

## Evaluating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Key Human Resource Management Challenges in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*It is no longer news that the human resource is the most significant and important resource of any organization and any effort made in motivating the workforce will pay off significantly. In this era of globalization and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, organizations that are failing to adequately identify, monitor and develop HRM policies that will lead to efficient goal achievement, are bound to experience series of inefficiencies and losses therefore leading to poor performance in terms of low profitability and poor growth. There is a wide gap between the manager of human resource and the human resource themselves. This study adopted robust conceptual and empirical review literatures on the subject. The paper there examines challenges posed by individuals, governments and unions on human resource management in Nigeria such as an unavailability of Executive Information System (EIS), the wide gap existing between the management and staff, introduction of flexitime, no external interference or pressures in the recruitment and promotion of staff, workplace diversity, changing mix of workforce, values, demands of employers and governments are evident. The Niger Delta militancy, kidnapping, gender discrimination, nepotism and ethnic sentiments are evident and are also factors affecting HRM in Nigeria in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is concluded that the design of programmes for recruitment, training and development, integration, maintenance and separation of the employee cannot be possible without the acceptance of the organizational members. A team building and policy formulation on solving the workplace diversity is fundamental to achieving the set organizational goals.*

**Keywords:** Challenges; Human Resource Management; Globalization; 21<sup>st</sup> century; Recruitment, Training and Development, Content analysis

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### INTRODUCTION

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Human resources are the lifeblood of an organization. Despite the application of technology in modern business management, human resources are still relevant as the most adaptive resources of the organization. The strategic values of HR stem from the fact that apart from other resources employed in the course of production (land, capital, technology, etc.) which are passive, human resources are endowed with discretionary decision-making power and thus have competitive advantage over the other resources. Besides, HR combines other resources in the right mix to formulate appropriate strategies for the accomplishment of the desired objectives

of the enterprise. This essential attribute of HR assists the enterprise to make rightful decisions and respond effectively to the threats and opportunities within the environment of the organization. Thus, the enterprise depends highly on its human resources for success and survival. This dependence continuously is increasing considering the complex and turbulent nature of the business environment of this century. Changes occur within and without a particular organization; Ile (2003) informs that these changes put pressure on the human resource manager. To tackle the changes, every organisation has a human resource function overtly or covertly. Every organisation must hire, train, pay, motivate, maintain and ultimately separate employees. This means that for organisational effectiveness, the human resource management function must be constituted in the organisation. Imaga (2001) believes that human resource management functions have been elevated today because of the increasingly critical nature of problems and challenges in the more effective utilisation of human resource.

When an organisation buys or invests in an expensive piece of equipment, it receives a manual containing instructions for operating it, maintaining it, and troubleshooting when the equipment does not function as it should, but when the organisation procures its human capital, it does not receive a similar manual. This information gap on the human resource management must be filled. The role of the human resource manager is evolving with the change in competitive market environment and the realisation that human resource management must play a more strategic role in the success of an organisation (Sims, 2005). Organisations that do not put their emphasis on attracting and retaining talents may find themselves in dire consequences, as their competitors may be outplaying them in the strategic employment of their human resource. With the increase in competition, locally or globally, organisations must become more adaptable, resilient, agile and customer-focused to succeed. Given this change in environment, Armstrong (2004) suggests that human resource professional has to evolve to become a strategic partner, an employee sponsor or advocate, and a change (agent) mentor within the organisation. In order to succeed, human resource management must be a business-driven function with a thorough understanding of the organisation's big picture and be able to influence key decisions and policies. Today's human resource manager must focus on strategic personnel retention and talent development and therefore should coach, counsel, mentor and plan for succession in order to motivate organisation members and attract their loyalty. The human resource

manager should also promote and fight for values, ethics, beliefs, and spirituality within their organisation, especially in the management of changes.

The management of human resource is complex and problematic because the individuals as workers hardly adapt or voluntarily embrace the objectives of the organization. As individuals, the employees have needs, aspirations, motivations, desires and interests which influence their behaviour at work but unfortunately these objectives are sometimes in conflict with the corporate objectives of the enterprise. In reconciling this conflicting interests. human resources Management and planning are useful tools employed in harmonizing the needs of the employees with the goals and objectives of the organization on a continuous basis.

A cursory look at Nigeria shows that on daily basis business owners, executives, managers, and professionals are quagmire by frustrating employee related challenges. Changes occur within and without a particular organization. Organizations that do not put their emphasis on attracting and retaining talents may find themselves in dire consequences, as their competitors may be outplaying them in the strategic employment of their human resource. With the increase in competition, locally or globally, organizations must become more adaptable, resilient, agile and customer-focused to succeed. Given this change in environment, Armstrong (2004) suggests that human resource professional has to evolve to become a strategic partner, an employee sponsor or advocate, and a change (agent) mentor within the organization. In order to succeed, human resource management must be a business-driven function with a thorough understanding of the organization's big picture and be able to influence key decisions and policies. Today's human resource manager must focus on strategic personnel retention and talent development and therefore should coach, counsel, mentor and plan for succession in order to motivate organization members and attract their loyalty. The human resource manager also should promote and fight for values, ethics, beliefs, and spirituality within their organization, especially in the management of changes. There is need therefore to highlight the human resource challenges and how management function braces with the challenges of employee absenteeism, employee turnover costs, employee background screening, employee stress and conflict, poor job fit, poor customer service, poor employment engagement, poor employee motivation, changes in the mix of the workforce, values of the work force, demands of employees, demands of government, and the increasing size and complexity of the organization and its

technology. The insistent and sometimes violent demand of the less privileged segments of our society and workplace diversity is also discussed.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) and Historical Development of HRM**

The concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) evolved in the mid-1990s. According to Udeze (2000) “there has been diversity in business practice in naming the function that is concerned with handling employment relationship”. Following the creation of specialised departments in the 1920s and 1930s to handle the administration of the personnel programme, these departments were called personnel departments. The incursion of labour unions in the United States of America in the 1930s and 1940s resulted in this same function being named; many companies adopted the term Industrial Relations. Governments, hospitals and schools at that time still used the term personnel management. It will be however important to define personnel management as the planning, organising, directing and controlling activities involved in the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation of the human element in an organisation.

Worldwide, the HR profession has to respond to increased competition for globally mobile talents, changes in both workforce attitudes and composition, shifts in the employer/worker relationship and rapid advances in HR technology. New kinds of technical knowledge, skills and abilities would require HR practitioners in future who are flexible and willing to deal with the ever-accelerating pace and often unpredictable changes in the global workplace (Mayrhofer & Brewster, 2005). The HR profession needs to evaluate the implications of a movement into an era of decentralization, which if used properly, can lead to emancipation. The era will require a new kind of organization, based on a different paradigm that can bring together the contributions of autonomous individuals in a socially sustainable way. It is thus clear that a new way to manage HR as a paradigm is emerging, as well as new HR managers should manage themselves (Limerick, et al. 2002). The main focus for managers of this century is the urgency to manage change speedily and efficiently in a HRM context with appropriate competencies. Issues like international HRM, diversity, employment equity, generation Y, reputation management and corporate ethics amongst others must be factored

regarding future identification of HR professionals' role and capabilities. Various authors (Kane, 2006; Burton, 2003; Swanepol, et al, 2002 & Nel, et al, 2005) have identified factors which act as barriers to effective HRM. Some of the pertinent issues are: top management has a low priority, and offer a short-term view of what the real issues in HRM and the profession are according to various researchers (Parmenter, 2002; Burton, 2003), HRM practitioners are perceived to lack sufficient knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective HRM practices at various levels in their organization (Jayne, 2002; Burton, 2003).

No doubt human society has always been organised in groups for various group objectives. The industrial revolution of the 18th century triggered off what is today the modern human resource management. The industrial revolution, which was a technological revolution, brought the factory system instead of the earlier hand-craft system. Machines were invented and speed was brought into organisation process of getting things done. Udeze (2000) writes, "the major features of this technological revolution (industrial revolution) were the invention of machine to perform activities hitherto performed by manual labour". The industrial revolution had deep consequences for management. These were human problem of concentration and the technical competency. The human problem was mainly the many people who had to work under one roof in the factory system. The technical problem was associated with how to operate the machines. The second problem of skill acquisition was addressed to a large degree while the human problem was neglected. The human problem caused by the industrial revolution continued until the 1920s when a movement and new interest arose in human aspect at work. Research efforts by Elton Mayo, Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, Robert Owen and many others changed the situation drastically from paternalistic and mechanistic approach to human relations (Ulrich, 2005). The assurance of productivity through happy and motivated workforce became an ideology vigorously pursued.

In Nigeria, the Civil Service native Staff Union was formed in 1912. The amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates by Lord Lugard in 1914 marked the centralization of public service machinery and increased activity of the labour union. The Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress are the latest sensation on the labour movement in Nigeria. No doubt the advent of labour unionism in Nigeria and world over brought a new impetus into human resource management and the human relations angle to organizing. Challenges still exist in human resource

management in Nigeria. Corroborating the above statement, Udeze (2000) quoting Iyanda (1995) says “Management has made significant progress in planning, organizing and measuring work and success has been achieved in managing material resources for optimal results as well, but the degree of success in managing people could, however not be said to have recorded the same degree of success”. He concludes that “human resource management is the most daunting of all management’s responsibilities and perhaps the most popular subject of research and experiment”. Recently, the need and importance of human resource management has become more pronounced. It must also be noted that human resource has unlimited capacity for creativity, resourcefulness and productivity. Sims (2006) contends that today’s managers believe that any attempt to access and activate the potentials of human resource holds an exciting promise for organization and humanity in areas of higher productivity and profit maximization. This is at variance with the earlier mechanistic approach to managing human resource at work.

### **Traditional Functions of Human Resource Management**

Anyim, Ikemefuna, & Mbah, (2011) opined that, in a nutshell, the primary task of HRM is to ensure that the organization human resources are utilized and managed effectively. HR practitioners are saddled with the responsibility of designing and implementing policies and programmes that will enhance human abilities and improve the organization’s overall effectiveness. Empirical studies have shown that poor human relations at work, neglect of staff welfare programmes and lack of motivation are often the factors that cause industrial strife and declining productivity in the work setting. Tailor, (2020) opined that traditional HR deals with core HR tasks such as overseeing administrative tasks related to recruitment and firing and administering company policies. It covers the basic activities that businesses require if they are to continue to grow and remain legally compliant.

Traditional human resources management reacts to employees; when workers make requests or cause problems, HR steps in and takes care of it. Strategic HR involves planning. A strategic HR department looks ahead and heads off problems. These HR pros also look at the company's needs for the future and develop strategies to meet them. Traditional HR departments focus on managing labor relations, solving employees' problems and generally keeping the staff happy. Strategic HR has plans

for helping the organization - recruiting more workers, developing talent and training employees in company standards and principles (Sherman, 2019).

Anyim, et al (2011) opined that, the modern-day entrepreneurs recognize that the human resources are vital element in the organization and concomitantly acknowledge the role the HR practitioners play in developing these valuable resources. To acquire and retain HR in the organization, the HR practitioners in brief perform four critical roles:

- a. Create and implement policies, which should be in writing and communicated to all employees through circulars or the employee handbook.
- b. Offer advice and counsel to the employees on matters bordering on productivity, safety at work, career path or management, morale, honesty and integrity, human relations etc.
- c. Provision of services that assist line managers in performing their jobs or serving the organizational units e.g. recruitment, selection and placement, compensation management, training and development, staff welfare programmes, industrial and labour relations, research and planning.
- d. Control of human resource programmes and laid down procedures i.e. to monitor and ensure that HR policies and guidelines are implemented religiously or to the letters e.g. grievance handling and disciplinary procedures, adhering to federal character principles or quota system, fairness of appraisal exercise, granting of loans etc. Each of the above functions is a complex flow of activities and it underscores HR management functions as integral part of the overall corporate plans of the enterprise. It follows therefore, that HR management function is a joint responsibility for all managers within the enterprise (Anyim, et al, 2011).

## **Human Resource Management and Human Resource Management Practices in Nigeria**

HRM policies and practices are carried out within an economic, social, political and legal environment. Thus, there is a need for considerable historical and cultural

insight into local conditions to understand the processes, philosophies and problems of national models of HRM (Hofstede, 1993). Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of 180 million people. The Nigeria's population and human resource base make it one of the most attractive countries for foreign investment in Africa. As foreign and local firms increase their involvement in Nigeria, they will need to build capabilities and utilise local competencies. The knowledge of human resource management (HRM) and more importantly perhaps, knowledge of the factors that impact on HRM in Nigeria will become increasingly critical to the way we do businesses in Nigeria and ultimately their success. Hence, the way to get things done cannot be divorced from local values, customs, and the overall external cultural environment. HRM as a concept got introduced into the Nigeria literature in 1940 during the colonial era; with industrialisation and commercialization, which later became wage employment. Ever since then, there has been a tremendous growth of HR in Nigeria, which in recent years has been characterised by lack of professionalism and specialisation. Different reasons have been accounted for as the challenges facing HRM practices in Nigeria. Some of which are discussed in this paper. The socio-cultural diversity of Nigeria has influenced the HRM practices in Nigeria. Nigeria is characterised by over reliance on culture, language, religion, gender and educational qualifications as a basis for determining who get employed. What this means is that, the opportunity for an average Nigeria to get employed is a factor of the aforementioned variables.

Nigeria according to Fajana (2009) is one of the African countries troubled by abundant labour and scarce talent. Attracting, developing, deploying and retaining best talents had become a challenge. That is why Fajana and Ige (2007) argued that the desire for top performance has driven the need for effective management. HRM in Nigeria can be said to be 'still in Infancy' and lot of academic research is still required in this area. Lack of indigenous and comprehensive HRM models is one of the challenges facing HRM practices in Nigeria, which is why the majority of principles and practices evidence in workplaces in Nigeria are all adopted from other countries. HRM practices in Nigerian are a convergence with western-inspired approaches, with the evidence of cultural and institutional influences on it. That is, there is a blend of transplanted and indigenous HRM practices.

The sensitivity to individuals' socialization as well as economic, historical, political, and social contexts according to Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) may enable



organisations to capitalise on the potential to transplant forms of HRM from parent country cultures to developing countries such as Nigeria. Nevertheless, most organizations are characterized by lack of funding for human resource management research and development. Nigeria's democracy has enhanced the practice of HRM, determining the quota of expatriates it permits. Nigeria's economy allows the importation of new technologies to enhance HRM, but training is still a bit slow, thus employment of expatriates to handle such is still encouraged. In Nigeria, there is application of new management techniques and skills used in the running of organizations, all aimed at running a cost-effective system. HRM practices in Nigeria cannot be totally diffused from what is evidence in other countries. However, due the peculiarity of the social-cultural characteristic of Nigeria, HRM in Nigeria is an area open for further research. Good employer-employee relations are therefore critical to the stable and sustainable development of the Nigerian economy, as well as the world economy as a whole. Several other factors have affected HRM practices in Nigeria namely; first, lack the internal manpower to complete all necessary tasks. Second, the complexity of today's business climate as a result of deregulation, globalization, and technology advancements has outpaced many companies' level for companies to get special projects done without adding employees to the payroll (Olofin & Folawewo, 2006). Most organizations in Nigeria now offer a continued education and training to help its people cultivate the right skills and expand their career within a truly global/collaborative workplace.

In Nigeria, organizational control is firmly in the hands of management and the management's role is to effectively manage the number of employees and match them closely with desired goals and objectives. Both the management and the Nigerian government strive to make coherent HR policies that fit closely with overall business strategy. For example, in the oil industry (which is the most organized and highly paid employment sector) the government of Nigeria has made concerted efforts over the last 50 years to promote the participation of indigenous workers in the oil industry. Regulation 26 of the 1969 Petroleum and Drilling Act represents one of government's early efforts to increase Nigerian national oil workers' participation in the industry. Recruitment is selectively done in Nigeria, and employees are trained to perform required skills. However, due to the complexities involved in the activities of the oil industries, a lot of skilled expatriate services are required leading to a high level of expatriate employment till date. This is also because most of the oil companies are multinationals, with parent companies in well-developed and advanced countries. For

most organizations in Nigeria, performance appraisal is a dialogue process and serves as a mentor to generally mould the individual to perform at an optimal level. The employees are allowed to carry out a self-evaluation based on engagements and projects they were involved in during the assessment period. It is expected that performance appraisal system should be a fair process involving assessments on skills, technical knowledge and how well the employee can offer quality service delivery.

According to Fajana, Owoyemi, Elegbede, & Gbajumo-Sheriff, (2011), Managers, supervisors and HR departments are responsible for ensuring that workers are effectively trained. Some organizations in Nigeria now provide workers with education and subsidies for job-related training; while some other organizations have changed their wage structures to include education and training subsidy allowance in workers' wages. The challenge here is that such training is expected to be job-related and proven to be of mutual benefit to both employers and employees. This can limit the employees from acquiring others skills that are not related to the job description. There has not been reliable official statistics on the number of fatalities and non-fatalities in organizations in Nigeria. This is because most organizations are not willing to share their experiences with other because of the fear or being accused of not handling health safety issues properly and compensating the victims adequately. There is also the challenge of employees in Nigeria not knowing their right to work in a safe environment free of occupational hazards and appropriate compensation in the case of accidents or hazards that can affect them both psychologically and physically.

Most organizations in Nigeria are highly unionized, especially the public sector organizations. Employees unite to protect and promote their interest, so also do the employers. Until March 2005, the Government of Nigeria promoted compulsory union membership at the workplace, which has resulted in almost 60 per cent unionization rate. For instance, oil the workers are unionized by occupational category: white-collar workers belong to the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN) and production workers to the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG). Some of industry-wide trade unions affiliate with different national unions, such as the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), respectively. It is only the private organizations that there has not been a high participation in union. Rather what we have in some of these private organizations is employers and employees forming and meeting at common

forums to discuss issues, identified problems and map out strategies for a better working relationship (Fajana, et al, 2011).

### **Problems, Issues and Trends in Human Resource Management: Suggested Management Solutions in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria**

According to Anyim, et al, (2011), traditionally, the responsibility of the HRM has been centred primarily on recruitment, selection, orientation, training, job analysis and evaluation, labour relations, appraisal exercise etc. but in the modern time, some problems and issues have created a new dawn for the HR practitioners and professionals.

The competitive pressures faced by the modern day enterprise for survival and success due to globalization and liberalization will continue to create room for future demand for organisational excellence. The new, global, complex, and often chaotic world of the Multi-national Enterprises requires a new strategic focus and new capabilities from HR just as it does from other management functions (Briscoe et al, 2009). During the previous few years, many transitions have taken place like due to rise in there were numerous layoffs; many people lost their jobs that put a lot of pressure on organization's management to reassess its procedures and strategies (Zorlu, 2009). We understand that all human beings are different from each other and the employers have to have different ways for motivating and keeping the talent. Financial benefits are no longer considered to be a tool for retaining employee. Every organization has to adopt new and latest ways for satisfying its people, this will help to control the rate of turnover (Henson, 2007). . People often quit jobs if they do not find appropriate balance between personal lives and professional obligations. Hence the manager has to work to avoid such scenario and they need to help employees in finding right work life balance (Kossek, 1998). Some of these issues and management solutions are discussed below:

#### *(i) Productivity Improvement*

Poor productivity is likely to create unemployment and inflation, decline in standard of living of the masses, hence all hands must be on deck in search of ways to improve productivity and thus strengthen the economy for the betterment of all parties in employment relations.

**Management Solution:** Modern day HR practices have led to greater output and improved quality of products and thus the trend has encouraged HR practitioners in taking active roles on matter impinging on productivity improvement.

*(ii) Quality of Work Life (QWL)*

This term refers to the extent to which employees' personal needs are met through their work e.g. one's QWL improves as one's work meets more and more personal needs. Therefore, it is expected that improvements in QWL will affect the performance of the organization favourably.

**Management Solution:** The HR professionals are known to be taking keen interest in issues that relate to job satisfaction and commitment in their bid to promote Quality of Work Life (QWL).

*(iii) Health and Safety at Work*

The focus is on creating of a work environment which minimizes the likelihood of an accident or injury. Akin to this, is job stress which can be as hazardous as an unsafe work place.

**Management Solution:** The modern managers have recognized the dangers of potential personal and organizational job stress and have taken interest on ways to reduce the problem through medical attention.

*(iv) Quota System in Employment*

This is very common in public organization where employment in government establishments is expected to reflect the Federal Character Principle. These rights and entitlements (various fringe benefits, medical care for employees and family, pension, gratuity schemes, National Housing Fund, retrenchment benefits etc.) have added additional strain and costs which the employers must bear in hiring, maintaining and disposing employees.

**Management Solution:** The HR practitioners have herculean task in ensuring that employment is carried out in line with the above principles without compromising

merits and standards. Labour and social legislations from the 1970's to date have granted workers more rights in terms of security of employment and entitlements which were perceived as mere expectations in the yesteryears.

*(vi) Labour Dissatisfaction at Work*

This has to do with issues like growing rate of unionization of employees, low morale and alienation from work. Others include labour turnover, brain drain, poor work habits/attitudes, industrial conflicts and strikes which are inevitable phenomena in the workplace.

**Management Solution:** The management has put in place machineries that respect and implement labour agreements. Promotions and development| trainings are often taken seriously and timely. This prevents labour dissatisfaction at workplace

*(vii) Changing Values of the Employees*

In the past decades, work ethics were tenaciously followed by the employees in terms of punctuality, honesty, diligence etc. but in the modern day, there is growing evidence of serious decline in work ethics. The syndrome is such that some of the enterprises do not provide the basic guidelines for living rather the individuals are responsible for exploring and determining for themselves what they want to do and become in life. With this philosophy, one needs not to wonder why work has become one alternative among many to the workers who want to survive in a turbulent and harsh environment of the modern day. The trend led to erosion of values as bribery, corruption, lack of transparency, indiscipline, wasteful spending etc. became rampant.

**Management Solution:** The management must encourage changing demands of the employers due to competitive pressures; the organization must embark on changes in its internal environment as well as technological innovations. The foregoing factors no doubt have serious effect or repercussion for HR management and planning in the organization as manpower contraction or expansion becomes imminent.

*(viii) Changing Role of Government or State in Industrial Relations*

Due to the civil war in Nigeria, the government shifted its non-interference posture for more positive roles in industrial relations practice. This is evidenced by its “Interventionist Policy” in industrial relations in what it coined as “Guided Democracy” in labour matters. The government enacts legislations from time to time as industrial situations may warrant and implements labour standards approved by ILO.

**Management Solution:** The HR practitioner needs to keep himself abreast of labour legislations on continuous basis.

*(ix) The Clean Wage Option*

This is the consolidation of the basic pay with all allowances or fringe benefits. In other words, it is the payment of total package as salary without segmentation or distinction between the salary and the fringe benefits components. This is currently being practised by many Third World countries including Ghana which adopted the option in 1988. In Nigeria, the option was adopted by some oil companies including Mobil Producing Nigeria in 1997. The option has implications which are mix grill for both the employees and the employers. For the employees, the option will attract high element of taxation because only basic salary which is equivalent to the total package or clean wage will be taxable while the total emolument will increase the terminal benefits and holds more prospects for the retirees.

**Management Solution:** The manager must make sure that, clean wage option should always translate into higher contributions by the employer to staff pension and gratuity schemes as calculation will be based on the clean wage option.

*(x) Social Responsibility by the Employers*

Since the enterprises operating within some communities have made life unbearable for the populace through water pollution and destruction of other natural resources, the enterprises thus have social responsibility in terms of making contributions to the well-being and development of these communities. e.g. Oil companies in Nigeria provide social amenities to the host communities to avert crises.

**Management Solution:** Management of these companies should as a point of duty sponsor sporting activities, give scholarships to brilliant and needy students, sponsor or host educational activities etc. as contributions to the needy sectors of the economy.

*(xi) Economic Recession*

This phenomenon which is caused by decline in economic activities brings dramatic changes with decline in industrial production and output coupled with corresponding rise in the rate of unemployment. This trend affects industrial relations institutions and constitutes the main environmental factor affecting collective bargaining process. It also creates room for spate of industrial actions due to manpower contraction caused by capacity under-utilization in industries.

**Management Solution:** The HR managers must modify their responses by aligning with the unions to face these challenges realistically all in a bid to keep the enterprise afloat rather than adopting adversarial approach to labour/management relations.

*(xii) Public Service Reform by Government*

In Nigeria, the main thrust of public service reform is to show that government business can be carried out openly, economically and transparently devoid of favouritism and corruptible tendencies. The reform focuses on reforming government institution, implementing social charter, value re-orientation, moral rectitude, respect and due process to guarantee effective and transparent system of economic and financial management of government resources. The foregoing underscores the need to launder the image and future of the public service.

**Management Solution:** HRM managers in the public sector should act as vanguard in bringing back the service to the good old days or past decades when it enjoyed recognition and respect.

### *(xiii) Casualization of Labour*

This is a non-standard work arrangement caused by the effects of globalization and trade liberalization. This shift from standard to non-standard work arrangements is as a result of employers' orientation to avoid costs associated with the application of the provisions of the labour laws which are designed to protect permanent employees in standard and pensionable employment and also for the purpose of flexibility. The practice gives employers the freedom to 'hire' and 'fire' casual employees at will. The practice has been a source of constant conflict between unions and employers.

**Management Solution:** No legislation in Nigeria is supportive of this practice hence HR managers should be bold enough to guide and advise management accordingly.

### *(xiv) Outsourcing of Services*

The practice involves employers contracting out some of their non-core or ancillary services. Akin to actualization, this is done to cut costs as it denies employees the right to organize or belong to trade unions. As experience had shown, permanent employees who have stake in the organization show more commitment to their jobs than the contract employees supplied by vendors. HR managers should examine the cost-benefit implications of outsourcing certain services vis-à-vis engaging employees on permanent basis. From the foregoing, it is thus obvious that the environment of HRM has continuously varied and becoming more complex.

**Management Solution:** The trends have made it more imperative for new approach to be evolved in HR planning and management. The approach should integrate HR policies with the strategic objectives of the enterprise in pursuance of its corporate goals (Anyim, et al, 2011).

## **Globalization and Human Resource Management in Nigeria**

In the present day, business is conducted on international scale and this involves the transfer of goods and services, technology, managerial knowledge and capital to other countries or across national boundaries. Globalization has made the world smaller through fast communication network. The economies of the world have become



increasingly integrated (Bhagwatti, 2004). This is in line the studies conducted by Anyim, et al. (2011) on Human Resource Management Challenges In Nigeria Under a Globalized Economy. He argued that, the pace of globalization is increasing continuously in terms of markets for goods and services, investment opportunities across borders amongst others. Enterprises face competition from all fronts. Human resource management is not left out in this transformation crusade as it has obligation to move along with the changing demands of the globalization process.

Besides, we are now in a world where quality, efficiency and competitiveness count most. The progress and survival of the business enterprise of this century can be measured in this sequence: information, knowledge and their application through science, engineering and technology. In other words, knowledge sharing impacts on global enterprises as they export their management philosophies and techniques, as well as their technologies, products and services around the world (Kuruville, et al, 2003). This study agrees with the studies conducted by Orga, and Ogbo, (2012) who investigated the Challenges of Human Resource Management in Nigeria. The human resource is the most important resource of any organization and any effort put into motivating the workforce will pay off. In this era of globalization, organizations are not only paying for their inefficiencies through information technology (IT), they are also paying for the global inefficiency, and environmental degradation. There is a wide gap between the manager of human resource in manufacturing firms in Nigeria and the human resource. The internet has made communication network to be very easy and also for marketing to take place without necessarily moving from your desk. You can even see what the product is like and be advised by the seller. For you to participate in the global market, you must produce an internationally acceptable product. Your product must satisfy the market you are targeting. You must add value to the product. With the rapid expansion of global markets coupled with the view that the whole world in one market, it has now become imperative for the human resource practitioners to adapt to international needs by moving people, ideas, products and information around the world to meet local and international needs. In addition to these factors, the geographic dispersion, multiculturalism, different legal and social system and cross-border movement of capital, goods, services and people that the international firm faces adds a need for competency and sensitivity that is not found in the domestic firm (Vance & Paik, 2006).

Therefore, managers of this century must strive to balance the demand to think globally and act locally. However, some environment factors may constitute a problem and affect the rate of adaptation from international to local environment for the underlisted reasons: a. Economic system (capitalism; mixed economy, Marxist) and level of economic development (developed, developing and underdeveloped) b. Legal system/environment and constraints (laws, regulations and administration of justice) c. Political environment (power, ideologies, government policies and regulations) d. Educational system and language vary from one country to the other; e. Socio-cultural/Ethical environment (values, social organizations/systems, reward system etc.).

The foregoing constraints have high potentials for conflicts hence managers must develop social and diplomatic skills to forestall emergent conflict(s). this study also is inline with the studies conducted by Fajana, et al (2011) who examined Human Resource Management Practices in Nigeria. The globalization of business is having a significant impact on human resource management practices; and it is has now become more imperative than ever for business organizations to engage in human resource management practices on an international standard. While the management of people is mostly associated with HRM, the definition, parameter and context are contested by different writers. Some authors such as Kane (1996) argued that HRM is in its infancy, while other authors such as Welbourne & Andrews (1996) dispute it. However, other writers have attempted to differentiate between personnel management and HRM (Sisson, 1990), by emphasizing on the strategic approach to managing people. Other writers such as Legge (1995) have focused on the soft and hard approach to managing human resources. All these distinctions have contributed to the fundamental differences in understanding and defining human resource management practices, and therefore, HRM should not be incorporated within a single model, but rather adequate emphasis should be on understanding human resource management issues, which will assists practitioners, authors, mangers and organizations in developing and implementing HRM policies and practices that will be productive and that can make businesses to gain and sustain a competitive advantage. This is paper is aimed at exploring HRM practices in Nigeria.

### **Significance of the Study to Future Researchers**

The study is significantly important to the students and researchers as it equips them with research and qualitative analytical skills that are important in enhancing the

student's capability to understand trends and the problems of HRM in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will also reveal real life global HRM issues in the business management world and enabled them to be in a better position to comprehend and solve organizational problems in a professional manner.

### **Existing Research Gap**

There are several studies conducted on this subject matter "Evaluating 21<sup>st</sup> century Key Human Resource Management (HRM) in Nigeria", but did not follow the structure and trends follows in this study. However, for the purpose of this research, only studies of Anyim, et al. (2011), Orga, and Ogbo, (2012), Fajana, et al (2011), Kane (1996), Sisson, (1990), and Legge (1995) that were conducted within the Nigeria and out of the country. The point of departure from the previous studies is that this study is a conceptual review and is conducted on key 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges of HRM in Nigeria using different variables.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made to tackle the issues of human resource management identified in Nigeria. They include:

- a. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that an Executive Information System (EIS) for online information is made available in the organization. This will make information rightly available at no personal cost. Employees can use EIS facilities available to enhance their on-the-job skills to the advantage of the organization.
- b. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, the wide existing gap between the management and staff is bridged. This will instill the needed on-the-job confidence in staff and they will have a sense of belonging and will be ready to give in their best to achieve set goals.
- c. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, flextime is introduced to take care of the different needs, demands and time of workers while at work.

- d. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, there is no external interference or pressures in the recruitment and promotion of staff should. This will reduce making human resource manager a rubber stamp. They will also be able to make recruitment and promotional decisions without of favour.
- e. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, workplace diversities management is inevitable, as such, there should be mechanism or policy put in place to monitor and understand the different diversities that are likely to prevail at workplace and to timely provide lasting solutions to them.
- f. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, Trade unions should exist in the organization in the interest of workers see themselves as partners in progress and not competitors. There should be a level playing field for both partners so that, goal achievement can be easily achieved in the workplace.
- g. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, the latent nature and character of the union, in organisations should be reversed to make way for a virile and co-operative unionism. This will enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the achievement of organizational performance.
- h. The manager in-charge of human resource should ensure that, an industry-wide and cross-industry study be conducted of the issues, challenges and trends, of human resource management to ascertain and identify the key challenges of human resource management in Nigeria and proffer lasting solutions to them.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that human resource management has evolved from the commodity approach, through paternalism to the present social system approach. It has moved from a closed system to an open system. The key prevailing challenges of an Executive Information System (EIS), the wide existing gap between the management and staff,

introduction of flextime, no external interference or pressures in the recruitment and promotion of staff, workplace diversity, changing mix of workforce, values, demands of employers and governments are evident. The Niger Delta militancy, kidnapping, gender discrimination, nepotism and ethnic sentiments are evident and are also factors affecting HRM in Nigeria in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. The design of programmes for recruitment, training and development, integration, maintenance and separation of the employee cannot be possible without the acceptance of the organisation members. The job of the human resource manager is pervasive and requires the top place it deserves. Workplace diversities when not well handled is capable of fermenting disagreement and personality clash amongst staff and this normally breeds tension and stress that can lead to organisational conflict and employee burnout. The leadership skills of supervisors, managers and executives are identifiable. A team building and policy formulation on solving the workplace diversity is fundamental to achieving the set organizational goals.

### **Contribution to Knowledge and Suggestions for Further Studies**

The study Evaluates 21<sup>st</sup> Century Key Human Resource Management Challenges In Nigeria. The findings contributed to existing literature on the effect of HRM challenges in both the private and public sector in Nigeria.

The study broadly studied HRM challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigeria. Another study could be carried out using one organization either public or private in any of the six (6) geo-political zones in Nigeria. Study can also be conducted by looking at the impact of HRM on the performance of employees public sector in Nigeria.

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