

AN ASSESSMENT OF MANPOWER PLANNING IN NIGERIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

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Abstract: It is unfortunate that unavailability of manpower database, lack of forecasting are part of the factors affecting manpower planners in local government in Nigeria. Hence, manpower planning as a function of management is highly indispensable in the attainment of local government development goals. The study assesses manpower planning in Nigeria local government system, using Ewekoro Local Government, Ogun State. This discourse is exploratory in nature as it largely relied on secondary data generated from journals, articles, books, internet, etc as well as direct interview with the local government staffs which serves as primary source of information. Findings from the direct interview revealed that inadequate manpower inventory, improper utilization of the 1% of federal allocations for staff training, lack of forecasting especially when it comes to replacement policy and succession planning have impede human resources planner in Ewekoro local government. It was concluded that Ewekoro local government should have strategic manpower planning and human resources system because it serves as the bedrock for effective and efficient performances of the council. Recommendations based on the study is that there should be effective organizational communication of human resources policy, adequate workers motivation, engendering performance and diligence of career local council staffs, creation of enabling working environment through adequate provision of administrative offices for local government staffs.

Keywords: Manpower, Manpower Planning, Manpower Inventory, Local Government

Introduction

Manpower planning as a function of management is highly indispensable in the attainment of local government developmental goals. There is need to plan for the various resources such as human, material, time, etc in order to achieve these predetermined goals. It should be noted that, it is the function of the personnel to combine the various resources in an appropriate manner in order to actualize the objectives of the organization (Omode, 2016). Every organization needs three main resources to survive. These are financial, material, and human resources. An organization needs money to pay its staff and to buy the essential materials or equipment for operation. Even if an organization has got all the money and the materials it needs, it must still find capable people to put them into effective utilization. It is therefore safe to claim that human resources are the most important of the three essential resources of an organization. It is equally true to say that human resources are the highest

asset of any organization, because no matter the amount of capital invested in an organization, its success or failure depends on the quality of people who plan and execute its programme (Nwankwo, 2013:1).

However, as it concerns the local government system in Nigeria specifically, effective human resources planning is necessary because it will assist the local governments in obtaining and retaining the quantity and quality of manpower needed for effective use; ensuring the optimal use of human resources currently employed through training and career planning; avoiding waste by eliminating redundancies; providing for the future manpower needs of the organization in terms of needed skills, experience, locations, numbers, ages and sex; establishing and recognizing future job requirements; being better prepared to cope with the human problems associated with increases or decreases in manpower; enabling the local government commission to identify areas where a shortage or excess of manpower will likely occur in the future and to take advantage of the impending situation (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2014).

In Nigeria, general policies on the conditions of service of local government employees are made by the States and local government affairs department and the meeting of the key functionaries in charge of local government (Okoli, 2000). The implementation and interpretation of these conditions of service are left to the various local government service commissions and the directors of local government and heads of service in the various local governments where they exist. Therefore, the achievement of the purposes, aims, or objectives of the local government system depends to a large extent on the quality of personnel employed in it. According to Omode (2016), lack of systematic personnel planning as in many cases given rise to duplication of work in Nigeria local government.

Statement Of The Problems

In spite training and development institutions such as Administrative and Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Centre for Management and Development (CMD), National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Local Government Service Commission and among others, it appears manpower planning and development has made little or no impact in local government service performance (Omode, 2016). This ugly situation can be traced to issues such as training based on bureaucratic politics and patronage, frequently neglect of local problem realities and issues when it comes to planning, designing models based on borrowed models that are rarely updated, use of irrelevant manpower planning and development program that have no bearing with local government objectives and policy.

Most of the early studies about manpower planning in Nigeria public organization focused more on State and this has create lots of lacuna to the local government system which invariably affect the human resources and other resources of the local government. Writers such as Omodia (2009), Igbokwe-Ibeto & Osawe (2014), Eneanya (2009), Adamolekun (2002) and among others failed to look how manpower planning affects the operation and performance of the local government in Nigeria which the gap in knowledge tend to study. Meanwhile, part of the challenges facing manpower planning in Ewekoro Local Government is lack of forecasting especially replacement for manpower turnover and succession planning for retirement officers; manpower database unavailability also affect manpower planners to monitor the action rates in various departments of the local government because through this, vital records/data can provide information for recruitment and hiring as well as clues about morale of local government employees.

Objectives Of The Study

The main objective of the study is to examine how manpower planning affect local government employee in Ewekoro Local Government while the specific objective will be the strategies that can be adopted that can enhance the performance of Ewekoro local government through effective human resources system.

Methodology

This paper explores effects of manpower planning on Ewekoro Local Government employee in Ogun State, Nigeria. Based on this, the study maintains the qualitative paradigm of social research such as text books, journals, articles and other publications. To improve on the validity of the study, secondary sources of data were adopted.

Literature Review

In this section, the key concepts of this study were conceptualize in order to achieve deeper understanding of the salient issues raised in this study. These include; manpower planning and human resource management in local government.

Manpower Planning

The concept of manpower could be viewed as a generic concept because of its focus is shifting to human resource that is needed for the development of the organization (Omodia, 2009). Ibijofo in (Obojo, 2012) conceived manpower planning as the process by which an organization ensures that it has the right number of people and the right kind of people at the right place and the right time, doing things for which they are economically most useful (Moyo, 2015). The concept of manpower development could be defined as the existence of unskilled and skilled humans that need training or re-training to perform specific task in an organization (Ekpo, 2009). Thus, manpower development could be seen as organizational specific because it is largely a function of organizational manpower or job specification i.e. it could be viewed as the adaptation of the human resources available in the country to the needs, objectives and orientation of a given organization (LaMarco, 2018).

Conversely, manpower planning is concerned with budgeting for the most effective use of an organization's labour resources. Manpower planning in local government has been described as the process by which local government ensures that it has the right number of people and the right kind of people, in the right places, at the right time, doing the right things, to serve the purposes of the local government system (Omode, 2016). It may also be described as an attempt to forecast how many and what kind of employees will be required in the future, and to what extent this demand will be met (Nwankwo, 2013).

Similarly, Dimba (2010) describes the concept as the activity of administrator which is aimed at coordinating the requirements from and the availability of different types of employees. Usually this involves ensuring that the local government has enough of the right kind of manpower at such times as it is needed. It may also involve adjusting the requirements to the available supply. Every organization plans its manpower needs just as it budgets the amount of money it needs to spend. Those organizations (private or public) which do not have well established personnel departments or planning units in the administration fall into the error of looking for staff when necessary. All organizations determine their manpower needs either on a short – term, middle – term or on a long-term

basis. However, for most organizations long-term manpower planning rarely exceeds five years. Short-term planning is a yearly adjustment of the figures on the current payroll, which goes with the ritual annual budgeting in organizations. Manpower planning is important for the growth of any organization and should be made part of organizational planning (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Osawe 2014).

Most organizations that undertake comprehensive manpower planning, the human resources department is made responsible not only for preparing the plans when there is no special planning unit but also for assisting the other departments in their utilization (Omode, 2016).

Local Government Human Resources Management

Human resources management is all about managing people in the organization. In the local government parlance, the people who make up the local council are considered the most important resources. Hence, people and how they are managed are becoming more important because many other sources of competitive success are less powerful than they used to (Nwankwo, 2013). However, recognizing that the basis for competitive advantage for any local government has changed is essence to developing a different frame of orientation for considering issues of human resource management as strategic, because it aims to ensure that local government obtains and retains the skilled, committed and well-motivated workforce it needs. This means taking steps to assess and satisfy future people needs and to enhance and develop their inherent capacities, contributions, potential and employability by providing learning and continuous development opportunities. It also involves the operation of recruitment and selection procedures, management development and training activities linked to the needs of the local government alongside their motivation (Omode, 2016).

Armstrong (2009) defined human resources management as a strategy, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in an organization. Boxall et al (2007) defined human resources management as the management of work and people towards desired ends. Adewale (2012) defined human resources management as comprising a set of policies designed to maximize organizational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work.

In lieu of the above, the importance of human resources planning to organizations cannot be overemphasized; at least, it enables organizations to keep accurate and detailed personnel records, rather than forecast intuitively (Obi, 2002:53). It will also permit manpower planners to monitor the action rates in various departments of the local government. Such vital records/data can provide information for recruitment and hiring as well as clues about morale of employees. These information and clues could be useful to local government human resources planners. Also, adequate manpower planning is important because it will not only help organizations to use their manpower resources optimally but also to ensure that organization's manpower resources can meet up with the demands of the prevailing socio-economic, political and technological changes at all times (Omode, 2016).

Finally, adequate manpower resources planning is very important in order to prevent severe budget crises because if this situation arises, the only option usually left for management is retrenchment of large number of employees, or induce voluntary retirement by offering financial incentives. Alternatively, management could freeze employment or combine all

the alternatives highlighted above. It is, therefore, necessary to plan manpower resources in such a way to avoid all adverse consequences.

Manpower Planning in Ewekoro Local Government System, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Manpower planning for the local government system in Nigeria are done by a galaxy of discreet institutions such as: The State and Local Government Affairs Department, Abuja; The State Deputy Governor's Office; The Bureau for Local Government Affairs; Ministries of Local Government; Local Government Service Commission; Local Government Council Chairman; Directors of Local Government and Heads of Service; and Directors of Personnel Management (DPM).

For purposes of clarification, it is pertinent to briefly discuss the roles of the local government service commission, the executive chairman of the local government council, and the director of local government and head of service in manpower planning at Ewekoro local government, Ogun State.

Local Government Service Commission

The local government service commission is charged with responsibility for personnel matters in the local government system. It decides on the general trends in manpower development, based on feedback from the various local governments. Its responsibility covers both senior and junior staff. It decides on recruitment, training, development, and general staff development. In the exercise of these functions, it engages in both short – term, middle – term and long-term assessment of staff requirements and supply.

Unfortunately, it cannot decide on the critical determinant of staff development strategy, which revolves around finance. Apart from the 1% training fund, the commission lacks the much needed funds to carry out logical and conclusive manpower development plans. The result is that, in most cases, some local governments may need staff in certain cadres, yet the commission may be unable to assist because of shortage of funds.

Chairman of the Local Government Council

The chairman of the local government council exercises delegated powers of the local government service commission in respect of officers on grade levels 01 to 06. In the present political dispensation, the local government chairmen, primarily to score political points, sometimes to the detriment of local government administration, exercise this delegated authority with unmitigated pleasure and incredible enthusiasm. Local government service becomes a dumping ground for political associates, hooligan, friends, and relations of the chairmen. Under this stage, manpower planning becomes hindrance which makes it difficult for human resource management. Consequently, whether vacancies exist or not the chairman still proceeds to recruit.

Director of Local Government and Head of Service

This body also held responsible on personnel matters which include manpower planning at the local government level that fall within the purview of the director of local government and head of service. It is his/her duty to send information on staff recruitments to the local government service commission based on returns from the director of personnel management. These returns are in turn compiled from submissions and requests from the various heads of department.

As the chairman of the senior staff management committee responsible for all personnel activities affecting local government staff on grade levels 07 and above, the director of

local government and head of service is centrally positioned in the development of manpower planning of the local government.

Unfortunately, in practice, he/she is emasculated by the overbearing political manipulations of the local government chairman, local political party officials and thugs, political office holders at all levels of government, and the administrative inertia of the local government service commission. The result is that the director of local government and head of service is neither the director nor the head of any service, as he/she watches helplessly while his/her office is inundated with staff of all categories, most of whom are not only redundant but constitute themselves into a flatterers in the administrative machinery of the local government.

Manpower Planning: Challenges in Ewekoro Local Government, Ogun State.

There are many difficulties facing manpower planning in Ewekoro Local Government and these hitches have hinders the performance of the human resources system in the local government. Part of the challenges are highlighted below and they are:

Inadequate Human Resources Inventory

Personnel audit is a truism but we are of the opinion that there is a need to be proactive in human resources inventory to know exactly who to plan for, their needs and existing capabilities. Meanwhile, the rate of personnel audit in the local government existing side by side with ghost workers syndrome is a thing of concern because the actual number of local government employees cannot be easily ascertain based on political associates, flatterers which have hinder the ineffective management of the councils human resources. In fact, it has become a major concern for council managers to plan for this political sycophant without knowing who and how many of whom then are to manage.

Improper Utilization of the 1% of Federal Allocations for Staff Training

The importance of training employees cannot be over emphasized. Its benefits outstrip its cost. As a process, it enhances the skills, capabilities and knowledge of employees for doing a particular job; it moulds the thinking of employees and leads to quality performance of employees. Training is continuous and never ending in nature. It is crucial for organizational development and success in which local government is not exempted. It is fruitful to both employers and employees of an organization, as employee will become more efficient and productive if he/she is trained well. Training improves morale of employees, leads to less supervision; increase chances of promotion and ultimately increases productivity.

However, corruption has become the bane from the top to the down trodden when it comes to proper utilization of the 1% of federal allocation for staff training which adversely affects manpower planning and development in Ewekoro Local Government.

Improper Delineation of Functions and Offices

In Nigeria local government system, almost every employee wants to be in revenue drive in which Ewekoro not exempted. Many would not want to be in the works department. Many in the finance department will not want to leave office for a day. For this reason, many of them have turned down the offers for training because of the promises of their post in the office. Therefore, to get the best out of the workforce, well delineated function/offices for the employees is a most so that succession planning and replacement policy can be effective.

Strategies for improving manpower planning in Ewekoro Local Government, Ogun State.

Below are the strategic areas that ICT can help to improve and enhance manpower planning in terms of effectiveness on Ewekoro local council are:

Recruiting

One way in which human resources has been significantly impacted by technology is in the area of recruiting. Before the Internet, personnel managers had to rely on print publications, such as newspapers to post jobs and get prospects for open positions. Other methods such as networking also were used, but personnel administrator in the local government did not have the ability to post a job in one or more locations and have millions of people see it all at once. Technology has made recruiting more efficient and, in the hands of the right recruiter, more effective as well through the uses of online portal and social media (Isah 2010).

Training

Information technology makes it possible for local government personnel manager to train new staff members in a more efficient manner like their counter part in private sector as well. The ability to access company information and training programs from remote locations eliminates the need for trainers to work directly with new hires on all training. Some interaction will always be necessary on some level of course, but training in virtual classrooms makes it possible for the personnel manager to train a large number of employees quickly and to assess their progress through computerized testing programs (Adewole, 2012).

Data Storage and Retrieval

Human resources managers generally process a considerable amount of paperwork and also have to keep much of that paperwork on file for a considerable period of time. The use of electronic imaging has made it possible for public organization to store and retrieve files in an electronic format. Technology also makes it possible for human resources planners to simply print the forms that are needed for employees. Printing on demand eliminates the need to dig through an endless number of files in the file cabinet to find what is needed.

Those of us who have been hired know that it is necessary to complete forms so that we can become an “official” employee. The type of information requested usually includes first name, last name, address, emergency contacts, banking information, beneficiaries for benefit plans, marital status, and of course Social Insurance Number. There are data and the human resources (HR) department has always been the custodian of employee data. The type of data collected, where the data are stored, how the data are used, and the type of system used for these purposes has changed over time, but the need to collect information relating to hiring, promoting, and firing employees has not changed. HR technology is increasingly being used by small, medium, and large employers to meet the needs of its stakeholders (Bulmash, 2006).

Performance Management

Enhanced performance management is another byproduct of technological improvement. Human resources planner can use computer technology to assess employee performance and also to get employee feedback to be used for the betterment of the organization. Various software programs make it possible for human resources planner to examine employee performance using metrics to ensure that employees are meeting performance standards. Employees that don't measure up can be subjected to additional training or let go in favor a replacement that can come in and do the job.

Motivation:

Nigerian local governments condition of employment in is not fundamentally different from other organizations in the country, there should be comprehensive, attractive and tempting conditions of service, staff regulations and scheme of service in the local government system that are adequately comparable with relevant organizations in Nigeria, like job security and absence of all forms of job hazards. This is with a view to making the employees of the local governments not only motivated but also satisfied with the work they do. More so, there should be workplace environmental requisites in the forms of social amenities in the local governments to relatively attract, retain and amuse the employees. In all, there should be transparent and transformational leadership in the local governments as a must strategy for employee motivation and achievement of objectives.

The drive stems from the facts imbedded in the assumption that social influences on motivation suggest that motivations are socially and culturally determined which leaders, even at the local government level, must not ignore because leadership and motivation are intrinsically connected with and dependent on each other. Yet, the need for recognizing and motivating different people for different things should be stressed. Motivated local government employees will always be satisfied, happy and zealously ready to be engaged in any challenging task the organization places on them. Employees will therefore, strive to achieve such organizational objectives based on the degree of motivation categorized into physical, socio-economic and psychic dimensions (Isah, 2010).

Theoretical Review

New public management (NPM) theory: This theory is relevant to this study and it was formally conceptualized by Hood (1991). This theory is relevant and applicable to the study based on the fact that the input (quantity and quality of applicants) determines the output (performance). Efforts at conceptualizing the various steps help us have an insight into the effect of human resources management practices in an organization and its positive implication on organizational efficiency and employee performance which is the central theme of this study. New public management theory therefore, captures the basis of institutional and organization restructuring as an attempt to raise its performance by improving the quality of service delivery. It is result focused rather than the process of result. New public management theory came up with different concepts for performance and principles to achieve it (Pedro, 2016). He further identified the principles as flexibility in decision making; 'accountability and efficiency; improvement in resource use through labour discipline; reduction of public sector expenditure; competition in the public sector through decentralization and emphasis on result and not procedure.

New public management points to the failures and inadequacies of public sector performance over time and the problems lying squarely in the nature and processes of public sector activity and traditional public administration. As a new paradigm in public administration, NPM theory is the transition from old traditional public administration theories to an arrangement that is workable, practicable and result oriented. It places emphasis on efficiency, effectiveness, corporate governance, technological innovation and democratization. New public management theory is a relentless effort in the direction of greater cost reduction, transparency and accountability in resource allocation and performance management through the quality of service (Pedro, 2016).

The main thrust of New Public Management theory is not with what to do but how to do it better. The basic hypothesis hold that market oriented management of the public sector will

lead to greater cost-efficiency and effectiveness for governments without having negative side-effects on other objectives and considerations. However, the exponents fail to recognize that the ecology of public administration varies and that culture of any given society can hinder or accelerate its growth and development. For example, in Nigeria, because government is the largest employer of labour, even where and when there is no need for recruitment, government could embark on recruitment just to score cheap political support (Adeyemo, 2013). Despite the pit falls of NPM, the summary of the various views taken together, isolate New Public Management (NPM) theory as relevant and applicable in analyzing the subject matter of manpower planning and development because whenever issues of public sector efficiency and effectiveness is mentioned in contemporary times, NPM theory comes to mind. Thus, the elements of manpower planning and development based on this theory enable us have the bases for accessing the local government system as regards manpower planning and development practices. The theory as relating to manpower planning and development also enables us direct our search light for possible causes of poor performance and low productivity in the Nigerian public sector (Balogun, 2016).

Conclusion

Manpower is a critical resource although its significance is always recognized in local government. Local council with inadequate manpower, even when it has other limitless resources, will remain poor and unprogressive organization so long as the bulk of its staff remain illiterate and has people with no saleable skills and competence to harness the organization's financial and material resources for effective and efficient performance.

There is an urgent need in Nigerian local government system to improve workers' attitude to work with a view of enhancing productivity. There should also campaigns to enhance the status of certain professionals, such as technicians and craft workers that are looked down upon in spite of their importance.

The study concluded that Local Government should have strategic manpower planning and human resources system because it serves the bedrock for effective and efficient performances of the various councils in Nigeria. As the popular saying goes, he who fails to plan has planned to fail.

Recommendations

Engendering performance and diligence by career local council staffs: The career civil servants are supposed to take back their pride of place in the council as vibrant and progressive agent of change in the locality where they work. If the essence of the creation of the local government is to be achieved, they are not supposed to engage in show of power with the political appointees and elected officials because they will rule for a while and leave the council, but the career local government civil servants are always there. That is where their career is and so they should guide it with their life by being proactive in raising the status of the council, vis-à-vis being productive and ensuring efficiency of the local council. The political officers are to give them the enabling environment to work and survive.

Creation of enabling environment through adequate provision of administrative offices: It has become practice in Nigerian local governments system that there are usually about five or six staffs in one small office. This situation alone kills the morale of the workers and

tarnishes the image of the council. Hence there is the urgent need to ensure adequate administrative blocks where the employees will work effectively and efficiently.

Effective Organizational Communication of HR Policy: Effective communication is a basic prerequisite for the attainment of organization goals. No organization or group can exist without communication, not even the local government. Without effective communication, the management of human resources will be hampered. Even the co-ordination of work is impossible without effective compunction and the organization will collapse for lack of communication. Hence co-operation also becomes essential because people can easily communicate their needs and feelings to others when it comes to administrative policy in local government.

The set aside federal government 1% of the national budget for the development of the Nigerian local government workforces need to be maximize. Hence, this gesture by the federal government depends on the value attached to the proper management of the workforce of the Nigerian local government. Therefore we call for optimal utilization of this fund for the specific purpose of human resources management.

Adequate Workers' Motivation: Fulfilling employees' needs, recognizing their efforts and presenting them with monetary and non-monetary rewards help to create a right workforce for the local government. Recognition of their efforts and boosting their morale results in increased productivity and decreased attrition rate. It is a proven fact that the motivated and dedicated workforce can change the fate of any council. Hence employers and management need to be pro-active in developing a talented and dedicated workforce that can achieve goals of their councils.

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