore, appropriate HRM practices are introduced, it can also be assumed that HRM will make a substantial impact on organizational effectiveness.

HRM practices in public university in Cross River State need to be far more effective and tailored to the current labour and societal needs. They need to take account of new issues concerning their HRM, such as training, promotion and encouragement, evaluation development support and systematic planning for future needs. Moreover, aspects such as the socio-political climate and the level of state or public expenditure in education influence the capacity of public universities in Cross River State to address these challenges, calling for supporting actions in this research. Therefore, public universities in Cross River State need support and transfer of good practices for the creation of solid and sound practices, strategies and instruments in this domain.

It was found that there is a tremendous difficult to sustain and strictly adhere to HRM practices into public universities in Cross River. As government agencies, the public universities in Cross River State are at the mercy of politically appointed leadership teams. This creates a lot of "wee-bees". "We be here before you, got here and we be here after you leave" Again, poor leadership performance has negatively impacted organization HRM practices, leading to layoffs, loss of revenue, and loss of competitive advantage. Public Universities in Cross River State have hierarchical arrangements that have bureaucratic culture. Though there are talented employees in high level positions, however, their knowledge of what is going on at all levels of the institution is extremely limited. Most of the employees work in these public universities in Cross River State because they need the job, not because they want to work here. The remunerations are not attractive, long hours of working with lousy benefits. They have pushed more employees into part time jobs to reduce employee benefits.

Findings

Based on content analysis, the major findings are that:

1. A tremendous difficulty exists in sustaining and strictly adhering to HRM practices in the public universities in Cross River.
2. As government agencies, the public universities in Cross River State are at the mercy of politically appointed leadership teams.
3. HRM practices in public universities in Cross River State need to be far more effective and tailored to the current labour and societal needs.

Conclusion

Based on the content analysis, it is concluded that HRM is the term used to describe formal system (such as universities) systems devised for the management of people within an organization. In today's talent based global economy, universities have to acquire, develop and accordingly manage world class human resource management competencies and practices if they wish to survive and compete. Employees are motivated if there is work engagement which could be induced by human resource management practices for instance, job analysis, training and development, performance feedback, social support and supervisory coaching, role analysis, human resource policies, reward management, employee engagement, employee wellbeing. Moreso, four major approaches have been used to define and assess organizational effectiveness. These include, evaluator's focus on the outputs of an

organization, the system research approach, the internal processes and operations of the organization, and the strategy constituencies approach or the participant satisfaction model. In addition, the distinctive feature of HRM practices is its assumption that improved performance is achieved through the people in the organization. If therefore, appropriate HRM practices are introduced, it can also be assumed that HRM will make a substantial impact on organizational effectiveness.

Human Resource Management practices and organizational effectiveness has long been the subject of numerous studies through different approaches and dimensions. Nevertheless, one can verify the viability of measuring the HRM practices and organizational effectiveness of Public Universities in Cross River State (University of Calabar and Cross River State University of Technology). From the prospective of management using the participant's observation, interview, document which presented several advantages with respect to the employees' perceptions and experiences with the organizations, the problems encountered by the employees include the lack of management support, lack of involvement of employees in decision making process.

Recommendations

1. Line Managers (University Management Cadre) should be provided with time to carry out their people management duties which are often superseded by other management duties.
2. Development in good working relations with employees and managers.
3. Line Managers should be supported with strong organizational values concerning leadership and people management.
4. Line Managers should ensure they receive sufficient training to enable them to perform their people management activities such as performance/effective management.
5. Selection of line Managers should be carefully done with much more attention being paid to the behavioural competencies required.

References

- Alshaikhly, N. (2017). *The impact of human resource management practices on employee's satisfaction*, A field study in the Jordanian Telecommunication Companies, Middle East Universities.
- Armstrong, M. (2012). *Armstrong's essential human resource management practice, A guide to people management*, London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Bakker, A. B. & Demerouti, E, (2008). Toward a model of work engagement, *Career Development International*, 33, 209-223.
- Burns, R. B. (2000). *Introduction to research methods* (4th ed.), London: Sage Publications.
- Cameron, K. (1978). Measuring organizational effectiveness in institutions of higher education, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 23, 604-632.

- Cameron, K. (1981). Domains of organizational effectiveness in colleges and Universities, *Academy of Management Journal* 24(1), 25-47.
- Cameron, K. (1986). A study of organizational effectiveness and its predictions, *Management Science* 32 (1), 87-112.
- Dockel, A, Basson, J. S. & Coetzee, M. (2006). The effect of retention factors on organizational commitment: A investigation of high technology employees, *South Africa Journal of Human Resource Management* 4(2), 20-28.
- Emaikwu, S. O. (2011). *Educational research and statistics. Kaduna.*
- Etioni, A. (1964). *Modern organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice – Hall.
- Gigliotti, L. (1987). *An adaption of Cameron's model of organization effectiveness at the academic departmental level in two-year community colleges*, Unpublished PhD thesis. Syracuse University.
- Giti, A. & Suhaida L. A, K. (2012). A review on the models of organizational effectiveness: A look at Cameron's model in higher education, *International Education Studies* 5(2), 80-87.
- Guest, D. E. (2011). Human resource management and performance: A review and research agenda. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 8(3), 263-276.
- Hassan, S. (2016). Impact of HRM practices on employees' performance, *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Services*, 6(1), 15-22.
- Henry, E. A. (2011). *Is the influence of organizational culture on organizational effectiveness universal? An examination of the relationship in the electronic media (radio) service sector in the English Speaking Caribbean*, Unpublished PhD thesis; University of Mississippi.
- Kim, C. (nd). *Critical questions in assessing organizational effectiveness.*
- Klein, F. (2014). *The role and impact of human resource management: A multi-level investigation of factors affecting employee work engagement*, MSc Philosophy in Psychology Department of University of Oslo.
- Liv, C., Rhodora, A. N. & Thelma, D. P. (2020). Human resource management (HRM) practices. *Journal of Advanced Management Science*, 8(4), 121-125.
- Lochhead, C. & Stephens, A. (2004). *Employees retention, labour turnover and knowledge transfer: Case studies from Canadian plastic sector*, Canada: Canadian Labour and Business Centre.

Mensah, R. (2014). *effects of human resource management practices as retention of employees in the banking industry in Accra, Ghana*. Thesis submitted to Kenyatta University.

Paawe, J. & Roselie, P. (2005). HRM and performance: What next?, *Human Resource Management Journal* 15(4), 68-83.

Ulrich, D. (1998). A new mandate for human resources, *Harvard Business Review*, 124-134.