

Evaluation of Human Resource Management Practices and Job Performance of Non-Academic Staff of Private Universities

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Abstract

Employee job performance is one of the primary motivators of thriving organizations. In a university system, non-academic staff's roles in administrative activities cannot be overstated. However, non-academic staff appear to be underperforming in the Nigerian university system, particularly at private universities. The emanating multiplier effects of this include: poor resource management, poor coordination of activities, underachieving university goals, and so on. This paper aims at critically reviewing existing literature on job performance, Employee Job Performance in the University System, Human Resource Management (HRM), Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP), Attracting, Selecting and Retention of Competent Personnel, Career Development, and Training and Development as they relate to human resource management practices on the job performance of non-academic staff at private universities. The study, therefore, recommended that non-academic staff in private universities should be motivated to maintain high job performance. Also, private universities owners or boards of council should ensure adequate human resource management practices in order to improve the job performance of non-academic staff in the institutions.

Keywords: Human Resource, Management Practices, Job Performance, Private Universities

Introduction

Job performance which is sometimes referred to as employee performance has many definitions as there are several aspects to activities that the employees involve in while at work. It can be described as activities that are related to the job of a worker and how well those activities are carried out (Amarakoon, Weerawardena, & Verreynne, 2016). Job performance can be described as an essential tool in the assessment employees and the organisational activities. It connotes the overall expected values from employees' behaviour carried out throughout a set period of time (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). This means that job performance involves what the staff of a given organisation does or carries out at the organisation which is aimed at either improving the organisational goals or the other way round (Jibrin-Bida, Abdul-Majid, & Ismail, 2017).

Also, job performance has to do with the quality and quantity that are accomplished by individual employees or set of employees after finishing a given task (Jibrin-Bida, Abdul-Majid, & Ismail, 2017). A high job performance is essential for the organisation, as the success of the organisation is likely to depend on the resourcefulness, commitment, and innovation of the employee. This high performance in organisation in turn leads to the satisfaction of the employee. Employers expect high efficiency and excellent services from employees that must be completed in continuance of goals and objectives the organisations. There have been factors that could be responsible for the observed poor performance of non-academic staff in universities, in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the influence of human resource management practices (HRMP) on job performance of non-academic staff of private universities.

Employee Job Performance in the University System

In the university system, employee job performance determines the achievement of stated objectives, to put in clearer term, a university cannot achieve its stated objectives without high level of job performance of its employee. Non-academic staff in the university which is the major focus of this study are responsible for keeping records, conducting and admission process, maintaining resources and so on. This implies that their roles in achieving success in the university cannot be over emphasized. Hence the contribution of their job performance to the achievement of university goals is not negotiable.

The services of non-academic staff have been perceived to be poor in the university system considering indicators for measuring job performance such as effectiveness of planning and organizing material resources, result oriented, prioritizing, taking initiatives, cooperating with others, communicating with others effectively, adequate in expressing ideas and intentions, being customer oriented, taking challenge and showing resilience (Mazzei, Flynn & Haynie, 2016). Furthermore, it seems there is decline in the level of job performance among administrative staff in Nigerian universities. A previous study revealed that the weakening level of employee performance in Nigerian tertiary institutions is fast becoming a serious danger to continued existence of universities in Nigeria which needs to be addressed urgently (Pak & Kim, 2016). Most employees of today have a high degree of job dissatisfaction which create attitudes that are undesirable on the job and in turn degenerate their performance ability and that of their working place as well (Širca, Babnik, & Breznik, 2013). For high level of job performance to be achieved in the university system, some factors are necessary to be considered. Among these factors, Human Resource Management practices are key.

Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a planned and coherent method to the administration of the most cherished assets of an organisation. These assets are the persons working in the organisation who as a person and as a group add to the attainment of its objectives (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 2013). Furthermore, Human Resource Management Practices can be defined “as a set of organisational activities that aims at managing a pool of human capital and ensuring that this capital is employed towards the achievement of organisational objectives” (Zheng & Lamond, 2010). The adoption of certain bundles of human resource management practices has the ability to positively influence organisation performance by creating powerful connections or to detract from performance when certain combinations of practices are inadvertently placed in the mix (Mazzei, Flynn & Haynie, 2016). So, if we think human resource management as just the services any manager may provide in recruiting and selecting, appraising, training and compensating employees, then we rather would have to take the backseat for those who understand the influence HRM has on corporate performance to take the centre stage.

Attaining better job performance entails effective, successful and well-organized feat of organisation assets and proficiencies in order to form and sustain competitive position locally and universally. HRM guidelines on selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, promotion, incentives, work design, participation, involvement, communication, employment security and so on must be formulated and implemented by HRM specialist with the help of line managers to achieve the following outcomes: competence, cooperation with management, cooperation among employees, motivation, commitment, satisfaction, retention, presence (Hassan, 2016).

Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP)

Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) on job performance is a major argument among practitioners and academics these days. The question as to whether there exists a HRM system that is always positively related to employee performance, or does this relationship depend on organisational factors and employee outcomes has not been fully answered. It has been argued further that HRM practices can convert human resources into a strategic asset, given the potential for complementarities between practices and organisation resources. It has also been argued whether HRM practices engaged in an organisation can determine significantly the organisational success (Shin & Konrad, 2017).

Human Resource Management practices represent a distinctive approach for shaping employee behaviours and work attitudes, which in turn impacts on organisation performance (Glewwe, Maïga, & Zheng, 2014). Job performance and commitment to the organisation are important employee work behaviours that make direct outcomes of HRM practices (Ismail, Abdul-Halim, & Joarder, 2015). Satisfied and dedicated employees are more possibly to have a resilient aspiration to keep affiliation and exercise substantial effort for the organisation, thereby enhancing the organisation's performance. However, employees do not bring these important work behaviours when they started with the organisation; rather, they acquire them in the workplace, from a process of the exchange relationship, via relevant HRM policies, programme, processes and practices (Tabiu, Pangil, & Othman, 2016).

Recruitment, selection and retention strategies such as competitive salary, allowances training and career development are worldwide matters in both advanced and developing nations. Many organisations throughout the world including universities are striving to keep operational recruitment, selection and retention that is the centre of the organisation aims and there by advance their performance results. Recruitment, selection and retention strategies are the pivotal points of organisations performance results. Recruitment, Selection and retention strategies are important and substantial human resource practices that organisations have to think through and treat efficiently. Recruitment, selection and retention can create either positive or negative effects on performance results. Recruitment and selection of employees are central to the operative of an organisation and there are convincing reasons for attaining the right results (Tabiu, Pangil, & Othman, 2016). Effective recruitment and selection of employees are the essential human resource management activities that if handled rightly can have a substantial effect on job performance of employees and lead to a positive organisational image (Nwanzu & Okolo, 2017).

Attracting, Selecting and Retention of Competent Personnel

In today's competitive business environment especially among private universities the most important factor is the capacity of the institution to attract, select and retain competent personnel because the effectiveness of an organisation depends on the efficiency of its human resource. Recruitment and selection increasingly have become an important way of delivering behaviours seen as necessary to support organisational strategies (Glewwe, Maïga, & Zheng, 2014). Recruitment and selection process is one of the important practices of human resource management and they are crucial in affecting organisational success (Nwanzu & Okolo, 2017). The management of talent now seems to be one of the key functions that human resource management is applying strategically in the organisations, this is because it can help to bring in competent, experienced, talented, self-motivated, self-committed, enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable employees in the organisation who will perform well towards positive organisational performance outcomes while ineffective recruitment, selection and retention

can have negative influence on the organisational success by bringing in employees who are lazy and who perform below standard.

Attracting and hiring talent is critical not only for continuous competitive advantage but also the survival of the institution, properly planned and systematic recruitment and selection, effective retention policies, strategies and procedures are necessary to minimize disruption of work by constantly changing personnel and achieving equitable distribution of employment opportunities. Finding the appropriate ways of encouraging qualified candidates to apply for employment and retaining them is extremely important when hiring an employee in an organisation because one of the adverse consequences of poor recruitment and selection; and retention is the possibility of a high level of staff turnover. Membership of a team or department in the organisation is always changing as people leave or the department grows and new people are needed, whether the reason for requiring new staff is not clear, the importance of the process should never be underestimated, getting the wrong person recruited in the organisation can cause problems within existing group and the person will either require extensive training and development or will require replacement which will be expensive for the organisation. The organisation ought to recruit right people by making the best selection and this can only be done if the right approach is used (Hassan, 2016). People who hire and promote staff should understand the process, develop their skills and stick with a plan of action and it is dangerous to rely too much on gut feeling during recruitment, selection and retention process.

In this global world full of advanced technologies in recruitment, selection and retention, still there are some organisations that fail to adapt and use the current advanced recruitment, selection and retention technologies properly and as a result they fail to overcome the challenges of recruitment, selection, and retention process which results in failure to obtain and retain the right and competent personnel for the job. The overall aim of recruitment and selection is to obtain the number and qualified employees required to satisfy human resource needs of the company at a minimum cost (Asfaw, Argaw & Bayissa, 2015). Another measure for Human Resource management practice are career development and training & development.

Career Development

Career development refers to a set of programmes designed to match an individual's needs, abilities, and career goals with current and future opportunities in the organisation. Since career development focuses on future opportunities, it has essentially a long-term orientation. Career development differs from employee development through training and development in terms of time perspective. While career development has long-term orientation covering the entire work-life of an individual, employee development has immediate and intermediate-term orientation.

Therefore, some of the programmes may be common for those but their orientation may be different in terms of time perspective. For successful and effective career development, employee training and development should be compatible with an individual's career development in the organisation. Employers are motivated to establish career development programmes because such programmes are seen as an effective response to various HR problems, because top managers prefer to promote existing employees and to ensure a good fit between the work and the worker, and because employees have expressed interest in career development as a benefit.

If career development is to succeed, the senior level managers and HR managers must work together to design and implement a career development system. Managers should

encourage employees to take responsibility of their own career. They must offer assistance in the form of feedback on individual, performance. They must make available information about the organisation, the job and career opportunities in the organisation. The organisation is responsible for supplying information about its mission, policies and plans for providing support for employee self- assessment, training and development. One of the important supports comes in the form of mentoring. Receiving advice and counsel from someone who has gone through similar experiences will be invaluable to employees.

Training and Development

Training and Development is one of the main functions of the human resource management department. Training refers to a systematic setup where employees are instructed and taught matters of technical knowledge related to their jobs. It focuses on teaching employees how to use particular machines or how to do specific tasks to increase efficiency. However, development refers to the overall general and informative improvement and development of people in managerial positions. The process of development is in relation to understandings, attitudes, compliance, control and human relations. Training and development programmes are designed according to the requirements of the organisation, the type and skills of employees being trained, the end goals of the training and the job profile of the employees. These programmes are generally classified into two types: (i) on the job programmes, and (ii) off the job programmes.

Different training is given to employees at different levels. The following training methods are used for the training of skilled workers and operators: specific job training programmes, technical training at a training with live demos, Internship training, Training via the process of rotation of job.

People in managerial programmes are given this type of training- Management Games to develop decision making, Programmes to identify potential executives, sensitivity training to understand and influence employee behaviour, Simulation and role-playing, Programmes for improving communication, human relations and managerial skills. Also, Technical Training which is the type of training that is aimed at teaching employees how a particular technology or a machine can be used and maintained. Another training is Skills Training which talks about the training given to employees so as to perform their particular jobs. For example, a receptionist would be specifically taught to answer calls and handle the answering machine.

Training also increases the capacity and value of the workforce. It upsurges the skills and knowledge base of the employees. It improves upon the time and money required to reach the company's goals. For example, trained secretaries will achieve and exceed their targets faster than new and amateur clerk. Training helps to recognise the highly trained and capable employees and the organisation can give jobs of higher responsibilities to them. Trained employees are highly resourceful in comparing to inexperienced ones. It lessens the need to repetitively supervise and oversee the employees. It also improves job satisfaction and thus increases self-confidence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on this review, the following recommendations were made:

1. Non-academic staff in private universities should be motivated to sustain high job performance;
2. Private universities owners or board of council should ensure proper and sufficient human resource management practices (recruitment and selection, training and

- development and career development) so as to improve job performance of non-academic staff in the institutions;
3. Career development programs for non-academic staff should be given priority so as to improve on job performance of these set of staff;
 4. Recruitment and selection of non-academic staff of private universities should be strictly based on merit and possession of necessary competencies;
 5. Training and developmental programs should be organized periodically to ensure non-academic staff are well equipped with global best practices of management. This training should be extensive and should be provided for all employees in all aspects;
 6. Employee should be provided with clear career path in the organization;
 7. There is a need for private universities to ensure formal induction, orientation and familiarization process for new employees; and
 8. There is a need for more than one potential position for promotion of non-academic staff of private universities.

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