

| CHAPTER ONE |

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM: AN IMPRINT ON PROF. EUGENE OKOYE NWADIALOR'S ADMINISTRATION

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INTRODUCTION

There has been continuous agitation for better management of human resources not only in the education system but in every human organization. The turbulent human resource management crisis is challenging the university system to utilize their employees more effectively for improved service delivery. This is because employees constitute one of the most valuable assets of any organization. Neglecting this important resource may result in high deficiency in the teaching service, non-commitment to the objectives of education and general deterioration of quality service delivery in higher education.

In workplace organizations, management and staff rely on each other to achieve beneficial results for the organization. As such, the two must develop a strong relationship. This formal relationship between staff and management is called labour relationship, which as well refers to employer-employee relation. It occurs when a person initiates employment and the other renders services for remuneration under certain conditions. Employees work more effectively when they have a positive connection with their employers. They do their best to ensure the success of organization's programmes and projects. Thus Kaufman (2008) said that firms with friendly connection within the work

environment succeed in maintaining output consistency. Even Hollon (2021) recognized that good employer- employee relations are the foundation for any business; and that poor relations may lead to poor performance. That is to say that employees make the most of their talent and expertise towards contribution to organization's success when they have good relationship amongst all and between parties. This makes them feel valued. Therefore, labour/employee relation becomes essential skills of university administrators in human resource management; size and number of employees notwithstanding. This is the reason Bercu et al (2017) wrote that labour relation is an integral part of human resource management approach to productive improvement. Thus several studies over the years had widely acknowledged the relevance of labour relation in the process of achieving harmonious workplace environment.

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN RESOURCE

Human resources, as defined by Kaufinan (2008), are all the people that, in one capacity or another, work for or contribute to an organization. These people make up the workforce of the business sector or economy of the industry. He said that they can be full-time employees, contractors who can work in different organizations at the same time or any other type of contingent worker. Human resources therefore, can be associated with such terms as manpower, labour or personnel; hence it refers to all employees or persons who work for an organization. Such employees are the resources that further the goals of an organization by providing labour. Human resource management main aim is to improve employee performance in order to make the overall organization function better. Hence, human resources are the life blood of an organization.

Every organization is fueled by human beings. They are essential for the success of any business whether education or elsewhere. Performance of employees according to Eko (2022) can be a liability or an asset depending on management. This is why human

resource management is prevalent and a very important function in all organizations.

MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resource management is a critical function in organizations that focuses on managing and developing the workforce. It plays a vital role in ensuring that organization's human capital aligned with the organizational goals. Flippo (2023) defined human resource management as planning, organizing directing, controlling, procurement, development, compensation, integration and maintenance of personnel, to the end that the individual, organization and social objectives are achieved. The purpose of human resource management in higher institutions is to deal with the job holder so as to perform the job in the organization. Central to the mission of human resource is fostering a culture that reflects the core value and empowers staff to be as productive as possible, the primary objective being to acquire and cultivate talent and improve cooperation among the workforce members. Valper (2023) maintained that human resource management in education means an effective management of people in the school organization so that they may contribute to the education business successes.

THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Prominent scholars including Lukasz (2010), Chuang & Liao (2010), Collins & Clark (2012), had pointed on the roles which human resource management could play in higher education. The human resource management roles common to all of them were explored as follows:

1. **Staffing:** This is recruiting personnel both in right quantity and quality. It is done through individual departments in the school, in order to follow the steps and quantity the budget could carry.
2. **Job Analysis:** This is to determine the skill and operations necessary to perform a job well, so as to know the

- appropriate training programmes.
3. **Training and Development:** Human resource management role fosters staff growth, develop new skills and make the staff more productive.
 4. **Staff relations:** The role proactively address issues with the work environment, organizational culture and also relationship between staff and supervisors.
 5. **Performance measurement:** This helps constructive feedback and serves a guide for promotion or even dismissal.
 6. **Staff maintenance:** Regular update of staff needs and their upkeep sustain good human resource management.
 7. **Administering pays, incentives and benefits:** Recognizing achievements and rewarding high performance with bonuses and other ways of motivating staff make them take ownership of school objectives. The role attracts and retains staff. Pays and compensation has to meet the standards and be comparable to what other staff in similar duties are being paid.
 8. **Workplace safety:** Human resource management creates healthy and safety policies to respond to staff needs as well as grievances.
 9. **Compliance with the regulations, institutional rules and regulatory policies:** This covers vacations, leave, disciplinary actions and other types of protocols. Laws that affect higher education are constantly evolving. Human relations management should always keep up with those changes and gear towards staff compliance.

In fact, human resource management is generally tasked with creating and administering programmes that improve workplace efficiency. The essence is to maintain employer-employee relationship.

CONTEXTUAL MEANING OF LABOUR RELATIONS

The term labour relation comprises labour and relation. Labour means productive activities in which an individuals or group of people are engaged. It can be viewed as an economic activity of producing or processing goods and services. Relation means that, which exists in the organization between the employees and the employer. The employers are represented by the Management and employees are the workforce or group of workers either unionized or non-unionize as the case may be. The relation is created by the diverse and complex attitudes and approaches of both management and workers in connection. Because of their composite attitudes, the relation creates rules and regulations to govern the workplace and the work community, with the main purpose of maintaining harmonious relation between the management and the workmen; by solving their problems through the process of collective bargaining. Hence, labour relations are the interaction between the management and staff towards each other in terms of plans, directions, supervision. It covers all types of relations arising out of employer-employee interaction in an organization. Anjali (2019) defined labour relation as the system which workers, employers and their representative directly or indirectly interact to the set rules for governance of work relationship. In the context of education, and co-ordination of activities of the school, with a minimum of human effort and spirit of cooperation and proper regard for genuine wellbeing of all members of staff.(Ordway, Tead and Moleaff, 2010). In other words, labour relations examine how management and staff work together to create a fair work place. The purpose is to protect the right of everyone in the school, promotes social development, democracy, peace and fair labour practices. However, labour relations means the social relation which arises in respect of using labour. Labour relation therefore is the integral aspect of social relations arising out of employer (management)- employee (staff) interaction in the modern education system. Labour relation is concerned with manpower which can be classified as the management and staff. At times and depending on the nature of the

school organization; Government is an actor, though its role varies from active to passive, as the case may be. Since labour relation reflects an interaction amongst the main actors, it defines the process between the two parties in order to make decisions regarding work conditions and sets the formal and informal ground rules for determining the framework of their operations. In education, the relation consists of giving advice and help regarding work rules and work contract situations.

THE SCOPE

The boundary of labour relations in education covers the establishment and maintenance of good personnel relation, ensuring manpower development, establishing a close contact between persons connected with educational services, creating a mutual affection and a sense of belonging in the minds of the staff, fostering regards for each other, establishing a good teaching-learning climate, ultimately maximizing social welfare and stimulating performance for achievement of the common goal. (Sinambel and Wang, 2022).

THE OBJECTIVES

The main theme behind the concept of labour relation is to recognize the fact that labour is a human being and not a commodity, therefore, should be treated as a living being. Every individual differs in mental and psychological ability, sentiments and emotions, therefore should be recognized accordingly. Human like treatment only can improve the relations between subordinates and superordinates. Thus, the primary objective of labour relation according to Ferris (2001), is to bring about good and healthy relations between the two partners in the school organization, i.e. the management and the labour. A two-fold objective of a good labour relation is to secure the co-operation of all and preserve the institutional peace. Good labour relation in higher education should target development and progress of the school through stability of wellbeing of staff, happiness of the staff and industrial peace. In this case, staff must be assured of

reasonable, fair and minimum amenities of life, high level of mutual understanding and goodwill amongst all departments/units of the school. A good understanding between management and staff is important to reduce industrial dispute and ensure trust. Nevertheless, institutional peace is the fruit of good labour relations. It is the harmonious atmosphere where there is no uprising, dispute or prejudices. These inquilab have no place where good labour relations prevail. Good labour management relations depend upon the management and staff being able to resolve problems mutually, freely and responsibly.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LABOUR RELATIONS

There is a key intersection of Human resource management and Labour relations in every human organization. A continuous relationship exists between management and labour in their day-to-day work. According to Mura (2017), the relationship between human resource management and labour relation is not just a simple one, but a set of functional interdependence involving a number of factors such as social, economic, psychological, etc, and that it requires a disciplinary approach for its effective management. Thus the relationship is continuous between management and labour in the life of the organization. The relationship between both as emphasized by Kuvaas (2008), lies on the process of accommodation; whereby the parties involved develop skills and methods of adjusting to and co-operating with each other. That is to say that human resource management and labour relations are the functions that serve as the interface between management and staff. In the first instance, the Human relation department is responsible for handling labour relations, while labour relations play a major role in human resource management. It is an important function of Human relations that focuses on maintaining good relation between employers and employees. While human resource management is most often used to describe Managements approach to personnel administration, Labor relations refer to staff advocate with reference to those

elements that affect them at work. Hence human resource management and labour relation represent adversarial position in the workplace. In most school settings, labour relation component is separate from human resource management. But the fact remains that many seasoned human resource managers with expertise in both labour relations and human resource often function in dual role as experts in both areas. Such human resource and labour relation professionals provide essential link between staff and Management, helping to address work related concerns, developing policies and protecting the rights of both parties. It could be said that labour relations co-ordinate with human resource management employee's rights and conflict management, in order to foster a conducive teaching-learning environment. Human resource management thus becomes the central department actively involved in labour relation. Hence labor relation is a sub function of human resource umbrella that is focused on preventing and resolving staff related problems. Therefore, labour relation is important in human resource management. The relationship of the two is symbioses. Human resource team who are informed in labour laws can help protect both the institution and the staff when grievances and collective bargaining come into play. Effective labor relations help promote collaborative staff relation. Ideally, the goal of the education system, including every other organization, is to have both healthy staff management relation and healthy labor relation. You cannot have one without the other. Overall labour relation and human resource Management strive for the same goal. It comes down to caring about your staff, treating them well and ensuring that they have a safe healthy inclusive work environment. Efficient maintenance of labour relations help human resource managers in developing a harmonious environment within the school system, which in turn, helps in effective achievement of educational goals and objectives. This is so because, when staff are happy; paid well, have robust benefits, and a sense of trust in their employment, there are fewer complaints filed and employee retention stays high, which is what all parties want. Well managed labour

relations according to Campbell et al (1970) provides a competitive advantage to the education system by negating the hassle arising out of labour related issues and conflict. It has more advantage of support to sound human resource management and practices, ensuring employee satisfaction and productivity.

However, with increasing competitiveness and mounting pressure of accomplishing educational achievements in the present institutions of higher learning, it has become essential for human resource managers to acquire an effective and dependable labour relation support. This statement is authenticated by Bercu et al. (2017), when they wrote that conflicts and deteriorating relations at works place have adverse impact on the overall productivity and that lack of labour relations add to building up an environment of distrust among workers and hampers their motivation levels. Their stand point was that a human resource manager provides impetus in improving the everyday dealing between labour and management, and that he works towards promoting an environment of collaboration, understanding and mutual trust among the labour and Management by carrying out various discussions and joint exercise between labour and management, customized to the specific needs of the organization. Thus, the relationship bordered on the fact that human resource management assists in improving labour/employee relations. However, human resource management and labour relations coexist within the work place. The co-operative existence can ensure that the situation in the teaching and learning environment does not have to deal with unresolved grievances.

LABOUR RELATIONS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Once employees are on board in the school organizations, performance management, which is a tool that helps human resource managers monitor and evaluate employees' work, becomes important. The goal is to maximise efforts of the staff to perform to the best of their abilities and in alignment with the

overall goal of the school. To meet this target objective tends to be easy when labour relations exist in the activities of the school. This brings about an ongoing process of human relation between the Management and staff, in support of accomplishing school goal. Performance management has been the 'Achilles heel' of human resource management and has remained the issue of vulnerable spot in meeting educational objectives. It is therefore, the labour relation that softens the complexities that mostly arise in a bid to handle personnel performance issues in schools. Thus, Campbell and Dunette (1970) maintained that labour relations being grounded in individual or group treatment, helps school organizations accomplish its goals. Chadwick and Dabu (2009) were supportive of this idea with their stand that preeminent educational institutions focus on the employment, the work and the labour (personnel), and that it is the labour relations that generate and share activities which improve the lives of the staff and transform the future of the work. Galade (2003) also posited that labour relation become an important strategy in human resource management because it enhances results in improved work productivity and work profit, and that it also plays important role in staff retention. Hence, it was un-doubtful when the foregoing prominent scholars earlier mentioned, said that if teachers feel satisfied in their job, they pay attention to the needs of the school, resulting in a positive learning outcomes. That is to say that Human resource management is dedicated to generating and disseminating relationship that improves lives of staff when it is in better relation with them. Therefore, human resource management promotes a healthy organisational culture by addressing issues with job satisfaction, environmental circumstances, office policies and other related issues of labour relations. Suffice it to say that labour relation in education, as the basics of human resource management, involves helping staff to become their best selves in the service of their duties. Labour relation therefore, is crucial in human resource management for the purpose of sustaining and advancing the school organization. This is further expatiated by Geringer et al (2003), who established that human resource

department is needed by every organisation, including schools, to cultivate positive labor relation because both play a key role in developing an organizational strategy, handle labour relationship and assist employees with any issue they may be facing in school. They regarded labour relation as the most important part of human resource management, without which, human resources will not be effectively utilised. In line with the foregoing, Harter and Schmett (2003) explained that department of human resources oversees various aspects of employment terms as regards compliance with labour laws, employment standards, performance management, and administration of staff benefits, all for the purpose of maintaining good labour relations. They went further to inform that human resource professionals are trained to work well with people, resolve conflicts and promote safe and conducive work place culture which labor relations acclaim. Labour relations draw the human resource managers closer with people to understand what motivates them to put in their best performance. This helps to create a productive environment where people feel valued, motivated to stay in the organisation and give their best work. Therefore, human resource management boils down to optimizing labour relations for effectiveness. However, better management of labour gives rise to successful human resource management. Both gives every human resource manager a dual responsibility, where by the manager is on the lead of the organisations goal achievement, while the role of human resource management mounts the stage to stabilise the organisation through effective labour relation.

THE CHANGING FACE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PRESENT DISPENSATION

The world of education has evolved tremendously in the recent years and the pace of change has continued to accelerate in various dimensions. Human resource management cannot remain static. People have realised the importance of human relations and innovations in this particular era. Given the intensity of competition in the education industry, there is always an endless

value improvement that leads to workers producing better, being more attuned with individual making more contributions. In today's education system, business environments inclusive, establishing positive climate is becoming increasingly important for organisational performance and growth. Wood et al (2012) wrote that a positive employment relation climate creates social atmosphere, which encourages high employee culture and in response, staff feel comfortable and contribute positively to organizational performance. Thus, a new face of human resource management has turned to climate creation of social atmosphere which encourages employee involvement. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) wrote that employee involvement plays an important role in translating human resource practices into favorable performance outcome because it is employees who could share climate perception based on their experiences. This is understandable because unsafe climate poses danger of insecurity, therefore calls on administrative attention. Hence, a high participation of employee, or to be precise, employee centered culture is required, to contribute to decisions that will help to improve situations and curb hazards in the work environment. Considering these increasing complex challenges facing human resource management and the implication, there is need for it to evolve a long way from only issues of recruitment, selection, engagement of people who will be more productive to deliver high quality work, training, development, dispute/conflict resolution and so on. The present time mandates human resource management to shift its focus to develop and implement meaningful solutions that will impact the institutional business in a positive way. In recognition of this fact, Zhao (1998) and Lau (2000) provided the foundation of human resource management and labour relation management respectively and their studies seemed to introduce the concept of administrators' adaptive role into institutions of higher learning. Their studies had portrayed that what really matters in the higher education system is mobilization of human resources into productive outcome. There is also the need for the system to eliminate or minimise the

constraints towards proper utilization of human resource, so as to enhance rapid commitment to performance among staff. The implication is that the value chain of employee maximisation resides with good administrators. To achieve this, it becomes imperative for human resource management to also gear towards proper relationship management. Many researchers' related studies on employees' psychological and motivational aspects which bring one's attention about how employee perceptions regarding attitudes and behaviours may affect organizational outcomes, discovered that their attitudes, responses and perception regarding organisational performance are the key mediators in achieving better human resource management. (Wood et al, 2012). In connection with this issue, several other studies such as Dulebohn et al (1995), Delawey and Huselid (1996), Delery and Shaw (2001), Gerhart (2005) and Chang et al (2013) had studied human resource management functions in different perspectives and came out with similar findings of alternative strategy of achieving better result. Common among them include the following:

1. **Open Communication:** This is when senior managers and other workers in the organisation express their ideas, issues and thoughts with one another in a steady, honest; transparent and reliable manner. In this way staff can avoid surprises, resolve conflicts and collaborate better.
2. **Sharing Information:** It involves the passing of information from one individual, group, unit, department or any arms, to another. It appears as an activity through which ideas, opinions, facts and documents are jointly used. This is more effective in achieving common goals in an organization.
3. **Knowledge integration:** This is the process of synthesizing multiple knowledge models into a common relevant model for the purpose of acquiring new ideas.
4. **Flexibility in human resource management:** This refers to the extent to which human resource practices can adapt and apply across a variety of situations or across various

sites or units of the organisation. The speed with which this adaptation and application can be made enhances to a great extent, the effectiveness of achieving the desired result.

5. **Feeling of trust between Management and Staff:** It refers to being approachable and friendly; championing authenticity, empathy and humanity. Being considerate of others and their feelings shows support for the team members. Even when they make mistakes, it bestows confidence of staff on the authority.
6. **Social Network:** This focuses on the connections and relationship between individuals, groups and teams in the workplace, exchanging messages, share information and co-operate on joint activities.
7. **Psychological Empowerment:** This is a subjective, cognitive and attitudinal process that helps individual staff feel effective and competent, and it authorizes them to carry out tasks. Psychologically, empowered staff has a more positive orientation towards his/her work.
8. **Concern for staff:** Common issues that poses concern for staff can include: workload, work-life balance, communication problems, lack of recognition, career growth opportunities, workplace culture and so on. Employee concern, if not properly attended to or managed, always affect productivity.

Typical human resource manager deals with all the psychological aspect of staff needs in an organisation, whether personal or general. Proper utilization of this phase of human resource management makes employees feel good and make valuable addition towards organization's performance.

IMPRINTS OF PROFESSOR EUGENE OKOYE NWADIALOR AS A RENOWNED HUMAN RESOURCE AND LABOUR RELATIONS MANAGER

Having explored the rudiments of human resource management and labour relations in the higher education system, this paper

goes beyond to concretize the tenet *pari-passu* to Prof. Eugene Okoye Nwadiakor, the Vice Chancellor of Tansian University in Umunya, Anambra State of Nigeria. A Vice Chancellor, being a Chief Executive Officer of University, leads university in academics and administration. He is charged with executing all managerial functions of planning, organizing, developing, directing and evaluating programmes and performances. He manages both human and material resources and handles all related issues by providing clear directions and guidance in order to generate a positive and encouraging work environment that will foster a productive workplace.

Going hand in hand with the precepts of human resource management outlined in this paper, Prof. Eugene Nwadiakor is an astute manager of men at work, a thorough bred personnel administrator with attention to details. His administrative acumen touches on the very essence of labour relations in the contemporary human resource management. He has proven track records as a Human Resource Manager in Tansian University.

Firstly, is in the area of Staff development. Prof. Nwadiakor helps to develop the knowledge, competences and skills of Staff of Tansian University by giving prompt approvals and sponsorship for seminar/workshops, conferences and other training programmes that are beneficial to the institution.

Secondly, is his propensity in employee centered culture. Prof. Nwadiakor has an exceptional ability in open Communication, shared goals and mutual respect to staff. He achieves this through the following means:-

- a. **Staff meetings:** His regular managerial staff meetings is with the main aim to exchange opinions, ideas and feedback towards basic staff needs and wellbeing, in terms of congenial working conditions, work environment and all that can build a team of motivated workers. Labour relation issues such as adequate provision of facilities,

flexible work hours, etc are subjected to discussions to help easing the cons and maximising the prons of the job. The meetings provide specific time set aside to chat and for effective interaction of staff of various departments with other faculties.

- b. Academic Retreat:** - Professor Nwadiakor sets up an institutional pattern of retreat to provide a special forum for teaching-learning problem solving process. The retreats are the time when many work units, departments and faculties make attempts at a long range review of ongoing strengths and weaknesses for programmes, and gear towards a new direction that will pursue the expected outcomes. Lecturers take the time to think thoughtfully about their teaching and examine the impact on students' learning. He uses academic retreat to stress on the potential roles of staff and teamwork skills that will enhance staff performance and classroom teaching, to enable lecturers deliver high quality lectures.

Thirdly, is his Psychological empowerment to staff. Prof Nwadiakor enhances the feeling of self-efficacy among members of staff through identification of their conditions such as health, domestic issues and other personal impairments that cause powerlessness in productive performance and as well reduces the powerlessness state through his flexibility, concern for all, sharing information, social network and the like. This creates a social atmosphere and gives the staff a feeling of trust. This particular quality of Prof. Nwadiakor was emphasized by educational and developmental psychologists when they wrote on well-being in the workplace and its positive relationship to business outcomes. (Harter and Schmett, 2003).

Fourthly, is his Adaptive capacity. Prof Nwadiakor's adaptive capabilities to adjust to potential difficulties take advantage of opportunities and respond to consequences, are clear in his utilization of available financial recourses and scarce human

resources in Tansian University as a private institution. He is well prepared to cope with adaptive options and maximisation of the meager financial and restricted human resources.

Fifthly, but not the least is Professor Nwadiakor's employee involvement by way of direct participation of staff to help the institution fulfil its mission and meet its objectives, through application of their own ideas, expertise and efforts towards solving problems, and making decisions. Instances of this abound in various committee report presentations at the University Senate Meetings. Such committees include Disciplinary, Examination malpractice, Quality Assurance and so on. This gives the university staff a feeling of participation and belongingness. As earlier portrayed in Wood et al (2012), on their writings, they confirmed that high staff involvement in management makes them take the organisation as their own and work with high sense of commitment.

Moreover, Professor Nwadiakor's other personal qualities that have distinguished him from amongst calibers of human resource and labour relations managers include: his leadership ability, ability to multitask, ability to motivate others, strong sense of ethics, respect for human values, personal integrity, empathy for problems facing employees, demonstration of knowledge and expertise in both human and material resources, quick decisions on prompt issues, and others too numerous to write down on this restricted volume. Thus, Prof. Nwadiakor belongs to the genres of human resource managers of the modern time. In the few years I have interacted with him, he has been found a great administrator with great personal and professional qualities, open and transparent in his ways as a manager of human resource, a scholar with distinct and diligent pursuer of academic truth.

CONCLUSION

This chapter is written in honour of a bellwether, a doyen and a leader of change in the contemporary higher education system

administration. Professor Nwadiakor's practice of human resource management is a legacy yet to be rivalled with. This write-up has asserted that both labor relations and human resource management primarily concerned with all functions relating workers effectively to their workplace environment. Therefore, educational administrators/Managers at every level, not only at the tertiary, should acquire fuller understanding of human factor in achieving the overall success in their organisations. Hence they must use the appropriate methods to improve labour and personnel relations.

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