

**STRATEGIES OF MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCE PERSONNEL FOR  
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN A DWINDLING  
ECONOMY IN UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*Human Resource Personnel refers to the organization employees, which are described with reference to their training, experience, judgment, intelligence, relationship and insight. The study was designed to investigate the strategies of managing human resource personnel for economic and political development in a dwindling economy in universities in Nigeria. The paper analyzed the variables such as management, human resource personnel, concept of university education and a dwindling economy. Adam Smith's Laissez faire theory of (1776) was adopted for the study which states that economic development, and hence the welfare of individual citizens and the society in general will be best promoted if the economy is not controlled by the state but left in the hands of individual citizens to manage. Based on these findings, the paper concluded that the strategies of managing human resource personnel for economic and political development are planning, provision of staff development, adequate welfare and fair compensation, political sensitization programmes, staff involvement in decision making process and allocation and assignment of responsibilities as part of apprenticeship programmes. Based on these conclusion, it was suggested that adequate planning should be put in place aimed at ensuring that the human resource requirements and needs of the universities are identified and met, government and other stakeholders should regularly organize seminars, conferences and workshops so as to enhance staff development.*

**Keywords:** *Strategies, managing human resources personnel, economic and political development in a dwindling economy in universities.*

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In response to the dwindling economic performance in Nigeria in the last two decades, the government turned the nation's economy toward a market oriented system. This policy includes a comprehensive privatization program of state-owned enterprises as a means of stimulating and accelerating national economic development (Bureau of Public enterprises, 2001).

To achieve its required goals, every organization (profit or non-profit) must have not only the required resources but must also use them effectively. Management is concerned generally with the proper mobilization of men, materials, machines, and money for the achievement of the set objectives of the organization. Managers are responsible for acquiring, developing, protecting and proper utilization of organizational resources to achieve organizational goals. The importance of human resources in the success of an organization is on the increase and this is known both within and outside the organization. The mere fact that Managing Directors and Chief Executives have the biggest problem and greatest challenges, confirms its importance in the organization. The success or failure of any organization to a large extent, depends on the people working in it, their skills, ideas, knowledge, satisfaction, commitment etc. The human resource personnel of an organization refers to these individuals who have a wide variety of knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform these job activities that will contribute to the attainment of the organizational goals.

They are the people involved in the production and distribution of goods and services. They include managers to the least employee.

The quality of the human resources programme, abilities and attitudes of the managers, to a great extent determines the effectiveness of the employee contributions. The managers and supervisors need to create an enabling environment for the effective utilization of its members. Human resource which is the most valuable and most perplexing resource must be properly harnessed. A satisfied workforce enables its organization to achieve its corporate objectives which include satisfied customers, cost effectiveness and profitability.

There has been an increasing demand on the employers by the employees and the public for increase in social responsibility in the human resources program. There are also complaints of many jobs devitalizing and injuring the health of employees. There are charges of discrimination leveled against some employers in terms of hiring, training advancement and compensation against women minorities, the handicapped and the aged. Other employers are being accused of pay that is not comparable to work done. These and other problems at place of work made workers not to have a good quality of work life (QWL) which must be avoided. QWL has to do with the "individual's job related well being and the extent to which his or her work experience is rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other

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negative personal consequences” (Shamir and Solomon 2010). These problems make human resources management a continuing project.

Aadesina (1990:7) declares that human resource personnel in the university system include all the men and women in that school system from the principal to the gateman”, it includes every member of the organization that plays a role no matter how little in the attainment of the goals. Accordingly, French (2011) defines Human Resources Management as “a term used to refer to the philosophy, policies, procedures, and practices related to the management of people within an organization. In all the definitions, it could be deduced that two distinct aspects of the personnel functions are:

- Routine administrative duties like the execution of established policies finding solution to minor day-to-day problems as they occur. Maintenance of healthy relationships and provision of personnel services (e.g records).
- Provision of advice on personnel policies, strategies, procedures and systems to management. It does this by: (a) analyzing existing conditions and staff resources in the light of the future requirements of the organization. (b) Diagnosing and defining its problems (c) prescribing and (d) executing the appropriate action to bring about the required change.

Therefore, mapping out appropriate strategies of managing human resource personnel for economic and political development in a dwindling

economy in universities in Nigeria is the major crux of this study.

A dwindling economy is a state of economy in which growth is slow, flat or declining. The term can refer to the economy as a whole or a component of the economy such as weak institutions and structures (Koo, 2011). It denotes a business cycle contraction which results to a general slowdown in economic activities. It is characterized by serious decline in consumption, investment, government spending, net export activities, high rate of loss of jobs, unemployment, galloping exchange rate, high cost of goods and services, closure of businesses, owing of government workers, increase in crime rate and decreasing value of our local currency (naira). This economic situation has affected all sectors of life and economic activities. Therefore, we need to map out strategies that can assist in economic recovery, growth and development.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical position of this discourse is anchored on Adam Smith’s Laissez Faire theory postulated in (1776). The theory states that economic development, and hence the welfare of individual citizens and the society in general will be best promoted if the economy is not controlled by the state but left in the hands of individual citizens to manage. His reasoning is that every individual knows his interest best and will pursue that interest to his best or optimum advantage, maintaining that, if left alone, he (the individual) will seek to maximize

his own wealth. Therefore, if left alone, all individuals will maximize aggregate wealth, hence the totality of the wealth of the nation. Adam Smith's theory was contained in his book titled *An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nation*, which was published in 1776 and reproduced in M.L. Thingan, published in 1985.

Essentially, Smith argued for an economy free of official regulation, but left to be directed by market forces, with profit as the propelling motive. Thus, Adam Smith was one of the believers in the so called "invisible hand" or natural forces of the market. He further maintained that economic growth will be cumulative and lead to prosperity due to progress in agriculture, manufacturing industries and trade based on a large population and expanded market. From the explanations above, this theory is suitable for the study.

### **Concept of Management**

An organization is made up of people who have come together in order to achieve certain agreed purposes and objectives. Although, the people may have direct backgrounds and divergent individual interests and characteristics, their membership of the organization presupposes their belief and hope that the organization will help them to attain both the individual and collective objectives for the existence of the organization. For their aspirations and expectations to be materialized, there must be proper planning, coordination and management of

the activities of groups and individuals within the organization.

Nwagwu (2004) opines that management is concerned with the planning and administration of all activities and programmes in an organization. Accordingly, Peretomode (2003) defines management as the guidance, leadership and control of the efforts of a group of people toward some common objectives. It is a social or interactional and economic process involving a sequence of coordinated events – planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling or leading in order to use available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way. Management is a central activity in any group, more so in the educational industry. Ogonor (2004:305) views management as a variety of sequential and related activities which are designed and carried out so that the goals of teaching and learning can be effectively and efficiently met in relation to the dynamic needs of society.

Furthermore, management has been defined as the process of allocating an organization's input (human and economic resources) through planning, organizing, directing and controlling for the purpose of producing outputs (goods and services) desired by its customers so that organizational objectives are accomplished. In the process, work is performed with and through organizational personnel in an ever-changing business environment.

Again, the meaning of management is contextual in the sense that

it could mean different things in different situation. Therefore, the appropriate definition of management depends on the context in which it is used. Management can be a process that involves several activities directed at achieving the goals of an organization in the most efficient manner. It can also be a body of personnel at the policy-making level in any specific skills, knowledge and principles are acquired (Akinwumiju and Agabi, 2008)

### **Concept of Human Resource Personnel**

The term human resources personnel could be used interchangeably with human resource management. It has been defined by various authors and institutions in several ways. The British institute of personnel management published the following definition in 2014:

Personnel management is a responsibility of all those who manage people as well as being a description of work of those who are employed as specialist. It is that part of management which is concerned with people at work and with their relationship within an enterprise. It applies not only to industry and commerce but to all field of employment. Personnel management aims to achieve both efficiency and justice, neither of which can be pursued successfully without the other.

It seeks to bring together and develop into an effective organization the men and women who make up an enterprise, enabling each to make his own best contributions to its success both as an individual and as a member of a working group. It seeks to provide fair terms and

conditions of employment add satisfying work for those employed in particular, human resource management is concerned with the development and application of policies governing;

- (a) Manpower planning, recruitment, selection placement and termination.
- (b) Terms of employment, methods and standards of remunerations.
- (c) Working conditions and employee service;
- (d) Formal and informal communication and constitution both through the representatives of employers and employees and at all levels throughout the enterprise.
- (e) Negotiation and application of governments on wages and working conditions, procedures for the avoidance and settlement of dispute.

Armstrong (2011) defined human resource personnel as that integral part of management that is concerned with obtaining, organizing, and motivating the human resources required by all enterprise; with developing an organization climate and management style which will promote effective effort and co-operation and trust between all the people working in it; and with helping the enterprise to meet legal obligations and its social responsibility towards its employees with regards to the conditions of work and quality of life provided for them. In the same vein, Cumming (2008) offers a more practical and descriptive definition;

“Personnel management is concerned with obtaining the best staff for an organization and having got them, looking after them so that they will want to

stay and give their best for their jobs". Wehrich and Koontz (2008) define staffing as "filling and keeping filled, positions in the organization structure. This involves identifying the manpower requirements, knowing the actual member available, recruiting, selecting, placing, promoting, appraising, planning the careers of compensating and training of otherwise developing both candidate's and current career job holders so that they can accomplish their task effectively and efficiently.

### **Concept of University Education**

The Nigerian education system is based on the National policy on education document of 1977 (last revised in 2013). The policy identified the following national educational goals: a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (FGN, 2013). To meet these goals, the Nigerian educational system is structured into different sections; basic education (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (three years) and university education (four to six years) depending on the programme of study. University education is provided to:

- a) Prepare the student for research and leadership.
- b) Provide highly specialized training courses adapted to the needs of economic and social life.
- c) Be open to all so as to cater for the many aspects of lifelong education in the widest sense, and

d) Promote international co-operation through internationalization of research, technology, networking and free movement of persons and ideas (UNESCO, 2004).

University education is indeed the backbone of any society, as its quality determines the quality of human resources and development. University education as we see it today is a complex system facilitating teaching, research and international co-operation (Mishra, 2017). In Nigeria, tertiary education is provided by universities, polytechnics, colleges of education as well as institutes that prepare candidates for professional courses such as accounting, law, architecture, mass communication, etc. Therefore, the importance of appropriate strategies and human resource personnel management for economic and political development in a dwindling economy in universities in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Thus, well articulated strategies are potent measures to apprehend a dwindling economy.

### **Strategies of Managing Human Resource Personnel for Economic and Political Development in a Dwindling Economy in Universities**

Managing human resource personnel for economic development in a dwindling economy will involve making budgetary estimates about the number of employees for a given educational programme. In other words, it involves a forecast aimed at ensuring that the human resource requirements and needs of a school are identified and plans are made

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adequately for the realization of the objectives. Armstrong (2003: 362) identified the following aims of human resource planning.

- a) Attraction and retention of the right caliber of staff in a given university
- b) Identification of shortages or surpluses.
- c) Effective utilization of staff through the introduction of flexible work schedule
- d) Developing strategies for staff development as a way of retaining the skills and techniques of the committed teachers.
- e) Creating avenues for the development of the staff so that they can adapt to changes.

The National Policy on Nigerian Education (2004) stipulates that the five major national objectives of education in Nigeria include.

- (a) A free and democratic society
- (b) A just and egalitarian society
- (c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- (d) A great and dynamic economy
- (e) A land of bright and opportunities for all

These values will become a mere philosophical rhetoric without the active involvement of these staff. This importance justifies the call for management of the staff for effective economic actualization of universities objective. Therefore, management must produce a perfect blend in:

- a) Teacher demand and supply
- b) Teacher student ratio

- c) Subject balancing in all universities
- d) Provision of staff development
- e) Adequate welfare and fair compensation
- f) Staff security
- g) Retention plan and reduction in staff attrition
- h) Staff motivation, efficiency and effectiveness (Maduagwu & Nwogu, 2004).

Accordingly, Maduagwu (2004: 3) states that “leadership is about politics, from the classroom setting, students leadership starts. Students are appointed or elected to various positions by their classroom mates or teachers. Class prefects, monitors, labour prefects and school captains as they are called are part of leadership responsibilities. These are responsibilities that go with politics in that regards”.

Teaching is a career. If people seek to achieve power through their career then the university staff must be managed effectively to achieve this political consciousness. It is the teacher (staff) who analyzes current political issues and interprets them to the students. Therefore, since an individual cannot offer what he does not possess, educational managers must endeavor to manage the staff (human resources) for political development through:

- a) Political sensitization programmes
- b) Leadership development seminar/programme

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- c) Allocation and assignment of responsibilities as part of apprenticeship programmes.
- d) Teacher involvement in decision making process.

### Conclusion

In view of the observations and findings of this discourse, it is concluded that the need for a well articulated strategies of managing human resource personnel for economic and political development such as planning, provision of staff development, adequate welfare and fair compensation, political sensitization programmes, teacher involvement in decision making process and allocation and assignment of responsibilities as part of apprenticeship programmes etc are of paramount importance to apprehending a dwindling economy in university in Nigeria.

### Suggestions

In the light of the observations and findings made, as well as conclusion of the discourse, the researchers offer the following suggestions for implementation:

1. Adequate planning should be put in place aimed at ensuring that the human resource requirements and needs of the universities are identified and plans are made adequate for the realization of the objectives.
2. Government and other stakeholders such as companies, banks, multinational corporations should put up a platform that can enhance staff development through in-serve training

such as seminars, conferences, workshops etc.

3. Political sensitization programmes should be regularly organized for staff to enable them achieve these political consciousness.
4. Staff should be fully involved in decision making process to enable them cross-fertilize their talents and knowledge.

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