

Assessment of Human Resource Management Strategies for Enhancing Employees' Motivation in Edo State Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed human resource management strategies for enhancing employees' motivation in Edo State. Four research questions guided the study. The sample size of the study was 179 employees from six organizations in Edo State representing 10% of the population. The descriptive survey design was used for this study. The instrument used was validated by three experts. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to compute reliability of the instrument which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.71. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Means were used to answer all the research questions. From the results of the analysis, it was discovered that employers empowered their employees to very low extent; employers rewarded their employees to high extent; employers redesigned employees' jobs to low extent, and employers created flexible jobs for their employees to low extent respectively. Consequently, it was recommended that workers should be sufficiently empowered to enhance higher performance and more productive. This will also go a long way to reduce attrition rate, the use of verbal praise, allowing workers' personal development should be given priority attention by management to enhance higher productivity, management should redesign tasks/jobs from time to time so as to enhance motivation, job satisfaction, commitment to reduce absenteeism and turnover, and management as a matter of urgency should create flexible jobs/tasks by allowing workers to control their work hours as well as allowing a portion of scheduled hours to be completed outside of their office so as to reduce boredom and work monotony.

Keywords: Human resource management; strategies; employees' motivation

1. Introduction

The economic environment is changing rapidly as a result of so many factors such as globalization, customers' demands, product-market competition, and competing new technologies. To be able to compete successfully in this changing environment, organizations must be able to improve their performance by reducing cost, innovating products and processes and improving quality, productivity and speed to market. This is why organizations are putting strategic human resource management (SHRM) in place. This represents a relatively new transformation in the field of human resource management which is concerned with the role human resource management systems play in firm performance, particularly focusing on the alignment of human resources as a mean of gaining competitive advantage. SHRM is concerned with the role human resource management play in firm performance, particularly focusing on the alignment of human resources as means of gaining competitive advantage (Caliskan, 2010). Competitive advantage according to Barney (1995) means superior performance relative to other competitors in the same industry or superior performance relative to the industry average. A company that is able to achieve superiority in cost or differentiation is able to offer consumers the products at lower costs or with higher degree of differentiation and most importantly, is able to compete with its rivals.

Human resources management, according to Armstrong (2008) involves the operation of recruitment and selection procedures, management development and training activities linked to the needs of the business. This means taking steps to assess and satisfy future people's needs and to enhance and develop the inherent capacities of people in relation to their contributions, potential and employability by providing learning and continuous development opportunities. To achieve all these, Armstrong and Baron (2003) opined that human resource management needs to achieve the following strategic goals in order for organization to gain and sustain competitive advantage: To invest in people through the introduction and encouragement of learning processes designed to increase capability and align skills to organizational needs, to ensure that organization identifies the knowledge required to meet its goals and satisfy its customers and takes steps to acquire and develop its intellectual capital, to define the behaviours required for organizational success and ensure that these behaviours are encouraged, valued and rewarded, to encourage people to engage wholeheartedly in the work they do for the organization, and to gain the commitment of people to the organization's mission and value.

The people that these changes may happen to are human resources which are considered to be one of the most potent resources of today's firm. People are the most complex to manage because other resources of

competitive advantage are less powerful than they used to be. The technological development of a nation is highly dependent upon the adequacy of its work force in number and quality. It is also presumed that no nation can develop above its human resources. As a result of this, it is important that employees are properly developed, effectively managed and sufficiently motivated. The future of any nation rests in the hands of its workers, for the qualities they possess today will inevitably be reflected in the citizens of tomorrow. There may exist the most sophisticated equipment, best facilities and funds but if these are not effectively utilized and managed by effective, efficient and dedicated employees, the objectives for which they are meant may not be attained.

Supporting this claim, Akinmayowa (2005) stated that human resources are the most potent assets that any organization possesses. Without them, equipment, materials and even capital of the company will amount to nothing as nothing gets well done without the input of the manpower resource of the organization. Every organization is expected to be committed to creating equitable, developmental and motivating working environment which values and empowers people at all levels. For any organization to operate optimally, the organization must provide training and development for its employees. Training and development according to Owenvbiugie (2015) are the practices of providing training, workshops, coaching, mentoring, social networking, job rotation, conferences or other learning opportunities to employees to inspire, challenge, and motivate them to perform the functions of their positions to the best of their abilities and within standards.

Shauna (2018) describes motivation as the level of desire employees feel to perform, regardless of the level of happiness. Employees who are adequately motivated to perform will be more productive, more engaged and feel more interested in their work. When employees feel these things, it helps them, and thereby making their managers to be more successful. McGuinn (2015) identified three simple ways to motivate employees to greater performance, which include a strong communication strategy between employees and their immediate supervisor; taking interest where employees' careers are headed; and to help employees feel heard by putting in place an internal communication plan with behavioral styles taken into account.

Harcourt (2016) identified a number of motivational strategies human resource management should put in place to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and optimality of its work force. To develop motivated employees, a manager must treat people as individuals, empower employees, provide an effective reward system, redesign jobs, and create a flexible workplace. Empowering employees occurs when individuals in an organization are given autonomy, authority, trust, and encouragement to accomplish a task. Empowerment is designed to unshackle the worker and to make a job the worker's responsibility. In an attempt to empower and to change some of the old bureaucratic ideas, managers are promoting corporate intrapreneurships. Intrapreneurship encourages employees to pursue new ideas and gives them the authority to promote those ideas. Obviously, intrapreneurship is not for the timid, because old structures and processes are turned upside down. In the same vein Dresser and Associates (2018) stated that empowered employees are engaged employees that have the tools they need to learn and grow, the tools to be productive leaders and contribute to the success of the business, and the tools they need to connect and collaborate with colleagues and others throughout the company.

In providing an effective reward system, managers often use rewards to reinforce employee behavior that they want to continue. A reward is a work outcome of positive value to the individual. Organizations are rich in rewards for people whose performance accomplishments help meet organizational objectives. People receive rewards either extrinsically or intrinsically. Extrinsic rewards are valued outcomes given to someone by another person, typically a supervisor or higher level manager, while intrinsic rewards are self-administered. A person feels good because he/she has a feeling of competency, personal development, and self-control over his/her work. Rewards demonstrate to employees that their behavior is appropriate and should be repeated. If employees do not feel that their work is valued, their motivation will decline.

When redesigning jobs, managers look at both job scope and job depth. Redesign attempts may include job enlargement, job rotation, and job enrichment. Job enlargement often referred to as horizontal job loading. It increases the variety of tasks a job includes. Although it does not increase the quality or the challenge of those tasks, job enlargement may reduce some of the monotony, and as an employee's boredom decreases, his or her work quality generally increases. Job rotation is the assignment of employees to different jobs or tasks to different people on a temporary basis. The idea is to add variety and to expose people to the dependence that one job has on other jobs. Job rotation can encourage higher levels of contributions and renew interest and enthusiasm. The organization benefits from a cross-trained workforce. Job enrichment also called vertical job loading is the application of an increased variety of tasks, but also provides an employee with more responsibility and authority. If the skills required to do the job are skills that match the jobholder's abilities, job enrichment may improve morale and performance.

Creating flexibility is another way human resource management is accommodating their employees' needs. These may include a compressed workweek. This is a form of flextime that allows a full-time job to be completed in less than the standard 40-hour, five-day workweek. Its most common form is the 4/40 schedule, which gives employees three days off each week. This schedule benefits the individual through more leisure time and lower commuting costs. The organization should benefit through lower absenteeism and improved

performance. Creating flexibility may also include job sharing or twinning which occurs when one full-time job is split between two or more persons. Job sharing often involves each person working one-half day, but it can also be done on weekly or monthly sharing arrangements. When jobs can be split and shared, organizations can benefit by employing talented people who would otherwise be unable to work full-time. The qualified employee who is also a parent may not want to be in the office for a full day but may be willing to work a half-day. Although adjustment problems sometimes occur, the arrangement can be good for all concerned; while telecommuting, sometimes called flexiplace, is a work arrangement that allows at least a portion of scheduled work hours to be completed outside of the office, with work-at-home as one of the options. Telecommuting frees the jobholder from needing to work fixed hours, wearing special work attire, enduring the normal constraints of commuting, and having direct contact with supervisors. Home workers often demonstrate increased productivity, report fewer distractions, enjoy the freedom to be their own boss, and appreciate the benefit of having more time for themselves.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There appears to be attrition rate in various organizations which may make them to incur a significant amount of costs. These costs may include opportunity costs, costs required for reselection and retraining, and decreased level of morale of the remaining workers. These costs may become more serious when an organization loses valuable employees who are difficult to replace. This level of turnover may be injurious to human resource development in the various organizations. If this trend of turnover continues unabated organizations may be adversely affected by high turnover of this set of workers. What could be responsible for this rate of turnover of workers?

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess human resource management strategies for enhancing employees' motivation

The specific objectives were to determine:

1. the extent organizations are empowering employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State.
2. the extent organizations are providing an effective reward system for employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State.
3. the extent organizations are redesigning jobs of employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State, and
4. the extent organizations are creating flexibility for employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. To what extent are organizations empowering employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State?
2. To what extent are organizations providing an effective reward system to employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State?
3. To what extent are organizations redesigning jobs for employees to enhance their motivation in Edo State?
4. To what extent are organizations creating flexibility for employees to enhance their motivation in Edo state?

2. Methods

The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. According to Leary (2010), a descriptive survey uses questionnaire and interview to collect information about few people's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behaviours, and lifestyles representative of a group. The population consisted of 1789 employees drawn from 6 organizations in Edo State. This was made up of 339 employees from Edo Central, 338 employees from Edo North, and 1112 employees from Edo South. The population was made up of males and females employees. Proportionate sampling was adopted to have a sample size of 179 representing 10% each from the different senatorial district of the population. This was made up of 111 from Edo South, 34 from Edo Central 34 from Edo North. The instrument that was used to gather data for this study was a structured questionnaire titled Human Resources Management Strategies Questionnaire (HRMSQ). The instrument was made up of two sections A and B. Section A consisted of demographic data, such as name of establishment, and gender of respondents. Section B consisted of 30 items on assessment of human resource management strategies for enhancing employees' motivation. The instrument examined variables such as empowering employees, effective reward system, redesigning jobs, and creating flexibility. The instrument used for the study was a 4-point rating scale made up of four response options of Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent, and Very Low Extent.

The instrument designed for the study was validated by three experts from University of Benin and one other expert in Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The reliability of the data collected was determined by using Cronbach alpha method. The instrument was administered on 30 employees outside the sample. The coefficient for empowering employees was 0.71, effective reward system 0.65, redesigning jobs 0.68, and creating flexibility 0.79. The value of the reliability obtained for the entire variables was 0.71.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered on 179 employees spread across Edo State. The researchers personally administered some of the questionnaire items to the respondents, while three research assistants were employed and briefed for two weeks who administered others. One week was given to the respondents before going back to collect the questionnaire for those who were unable to fill them immediately. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions. Questionnaire items related to the research questions had four response categories. Real limit of values was used for decision in selecting the items that were appropriate in accepting high and low extents. Very High Extent (VHE)-4 (3.50 – 4.49); High Extent (HE) -3 (2.50– 3.49); Low Extent (LE)-2 (1.50 – 2.49); Very Low Extent (VLE)-1 (0.50 – 1.49). To determine the extent of motivation strategies employed by organizations in Edo State, a decision rule was taken. The level of adoption of motivational strategies by organizations of each questionnaire cluster related to the research questions was determined based on grand mean.

3. Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1

To what extent have organizations empowered employees in Edo State?

The data collected in respect of this question are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' mean Responses on Employees Empowerment

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Provision of autonomy to employees	1.37	0.85	VLE
2.	Provision of authority to employees	1.18	0.61	VLE
3.	Giving of trust to employees	1.24	0.66	VLE
4.	Giving of encouragement to do things differently	1.14	0.47	VLE
5.	Giving employees encouragement to pursue new ideas	1.31	0.68	VLE
6.	Making a job worker's responsibility	2.98	1.09	HE
7.	Giving of authority to promote new ideas	1.19	0.56	VLE
Grand Mean		1.49	0.70	VLE

Researcher's field work (2018)

The data shown in Table 1 revealed that the mean values of the respondents ranged from 1.14 to 2.98. It equally revealed that the standard deviation of the items on the table ranged from 0.47 to 1.09, with a grand mean of 1.49. The mean values show that employees felt that their employers do not empower them as required in all the items except item 6 which was rated high extent. The grand mean of 1.49 reveals that employers empowered their employees to very low extent.

Research Question 2

To what extent have organizations provided effective reward system in Edo State?

The data collected in respect of this question are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents' mean Responses on Effective Reward System

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
8.	Giving of bonus	2.69	1.25	HE
9.	Giving of promotion	3.38	0.50	HE
10.	Giving of time off	3.25	0.78	HE
11.	Giving of special assignments	3.50	0.52	VHE
12.	Giving of office fixtures	1.14	0.49	VLE
13.	Giving of awards	2.97	0.27	HE
14.	Giving of verbal praise	2.02	0.43	LE
15.	Feeling of competency	3.06	0.26	HE
16.	Allowing of personal development	2.32	0.40	LE
17.	Having of self-control over work	2.17	0.42	LE
18.	Giving of self-recognition	3.24	0.42	HE
Grand Mean		2.70	0.52	HE

Researcher's field work (2018)

The data shown in Table 1 revealed that the mean values of the respondents ranged from 1.14 to 3.50. It equally revealed that the standard deviation of the items on the table ranged from 0.26 to 0.78, with a grand mean of 2.70. The mean values show that employees felt that their employers' reward was good in all the items except items 16 and 17 which were rated low extent. The grand mean of 2.70 revealed that employers rewarded their employees to high extent.

Research Question 3

To what extent have organizations redesigned jobs for employees in Edo State?

The data collected in respect of this question are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: **Respondents' mean Responses on Redesigning Jobs**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
19.	Reduction of monotony	1.16	0.51	VLE
20.	Reduction of boredom	1.18	0.54	VLE
21.	Having interest and enthusiasm in your job	1.11	0.47	VLE
22.	Assignment of workers to different jobs or tasks	2.32	0.40	LE
23.	Provision of more responsibility and authority	3.16	0.42	HE
24.	Provision of increased variety of tasks	3.44	0.36	HE
Grand Mean		2.06	0.45	LE

Researcher's field work (2018)

The data shown in Table 3 revealed that the mean values of the respondents ranged from 1.11 to 3.44. It equally revealed that the standard deviation of the items on the table ranged from 0.36 to 1.54, with a grand mean of 2.06. The mean values of items 19, 20, 21 shows that respondents agreed that their employers redesign their jobs to very high extent, while item 22 shows that employers redesign employees' tasks to low extent and items 23 and 24 reveal that employers redesign employees' job to high extent. The grand mean of 2.06 reveal that employers redesign employees' jobs to low extent.

Research Question 4

To what extent have organizations created flexible work for employees in Edo State?

The data collected in respect of this question are shown in Table 4

Table 4: **Respondents' mean Responses on Creating Flexibility**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
25.	Allowing employees full-time to be completed in less than Five-day work week	2.17	0.48	LE
26.	Allowing job sharing arrangement	2.15	0.35	LE
27.	Allowing a portion of scheduled hours to be completed outside of the office	1.98	0.43	LE
28.	Assignment of workers to different jobs or tasks	3.44	0.67	VHE
29.	Allowing you to be your own boss	2.15	0.42	LE
30.	Allowing you to control your work hours	1.19	0.49	VLE
Grand Mean		2.18	0.47	LE

Researcher's field work (2018)

The data shown in Table 4 reveal that the mean values of the respondents ranged from 1.19 to 3.44. It equally reveals that the standard deviation of the items on the table ranged from 0.35 to 0.67, with a grand mean of 2.18. The mean values of items 25, 26, and 27 show that respondents agreed that their employers created flexible jobs to low extent, while item 28 shows that employers created flexible jobs to high extent and item 30 reveals that employers created flexible jobs to very low extent. The grand mean of 2.18 reveals that employers created flexible jobs to low extent.

4. Major Findings

The major findings observed in this study as per data collected were based on the four research questions.

1. Employers empowered their employees to very low extent.
2. Employers rewarded their employees to high extent.
3. Employers redesigned employees' jobs to low extent.
4. Employers created flexible jobs for their employees to low extent.

5. Discussion of Results

The discussions of the results obtained in this study were organized according to research questions that guided the study.

Extent organizations empowered employees in Edo State

The need for employees to do their job consciously cannot be over emphasized. Business organizations are passing through competitive environments that workers are moving away from one organization to another in the spirit of competitiveness. The basic purpose of the human resource and labour management is to enhance the confidence or to improve the employee's attitude towards their job performance in a well-organized manner. Employees are supposed to be more satisfied when they feel happy in their jobs. Main reason behind this is that satisfied employees are less likely to run away from their jobs and have low absenteeism rate and ensure more output than others.

The findings in Table 1 showed that employees agreed that employers empowered them to very low extent. The finding of this study is not in line with Loke (2001) who stated that encouraging employees' empowerment and self-initiative would make employees work in accordance with department goals to sustain quality. Employees feel important and motivated to attain organizational objectives. Block (1987) asserted that employees should have full autonomy on their jobs and their involvement be high in decision-making. In the same vein Barrett and O'Connell (2001) asserted that if employees feel sense of belongingness towards company they would work with efficacy resulting in high organization performance, less absenteeism and retention of best workers.

Extent organizations provided effective reward system in Edo State

Organizations are striving hard to develop and retain high performing work force for uninterrupted organizational operations. In today's competitive global environment, effective reward system is considered an important part of new human resource practices, because it inspires employees to increase their commitment to the organization thus ensuring increased organizational productivity and success since people are the most important assets of organizations.

The findings in Table 2 showed that employees agreed that employers rewarded them to high extent. This finding is in agreement with Lockwood and Walton (2008) who stated that one way through which employers can retain the workforce is through offering a good compensation package. They further opined that an organization can only be successful in its retention strategy if it offers competitive, market-related pay and benefits because this motivates employees to become committed to the organization. In the same vein Willis (2001) stated that compensation is one of the crucial issues as far as attracting and keeping talent in organizations is concerned.

Extent of employers redesigned employees' jobs

New methods of job design encourage managers to adapt environmental and technological changes which ensure a better responsibility to beneficiaries needs and to increase work motivation of employees. One of the most effective methods for developing the horizon of employees is job rotation, especially human resource empowerment.

The finding in Table 3 showed that employers redesigned employees' jobs to low extent. This revelation contrasted the finding of Parvin (2011) who stated that the purpose of job design is to increase the level of job satisfaction which shall ultimately cause the good performance of the employee. Job design may include job rotation, job enlargement and job enrichment. In the same vein University of Minnesota Libraries (2018) stated that how a job is designed has a major impact on employee's motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to an organization, absenteeism, and turnover

Extent employers created flexible jobs for their employees

The finding in Table 4 showed that employers created flexible jobs for their employees to low extent. This revelation contrasted Harris and Bonn (2001) who revealed that not only promotion is a source of satisfaction among employees; there are other rewards also to retain and attract employees. The identified practices are decision autonomy, flexibility in the work schedules and task impact also are driver of employee's performance efficacy. In the same vein Almer and Kaplan (2000) explained the relationship of flexible job assignment with employee's turnover/ retention by giving the remarks that if the organization is offering flexible job assignment to the employees, the employees retain their career in the organization. Baltes et.al., (1999); Gajendran and Harrison (2007) asserted that flexible job assignments are associating with high level of job satisfaction.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings it was concluded that empowering employees, providing effective reward system, redesigning jobs for employees, and creating flexible jobs for employees are effective means of motivating and retaining workers in an organization.

7. Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Workers should be sufficiently empowered to enhance higher performance and more productive. This will also go a long way to reduce attrition rate.

2. The use of verbal praise, allowing workers' personal development should be given priority attention by management to enhance higher productivity.
3. Management should redesign tasks/jobs from time to time so as to enhance motivation, job satisfaction, commitment to reduce absenteeism and turnover.
4. Management as a matter of urgency should create flexible jobs/tasks by allowing workers to control their work hours as well as allowing a portion of scheduled hours to be completed outside of their office so as to reduce boredom and work monotony.

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