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Human Resource Management in Nigeria: A Review and Conceptual Model

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Introduction

Human resource management (HRM) as a discipline and practice has transformed and evolved over the decades in response to societal changes in general and the business environment more specifically (Kamoche, 2002). A vast body of knowledge on the dynamics and challenges of managing people in various parts of the world now exists (Bartram et al., 2009; Budhwar & Debrah, 2004; Guest, 1997; Nikandrou et al., 2005). However, most of the research on HRM has been undertaken within the contexts of advanced industrial societies—with countries in Africa (such as Nigeria) being largely understudied (Okpara & Wynn, 2007; Wood,

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2008; Wood & Brewster, 2007). The paucity of empirical information on African HRM has been noted frequently in academic literature, yet lots of documented work are available on selected African countries, such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya, but many of these might not be located in what most western scholars consider to be acceptable or accessible scholarly publication outlets. Bischoff and Wood (2012) shared this view when they indicated that it is incorrect to surmise that there is a general lack of attention to people management issues in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). HRM policies and practices tend to be predicated on the economic, political, legal, and social climate of a society. Therefore, historical, cultural, and institutional insights into the society are often needed to understand processes and philosophies which are strategically required in the effective design of national HRM models (Bobina & Grachev, 2016; Shoobridge, 2006). This essentially means that there is no singular HRM model that fits all environments. Nevertheless, much of the literature about management and HRM in SSA has been influenced by cultural accounts, especially drawn from the work of Hofstede (Jackson, 2002b; Bischoff & Wood, 2012).

Essentially, HRM policies and practices cannot be divorced from contextual factors such as the economic, political, legal, and socio-cultural climate of a society (Fajana et al., 2011). Therefore, this review paper brings to the fore some of the critical issues of HRM research and practices in Nigeria. It evaluates the various issues that characterise HRM policies and practices in Nigeria, to set an agenda for future research. The chapter also develops an HRM model that takes into consideration the relevant indigenous and contextual factors in Nigeria. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Next, it discusses HRM practices in context; followed by a rationalisation of why Nigeria. The next section discusses the scope and method of the review. This is followed by emanating details on HRM in Nigeria: perspectives and discourse. The section following that discusses current issues facing HRM in Nigeria; followed by a conceptualising a Nigerian HRM model; then a synthesis of themes and future research directions. The final section provides some conclusions.

HRM Practices in Context

The concept of HRM is well documented in the existing body of literature on management (Anakwe, 2002; Brewster, 1995; Kamoche, 2000). HRM is the organisational function which deals with issues relating to people, such as recruitment, performance management, compensation, organisational development, benefits, safety, training, and employee motivation (Sparrow et al., 2004). Bach and Edwards (2013, p. 19) defined HRM succinctly as involving ‘all management decisions related to policies and practices that together shape the employment relationship and are aimed at achieving individual, organisational, and societal goals’. However, Wilkinson et al. (2009, pp. 4–6) argued that effective HRM must be (a) human focused (concerning employee rights and wellbeing), (b) resource focused (employees as a resource for enhancing performance), and (c) management focused (a strategic approach involving managing change, relationships, and organisational culture). HRM, therefore, gives a unique strategic leverage for all organisational resources (Morris & Snell, 2009).

This phenomenon has resulted in the development of a body of knowledge on the dynamics and challenges of managing people in various parts of the world (Kamoche, 2002; Jackson et al., 2013). However, the literature is overwhelmingly based on western and Anglo-Saxon perspectives and models, which do not reflect the cultural and contextual factors of countries in Africa such as Nigeria (Kamoche, 2001; Wood & Brewster, 2007). Some scholars have, rightly, questioned the appropriateness of western management practices for African countries due to their lack of consideration of the relevant socio-cultural and environmental factors (Anakwe, 2002; Gbadamosi, 2003; Jaeger & Kanungo, 1990; Kamoche, 2000).

Bischoff and Wood (2012) argued that while it is correct that the body of HRM work in Africa is limited, yet we must recognise that South Africa and to some extent Nigeria has dominated the discourse on the African continent. Perhaps, the more cogent point they made, however, is that people management issues have neither been ignored in Africa nor has labour repression been the only problematic symptom of HRM in

Africa. On the side of caution, Gbadamosi (2003) argues that a systematic and human orientation, and a tendency to view practice in relation to an ideal, are culturally embedded values shared by many African managers. Thus, they suggest the need to develop a broader HRM management philosophy based on African values so we can move away from rhetoric.

While the enabling legal statutes tend to be present in most parts of Africa, the problems mostly identified are the limitations in government capacity and a lack of political will to enforce these HRM related laws (Wood & Brewster, 2007). Kamoche (1997) reported that much of the literature on HRM in Africa has focused on the concerns and needs of multinational companies, rather than more broadly, the needs of organisations and individuals based in Africa. Furthermore, Nyambegera (2002) suggests that the ethnic diversity often reported in and about African organisations, if well managed, could enhance organisational harmony and effectiveness thus allowing more inclusiveness which can, both improve image and effectiveness of organisations operating in Africa. The representativeness of Africans writing in major international journals on work and employment relations issues in Africa has been well covered (Wood & Brewster, 2007; Wood & Dibben, 2006). The argument of under-representation and thus under-exposure of topics relating to HRM in Africa in such journals is a common one (De Cieri et al., 2007). It is on this basis that Özbilgin (2004) noted that Africa represents a 'blind spot' when studying HRM. The fact that not much has changed well over a decade later is thus worthy of note. It is implicit, therefore, that if the entire continent remains underrepresented, Nigeria, which is a big part of the space, suffers a similar fate. In sum, there is a need to examine a country-specific context of the development of HRM in Africa. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management (IJHRM)* has published a few HRM in Nigeria-focused papers (1991–2016); these include Adigun, 1995; Anakwe, 2002; Fajana, 1991; Gomes et al., 2012; Huault, 1996; Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016. There have been other papers dealing with more specific HRM-related issues (Ituma et al., 2011), and several more broadly SSA and Africa-focused papers (Jackson, 2002a; Khan & Ackers, 2004; Parboteeah et al., 2014). This chapter

focuses on Nigeria and provides a context that promises to reveal the nuances of HRM practices in a non-western African setting.

Why Nigeria?

In an earlier *IJHRM* paper on HRM practices in Nigeria, Anakwe (2002, pp. 1044–1045) provides some background information on why Nigeria should be of interest for a study such as this one. It is a diverse country with rich within-country cultural differences (Adigun, 1995). Nigeria is a highly pluralistic nation, with many ethnic groups and corresponding indigenous languages, physically located in the western part of the African continent. It is the most populous black nation on earth and the single largest African democracy, with a population of about 219 million people. The country occupies a land area of 923,768 sq. km, of which 910,768 sq. km is landlocked and 13,000 sq. km is covered by water (CIA World Factbook, 2021). The Nigerian labour market, like many other developing countries, is characterised by high unemployment. The dominant informal sector—often associated with poor working conditions, low wages, and low productivity—provides the bulk of employment (Ogwumike et al., 2006). The return of democratic rule in 1999 and the government policy of privatisation have turned Nigeria into one of the most attractive destinations for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa (Fajana et al., 2011; Osabutey & Okoro, 2015; Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001). Since most foreign firm employers in a host country should rely on local human resources, these firms generally require a good understanding of how HRM works.

Since its independence in 1960 Nigeria has been continuously reported in numerous reports and publications as a country with great potential. Several other emerging economies of similar standing in the 1960s and 1970s have since been recognised to have achieved that potential, yet Nigeria seems to remain a promise for the future. This chapter brings to the fore the recently growing interest in Nigeria as an economy that remains attractive to businesses and individuals with aggressive FDI interest. Nigeria is reported understudied in HRM reviews (Budhwar & Debrah, 2004; Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001). Yet, labour and employment

relations in Nigeria have been reported as having a long problematic history in several studies (Otobo, 2016). The situation of Nigeria and its use of human resources is peculiar because while the country is rich in resources, its people are poor (Bako & Syed, 2018). Fajana (2008) highlighted some of the national challenges slowing down Nigeria to include a divided society, corruption, hyperactive demography, growth in GNP limited to the non-real sector, double digit inflation, skilled unemployment, low industrial capacity utilisation, capital-biased factor intensity, and political activism and wage determination process (see pp. 373–375). These realities of Nigeria have only been more vividly evidenced and widespread since 2019. Dowling (1999) noted that activities such as recruiting, promoting, rewarding, and dismissal are often determined by the culture-specific practices. This suggests that concerted efforts at planned research activities to understand and take advantage of these cultural differences especially in a multicultural context such as Nigeria might reveal some nuances which HRM research, theory, and practice might benefit from.

Scope and Method of the Review

Identifying the relevant HRM literature in Nigeria was the very first step we undertook. We followed two lines of systematic searches for published academic materials using two keywords as benchmarks of our search: HRM or human resources management and Nigeria. In our literature search, the target was to achieve a comprehensive coverage of scientific articles focusing on human resources management in Nigeria. We followed the three main stages of conducting a systematic review: planning, conducting, and reporting and disseminating the review (Tranfield et al., 2003); which Watson et al. (2018) referred to as ‘Searching’, ‘Screening’ and ‘Extraction/Synthesis’.

Search Protocol

In the first step we used the 2018 iteration of the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) Academic Journal Guide (AJG), for the UK. These were business and management journals from different disciplines within business. We focused exclusively on HRM-specific journals. In all there are 54 journals ranked under the category termed Human Resource Management and Employment Studies. The journals were ranked 4*, 4, 3, 2, and 1. None of the journals was at 4* level, there were 5 journals ranked 4, 9 journals ranked 3, 22 journals ranked 2, and 18 journals ranked at 1. We used this list as a guide as it provided a thorough, carefully selected HRM journals that has gone through careful peer review selection and adjudged as appropriate following careful academic scrutiny. It is, therefore, more credible and easier to reference due to the rigour of its methodology (CABS Academic Journal Guide Methodology, 2018). To ensure a careful and thorough search we searched one journal at a time.

The 54 journals generated a total of 240 hits. The screening was done by the authors to allow for comparison and enhance reliability and credibility. We reviewed and coded the articles adopting Kauppi et al. (2018). Our detailed and careful strategy resulted in inclusion and exclusion criteria being specified and discussed, followed by evaluation, review and refinement and then finally agreed. A total of 26 articles which formed the core of our third stage (reporting and dissemination/‘Extraction/Synthesis’) resulted. In the second round of our search we did a more generic and popular systematic search. Several scholarly databases were identified for search: Academic Search Ultimate, Business Source Ultimate, PsycINFO (this includes Emerald, Elsevier, Wiley, SAGE, EBSCOhost databases). Again, using two keywords: HRM or human resources management and Nigeria in our search, a total of 110 hits resulted. Careful evaluation by authors generated a total of 28 relevant articles. We, thereafter, followed up our review with careful checks of the reference list of our selected readings. This generated a further 14 relevant articles. As a key exclusion criterion, which is also important for the credibility of our work, we avoided paper published in outlets that are deemed

‘predatory’ journals (Beall, 2016; Demir, 2018; Xia et al., 2015), as these seem to be a major problem among Nigeria-based scholars.

In total, we extracted a total of 68 relevant articles on HRM in Nigeria. There were 11 qualitative papers (that used interviews, focus group, or a mixture); 33 were quantitative based mostly using surveys and a few using large data sets; 21 were conceptual papers; 3 used mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative strategy; and 4 were classified as ‘others’ having used archival, historical or other secondary unclassified data. There were papers that were double counted as they fell into more than one category. It was not the intention of this paper to do a systematic literature review, but we have ensured a comprehensive and inclusive literature search as detailed above which allowed us to exhaustively identify published materials on the subject of HRM in Nigeria. Each of the final sources formed the core of our reading. There are two notable limitations in our search protocol, it has left out books and book chapters, albeit particularly valuable ones, that were part of our more general readings. The second limitation relates to scholarly papers that have been published in non-electronic mediums, mostly available in print in Nigeria. Such publications are common in Nigeria and may indeed contain some useful additional information which have been missed. The logistics and difficulty of physically putting such together made it impossible for us, and unrealistic to pursue. Nonetheless, the quality and breadth of materials that has come out of our careful systematic search is comprehensive and credible, even if not exhaustive, and we anticipate future studies may take this useful gap as a springboard to further bridging our knowledge of HRM in Nigeria.

HRM in Nigeria: Perspectives and Discourse

HRM (and employment relations) in Nigeria have been products of endogenous and exogenous factors. On the one hand, modern wage employment—which constituted the remote origin of modern employment relations within the formal sector of the country as it were—was originally introduced by the British colonial administration, and hence externally induced from the onset. However, the initial structures of wage

employment gradually grew in Nigeria and remained intact for periods beyond political independence in October 1960 and through the 1970s. And then, as a result of factors that were also internally and externally accounted, the existing employment market institutions and formal work organisations in Nigeria had undergone further regimes of transformation and regeneration—considered as being sometimes chaotic and disruptive of macro-level development, and which actually lasted until the 1980s and 1990s (Matanmi, 2000, pp. 95–96). Also, historically and contextually within Nigeria, the concepts of ‘HRM’ and ‘personnel management’ (PM) have generally tended to be used interchangeably, despite that HRM models differ from PM models in terms of their focus, principles, and application (Tubey et al., 2015). Nevertheless, HRM has replaced what is traditionally known as PM in Nigeria. Prior to the colonial era, HR practices, in terms of methodology and procedures applicable for recruitment, selection, induction, and training, were determined by the chiefs (kings), guilds, influential people, and institutions in the Nigerian society (Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001). Recruitment, selection, and other processes were undertaken discretionarily and did not take into consideration candidates’ qualifications, skills, or talents. The advent of colonialism brought several foreign organisations whose HRM principles were basically bureaucratic (Taylor, 1992; Waweru, 1984). HR practices such as personnel functions were addressed and replaced by colonial methods (Akinnusi, 1991). The post-political independence era, however, widened the HR functions in Nigeria. In addition, the indigenisation of the private sector eventually led to the emergence of local businesses and the consequent replacement of foreign labour with local employees (Hawkins, 2000). Such processes required some level of indigenisation of HRM policies and practices.

As many countries in Africa witness different phases of transitioning—from pre-colonial to post-colonial to military era then to democratic rule; economic activities evolve and so should the practice of the related management processes. These historical shifts in development and business activities are expected to be associated with the concurrent evolution of HRM practices. Traditional Nigerian societies and organisations have developed their own HRM systems from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era (Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001), which has led to various

indigenous management practices. Arguably, Africans had their own forms of management practices before colonisation and continue to use management practices which are more akin to indigenous methods (Jackson, 2012). Many changes have also occurred since independence from British colonial rule. For example, the Federal Character Principle (FCP) gave rise to a quota system in Nigeria (Abdulraheem & Adisa, 2013; Fajana et al., 2011). This was aimed at reducing inequality and marginalisation of minority groups. The expectation was to minimise the dominance of persons from identified states and/or ethnic or other sectional groups in government agencies and other public sector organisations (Fajana et al., 2011). The FCP, as a Nigerian Federal Government Act, was incorporated into the 1999 Constitution. In addition, the Quota System Policy (QSP) was also aimed at redistributing national resources to rebalance wealth distribution across ethnic groups (Abdulraheem & Adisa, 2013; Son-Thierry & Weil, 2010).

HRM functions such as recruitment and selection had to, therefore, seek to redress such differences. Other HRM practices such as performance management and motivation require in-depth understanding of the needs, expectations, and motivations of the diverse ethnic groups. Although public organisations were mandated by the FCP of 2003 and the QSP in terms of recruiting employees according to the national diversity legislation (Arubayi & Tiemo, 2012), such processes were, inadvertently, likely to influence practices in the private sector. Generally, the FCP and QSP would affect other aspects of HRM practices. Nigeria has also become known as one of the countries in Africa which has increasingly received high inflows of FDI (Osabutey & Okoro, 2015). Due to the increasing presence of foreign firms, the need to understand the dynamics of HRM issues in Africa has begun to gain interest in the emerging literature (Kamoche, 2002; Osabutey et al., 2015). Anakwe (2002), in a survey of three major cities in Nigeria, found that HR practices were now a blend of western and local practices, emphasising the crossvergence among HRM practices. Although Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) predicted convergence, they conceded that the current evidence suggests that cultural and institutional influences have resulted in a blend of indigenous and foreign HRM practices. Therefore, while HRM practices are influenced by foreign practices, the evolving HRM practices are

heavily influenced by cultural and institutional factors (Adisa et al., 2017a). Consequently, it is important to note that the HRM practices in Nigeria have been influenced by indigenous practices which have evolved over the decades before and after independence. In addition, the increasing presence of foreign firms has also shaped HRM practice in the country. However, cultural and institutional issues cannot be ignored if HRM practice is expected to perform to its full capacity.

Studies on strategic HRM (SHRM) policies, opportunities, and practices in Nigeria are particularly important now that Nigeria is open to international trade and investment and has become a key player in the international markets inside and outside of Africa (Gomes et al., 2012; Okpara & Wynn, 2007). There is, therefore, the need for studies that elicit the SHRM issues in Nigeria with the view to developing a specific Nigerian HRM model that would enhance the understanding of Nigerian HRM practices. The problems of Africa are located firmly in Africa's colonial past as well as in its postcolonial present (Ahluwalia, 2001), yet any effort to proffer a solution must be interrogated within this reality (Nkomo, 2011). It is yet appropriate to challenge this orthodoxy in the light of rapid global development in other parts of the world especially south east Asia. The complex argument of colonialism, anti-colonialism, post-colonialism, and western hegemony serves an important reflective purpose as demonstrated by Nkomo (2011). It also helps to position narratives or sometimes appreciate lack of convergence, yet it has had much less positive impact on progress broadly within Africa research or HRM studies more specifically. In this chapter, we deliberately avoid narratives along the historical journey of HRM in Nigeria. Whereas, such a taxonomy creates logic and boundaries, yet much has been written on employment relations, industrial relations than HRM. Moreover, the extant literature presented along this trajectory are not isomorphic.

Current Issues Facing HRM in Nigeria

Effective HRM is one of the essential tools for achieving greater productivity in theory and practice. Consequently, although HRM literature has not been richly developed in Nigeria, our review of extant literature

reveals many important issues highlighted by scholars. The effective management of an organisation's human and material resources for achieving greater productivity is the focus of HRM (Beer et al., 1985). The broad issues identified from the literature include ethnicity and related differences, gender issues, the informal sector, modernisation and information technology, and human resource development.

Ethnicity and Related Differences

HRM in SSA often tend to be an autocratic, low-wage, and low-skill model operating with a strong paternalism that incorporates conceptions of personal and family based ties, rights, and obligations (Otobo, 2016; Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001; Wood & Brewster, 2007). In Nigeria, HRM cannot be divorced from various ethnic issues due to the highly diverse and multi-ethnic nature of the country. Arguably, ethnicity and related differences constitute a major dimension of diversity in terms of employment relations in most of Africa (Nyambegeera, 2002), and especially Nigeria (Adigun, 1995). The concept of managing diversity through HRM involves various issues, such as the employment of ineffectual employees and paltry productivity (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016; Oruh et al., 2020). Adisa et al. (2017c) revealed several inherent challenges confronting employee resourcing in Nigeria, including favouritism, ethnicity, age, and gender discrimination, and corruption. These are significant inhibitors of effective employee resourcing in Nigeria and thus these differences in personal characteristics constitute fundamental HR challenges in the Nigerian context. Adigun (1995) reported significant job attitude differences among the three major ethnic groups (Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa) of Nigeria thus confirming the importance of cultural differences in understanding workers even within the same country as values, beliefs, and customs differ. Significant within-country cultural differences are very common. Relatedly, Parboteeah et al. (2014) also highlighted the important role of HRM in furthering ethics and creating an ethical culture, albeit this has been mostly ignored in the African context.

Similarly, Parboteeah et al. (2014) discussed ethical considerations in the HR process including during recruitment, career advancement, and

training opportunities highlighting the positive and adverse impact that could play out. The notion of obligation to close relatives and friends during such processes was equally addressed by Kamoche (2001). The FCP and QSP, designed to prevent oppression and marginalisation of employees due to their socio- and ethno-religious affiliations, were found to have inadvertently eliminated competitiveness and have bred mediocrity in the recruitment and selection processes (Adeleye et al., 2014; Adisa et al., 2017c). The socio-cultural diversity of Nigeria has implications for HRM practice as ethno-religious affiliation segregates people and jobs. This is because the national culture is heavily inclined towards culture, language, gender, religion, and ethnic affiliation in terms of employment (Adisa et al., 2017c; Emerole et al., 2013; Pitts & Wise, 2010; Shoobridge, 2006). A wide range of external pressures—ranging from wider political instability to the demands placed by extended kin-based networks—often precluded managers from operating effectively (Bischoff & Wood, 2012). Essentially, ethnicity, local values, and customs are critical in HRM in Nigeria.

Gender Issues

Additionally, gender inequality in Nigeria has always been an important issue in HRM. Fatile and Adejuwon (2011) highlighted the government's apathetic attitude in terms of pursuing an employment policy which would ensure gender balance in the workplace (specifically in government institutions)—thus putting the female gender at the mercy of subordination and discrimination. However, gender stratification, in terms of male and female advantages, pervades every system of HRM in Nigeria, regardless of the sector (Ogunrin et al., 2011). This phenomenon may relate to the broad assumption that women's domestic responsibilities often affect their participation in the labour market (Hochschild, 1997) and their performance at work (Adisa et al., 2014). It may also be connected to the patriarchal nature and the traditional division of labour within a section of the Nigerian society, which allocates the primary breadwinning role to men and the homemaking role to women (Adisa et al., 2016, 2017b).

Bako and Syed (2018) discusses women's marginalisation and gender inequality in all phases of life in Nigeria attributable to patriarchal culture and legislative gaps. This has resulted in massive constraints for women participation in all spheres of life with implications for HRD as well as economic development more generally (Adisa et al., 2021). Despite signing the enactment of anti-discriminatory laws, gender inequality and women marginalisation persist due to the patriarchal culture and religious norms that have a strong influence on the society (Adisa et al., 2021; Bako & Syed, 2018; Nwaka et al., 2016). Nwaka et al. (2016) investigated gender differences in self and paid employment and found that gender difference is higher in self-employment compared to paid employment. The findings further reveal that pay structure varies across employment sectors—waged and self-employed—and that the determinants of the employment sector also vary by gender and family roles. Gender prejudice is an indication of ineffective HRM and a significant challenge.

The Informal Sector

Generally, in Africa, informal sector activities are overseen and regulated by business owners who operate from makeshift structures (Muuka & Mwenda, 2004), with informal obligations being promoted (Bischoff & Wood, 2012). Relatedly, the nature of businesses and the ownership thereof is also crucial to the effectiveness of HRM in Nigeria. The Nigerian informal sector has evolved over the past 50 years (Nwaka, 2005). Albeit, most businesses are privately owned, meaning that the informal sector accounts for a large proportion of the urban workforce (Arimah, 2001). The Nigerian informal sector contributes around 58% to the economy (Ministry of Budget and National Planning, 2017). However, despite the huge size of the Nigerian informal sector (which comprises several micro and small businesses) (Ovadje & Ankomah, 2001), there are no formal HRM rules, sanctions, or models guiding the HRM activities of organisations (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016). Business owners often adopt what they deem suitable HRM models. These usually tend to lean towards western approaches (Fajana et al., 2011).

Fajana (2008) provides an original and detailed review of employment relations in non-standard work. This vast non-unionised informal sector, Fajana (2008) opined, could be a valuable strategy for achieving decent work and pay, hence minimising poverty as well as enhancing Nigeria development objectives. Yet, there have been barriers in this area and more than a decade later, there has not been much progress made. Ogunyomi and Bruning (2016) examined HRM and organisational performance in SMEs, the findings reinforce extant studies from developed countries tentatively suggesting the generalisability of relationships between HRM practices and firm performance from large organisations to SMEs, while also raising awareness of the effectiveness of implementation of some practices for effective testing in SMEs. Overall, a lack of a framework for standardised HRM policies and practices within the informal sector in Nigeria undermines fair employment standards.

Modernisation and Information Technology

Electronic HRM (e-HRM) is still emerging in Nigeria. Much less research has been reported in this area. Much interest is reported within the banking industry probably due to affordability and the high cost associated with digitalisation (Iyiola & Osibanjo, 2014; Oruh, 2013). Although computer and internet usage in Nigeria is much less than it is in many western nations, many organisations in Nigeria continue to recognise the important role of computerisation/digitalisation in different areas of HRM (such as recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, employee benefits), and are now storing employee data electronically. Noe et al. (2003, p. 38) described e-HRM as 'the processing and transmission of digitized information used in HRM...from one computer or electronic device to another'. However, technological knowledge expertise (and utilisation) is still in short supply; as there is equally lack of financial resources to acquire, update, and maintain critical Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), a chronically unreliable electricity supply; and an ineffectual internet service (Sylvester et al., 2015). All these factors undermine the optimum impact of e-HRM in Nigeria. The introduction or adoption of e-HRM will increase employee commitment and service

delivery which may facilitate organisational performance (Iyiola & Osibanjo, 2014), and a method of implementing HR strategies, policies, and practices (Nura et al., 2012).

Human Resource Development

Another challenging issue is the lack of effective human resource development (HRD) policies and practices. Effective training (which focuses on developing superior HR) is crucial for the development of HR in an organisation. In many Nigerian organisations, developing a standard HRD strategy to stimulate effective and efficient HRM is still largely a goal. Similarly, identifying the need for staff training and, in many cases, the financial resources needed to sponsor the training remain huge setbacks for many organisations (Arubayi & Akobo, 2018; Oguntimehin, 2001), especially in the informal sector. Although the Industrial Training Fund (Amendment) Act 2011 mandated employers with just five or more employees to contribute to the fund in order to facilitate effective training and development for employees, anecdotal evidence suggest that majority of organisations in the informal sector do not have dedicated budgets for the support of many HRM practices, including employee evaluation, compensation, training, and development. Individuals entrusted with HRD tend to frame their interventions in terms of how they viewed the local cultural setting (Bischoff & Wood, 2012; Hansen, 2003).

The issues highlighted here are problematic and undermine the fundamentals and potentials of HRM in Nigeria. There are several empirical studies to draw from. Okpara and Wynn (2007) found that while HRM practices, such as training, recruitment, compensation, performance appraisal, and reward systems, are in place, the issues of ethnicity, training and development, and corruption remain significant challenges. In another study, Suleiman et al. (2018) drawing upon Badura's social cognitive learning theory investigates mediating role of transfer motivation on trainee characteristics when transferring training among Nigerian teachers. They found that the extent of involvement in organisational commitment and full involvement in their jobs would drive employee's

persistence and intense efforts towards utilising skills and knowledge learned in the work settings. Moreover, transfer motivation is a fundamental element in the transfer of training processes. Similarly, Oseghale et al. (2018) examines the main drivers, nature, and extent of employee training. The findings suggest several factors including government regulations, health and safety concerns, industry-education outreach programmes, and the general state of industry tend to trigger proactive measures in developing relevant training programmes. Moreover, organisations' strategies, policies, health and safety concerns, and technological changes influence training decision-making. While these issues are core to success, they are however not exhaustive. Nonetheless, dealing with such organisational management challenges require a strategic Nigerian HRM (NHRM) model which would consider all the relevant variables identified. The following section, therefore, conceptualises a workable NHRM model based on the foregoing issues and challenges.

Conceptualising an NHRM Model

Many scholars have called for a country-specific model to fit well in HRM context (Anakwe, 2002; Jaeger & Kanungo, 1990; Kamoche, 2000; Okpara & Wynn, 2007), and this would be most appropriate in the case of Nigeria given its unusual multicultural setting. Often western HRM models do not sit well in the non-western Nigerian context. SHRM theories developed and conceptualised in western-developed countries (Hendry & Pettigrew, 1990) have key environmental influences on HRM. Such theories concentrated on mapping the context while ignoring the analysis of the possible linkage between the context and performance. Some scholars built and concentrated on strategy and structure; hypothesising that organisations which have a fit between business strategy, structure, and HRM policy and practice will have greater performance (Miles & Snow, 1984; Schuler & Jackson, 1987). Other scholars proposed descriptive theories focusing on the classification of the content of HRM and different outcomes (Beer et al., 1985; Kochan et al., 1986). While Beer et al. (1985) concentrated on HRM policies and practices and their key outcomes, Kochan et al. (1986) focused on a

systems approach which described the interrelationships between levels. Normative theories on the other hand were prescriptive in nature (Walton, 1985), proposing that either a sufficient body of knowledge exists to provide a basis for the prescribed best practice or that a set of values indicate best practice (Guest, 1997; Pfeffer, 1995). The main contention is that a higher employee performance is required, if an integrated set of HRM practices is applied to achieve the normative objectives of high commitment to the organisation (Guest, 1997).

This segment of the chapter aims to present a best fit considered appropriate in the Nigerian context—the NHRM model. This is essential as many western theories/models are not fit for purpose in Nigeria, nay SSA. The more critical debate remains whether a universal HRM model exists. Some scholars have submitted that such a model exists (Huselid & Becker, 1995; Pfeffer, 1998). Others have argued that the effectiveness of HRM practices depends on the specific organisational and environmental context (Mayer et al., 1993; Venkatraman, 1989). Therefore, following the foregoing analysis and review of extant work in Nigeria, a country-specific HRM model is proposed here. The descriptive, normative, or strategic models do not provide insight into the contextual background of NHRM. This chapter, thus, introduces five contextual factors which must be considered when developing an NHRM model that would be fit for purpose and best HRM practice in the Nigerian context. The factors are cultural and social factors, environmental factors (internal and external), merit and standard practices, organisational requirements and institutional mechanisms, and organisational outcomes. With these factors in place, best policies and practices will be assured, and the right people will be in the right job performing the right tasks.

Cultural and Social Factors

Societal culture has an important influence on the way organisations manage their employees and the way HRM practices are developed and implemented (Sparrow et al., 1994). Culture involves rules and regulations which define the totality of people's lives in a society, regardless of the organisation in which they work. Cultural diversity in Nigeria means

that, often, organisational systems and approaches (which have a major influence on attitudes, perceptions, decision-making, and other vital aspects of an organisation) may be different across the country. The three dominant cultures in Nigeria are: the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo cultures albeit there are hundreds of other ethnic groups. The value of inclusiveness which HRM espouses means numerous ethnic groups must be factored in when designing policies. Nigerian cultural values include, not necessarily in order of importance: (a) religion, (b) family unity, (c) community life, (d) respect for the elderly, and (e) respect for parents and authority (Cohen, 2007). NHRM philosophy should focus on how HR functions can be managed in a way which embraces Nigerian cultural ideologies and way of life. In this respect, it is important for organisations to consider the ethnic composition in the area of its operation. Edoho (2001, p. 74) argued that 'for a theory or model to be practical in Nigeria, it must embrace the contextual reality and daily existence and experience of the people'. Similarly, every culture has developed specific and unique insights into HR and the management of organisations through their own histories (Laurent, 1986; Singh, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have extensively commented on the impact of culture on HR practices and the need for a balance between different cultural values and practices (Wang et al., 2008; Westney, 2005).

The question remains: to what extent does culture influence how HRM practices are developed and implemented? In the USA and Europe, the pay for performance scheme is prevalent (Hatton, 1988; Jones & Kato, 1995) whereas the lifetime employment and quality circle programmes are embedded in Japanese organisations and management policies (Newman & Nollen, 1996; Pascale & Maguire, 1980). These programmes are not currently popular and are unlikely to be successful in Nigeria. In a high-power distance Nigerian culture, loyalty, and obedience to superior or constituted authority are all required and essential to HR functions such as performance appraisal/management, promotion, and benefits. Socially acceptable behaviour thus takes precedence over results/performance criteria of the individual in HRM decisions. Therefore, cultural factors must be considered in the design and implementation of an HRM model for Nigeria.

Environmental Factors

Many studies have documented the relationship between, and the importance of, environmental factors in designing and implementing a vibrant HRM model (Buller, 1988; Cascio, 1993; Jackson et al., 1989; Wright et al., 1994). Environmental factors include both the internal and external factors. Internal environmental factors comprise the organisational purpose/mission, organisational size and structure, organisational strategies and objectives, actions of corporate headquarters, and the priorities of management. On the other hand, external environmental factors are composed of government regulations, economic conditions, technological advancement, and workforce demographics. All these factors are different and operate differently in Nigeria. For example, the economy of Nigeria was out of recession recently having been in recession for two years previous (Agri et al., 2017). Consequently, this has had a direct impact on the HR activities of both public and private organisations—in terms of recruitment, training and development, pay and compensation, and other HR functions. Researchers have stressed the significance of several environmental factors on HRM including the economy, technology, and government regulations (Kabene et al., 2006). Developing a good HRM model for the Nigerian HRM and organisational system requires careful consideration of all the external factors, some of which are unique to the Nigerian context.

Merit and Standardised Practices

The challenges surrounding the value of merit over and above other considerations is a rather difficult debate in many non-western contexts including Nigeria. The complications around ethnicity, family and kinship obligations, and loyalties among others suggest that merit and standardised practices within HRM practices are often compromised. Khan and Ackers (2004) previously proposed a modified version of Ackers' (2002) 'neo-pluralist' theoretical framework as the basis for understanding and resolving some of the issues involved in HRM in SSA. The

proposal which covers the external context, the institutional context, as well as HR policies and practices are an attempt to institutionalise some elements of the African social systems into formal HRM policies and strategies. It is, however, inadequate to comprehensively address the entire remit of people management for today's HRM functions. It pays little attention to contemporary issues and salient practices such as merit and standardised practices and organisational outcomes.

Furthermore, it deconstructs family, kinship, and religious obligations as external context, both of which are among today's dominant internal dynamics that determines who the employee is and what role the organisation plays in their care. Nyambegera (2002) highlights the positive contribution of ethnic diversity in African organisations, arguing that if well managed could enhance organisational harmony and effectiveness. He further advocates that African organisations consciously embrace approaches of 'inclusion' rather than 'exclusion' for HRM. It is noteworthy though that the actual practice and implementation of this proposal may be beset with intricate albeit surmountable challenges. Similarly, if organisations appreciate the inherent employee 'differences' this may significantly enhance the reputation and effectiveness of organisations. It is imperative that organisations standardise their practices and embrace merit to ultimately achieve a successful organisational outcome. This is a potentially rich research area and a proposal that is open to empirical validation and further research.

Organisational Requirements and Institutional Mechanisms

Organisational requirements deserve consideration for the development of the NHRM model because every organisation has plans and requirements which further determine the trajectory of its progress. Such organisational requirements include the organisational vision and mission, its goals and objectives, its priorities, its plans, standards and protocols, and resource parameters. It is essential to note that the source of organisational requirements is rooted in organisational structures, the activities of

individuals and groups, power structures, obligations and responsibilities, and control and autonomy (Harker et al., 1990). All these must be carefully considered when developing an NHRM model. The FCP and the QSP are two prominent institutional mechanisms which have been established and operated in Nigeria and aim to manage equality, diversity, and inclusion in organisations (Adeleye et al., 2014). The FCP (Federal Character Commission, 1996) and the QSP (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2011) detailed in the cited documents were established to curb the excesses of HR managers and other recruitment agencies, preventing bias, inequality, and marginalisation in recruitment into public organisations (Fajana et al., 2011). However, while some researchers have argued that FCP and QSP have not achieved their lofty objectives (Arubayi & Tiemo, 2012; Bodunrin, 1989; Mustapha, 2009), others have suggested that these mechanisms should be reviewed as they undermine the principles of merit and excellence (Adeleye et al., 2014; Adisa et al., 2017c). Vibrant institutional mechanisms evidencing merit and transparency in the system, which were discussed in the previous section, should be incorporated into the proposed NHRM model.

Organisational Outcomes

Many studies have demonstrated that there is a nexus between HRM and organisational outcomes/performance (Boselie et al., 2009; Combs et al., 2006; Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Huselid et al., 1997). The alignment of organisational strategy and various HR practices within an organisation are crucial for explaining the link between HRM and organisational outcomes: when HRM is properly aligned within the organisation, the employees know what is expected of them (Baron & Kreps, 1999). Although there is evidence in the existing literature on this topic that HRM improves organisational outcomes (Huselid, 1995; Huselid et al., 1997; Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016), it is essential to examine the outcomes of any proposed HRM model in relation to the outcomes on the part of both the employer and the employee, while these need to be clearly communicated to the employee. Nishii et al. (2008) argued that employees may make attributions about HR practices and their motives,

which can impact their attitudes and behaviour. Essentially, the purpose, intention, and outcomes need to be communicated clearly to the stakeholders to ensure buy-ins as well as consistent execution across the organisation.

Synthesis of Themes and Direction for Future Research

There are five discernible but interconnected prospective areas for future research highlighted by this review. First, there has been a systemic failure of investigative empirical research in all aspects of HRM in Nigeria. Many published researches have been in silos with no systematic follow-up. We did not find any study that followed up on previous empirical published studies. This lack of follow-through makes it difficult to identify a research trajectory and create a path that may lead to credible conclusions, as well as feasible theoretical or applied value. The absence of any studies that have followed up on any of our key readings make it difficult to demonstrate how extant studies have advanced HRM knowledge and bridged the gap in the HRM literature in the case of Nigeria. Future studies, therefore, require a more systematic approach that would engage with the HRM challenges that are both general global practices and specific NHRM challenges. Second, Ovadje and Ankomah (2001) argued that modern practices such as peer and/or subordinate appraisals do not sit comfortably within the Nigerian culture where critical face-to-face comments may be misconstrued as personal attack. This is a curious take which may have anecdotal evidence but requires empirical support. Yet, we did not find any performance appraisal review-specific research that has evaluated or challenged this viewpoint. This is an important area for future investigation that may reveal valuable insight into employee review and performance.

Third, softer and contemporary HRM issues are generally missing from current outputs from Nigeria. Contemporary and topical issues such as Green HRM, emotional intelligence and the role of HRM in ethics are missing from empirical investigation in our literature search. These

issues are topical globally and have massive implications for the future of HRM. There is, therefore, a need to infuse such areas of investigation in the sphere of future HRM research in Nigeria. This is instructive owing to the changing dynamics of the organisational landscape and the need to adopt an integrated approach. Fourth, diversity, gender, and technology are also contemporary issues globally. While there are few reported studies in these areas from our review and engagement with the literature, yet neither research nor practice of HRM in Nigeria is at the forefront of best practice in any of the three areas. This is despite the fact that these issues are unique for Nigeria as a country with great diversity challenges (Adigun, 1995; Anakwe, 2002; Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016). Moreover, there are massive gender gap differences and women discriminatory practices (Bako & Syed, 2018; Nwaka et al., 2016), and the use of technology could have quick positive impact on its HRM practices (Iyiola & Osibanjo, 2014; Nura et al., 2012; Sylvester et al., 2015). Future research geared at empirically demonstrating how diversity, gender, technology could support the attainment of better HRM practices are therefore timely. Fifth, there is also a dearth of funded research and/or sponsored projects. We found only one published paper in 2002 that received some grant. It is not clear if it is the lack of available bids, the absence of submitted proposals, or the failure of submitted bid proposals that accounts for this gap. However, it provides an impetus for bridging this gap.

Conclusions

The chapter emphasised the importance of designing HRM research and practices to suit country-specific contexts. It argues that, in Nigeria, socio-cultural, ethno-religious affiliations, institutional measures (FCP/QSP), the informal economic sector, poor infrastructure, and the need to blend foreign and indigenous HRM practices have strongly influenced HRM policy and practice therein. Consequently, it calls for a critical review and reflection of contextual factors when applying HRM theory especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. A key contribution of the chapter is the identification and discussion of indigenous and comprehensive contextual factors which must be considered when developing

an NHRM model or best HRM practices for Nigerian organisations and/or organisations operating within Nigeria. Many researchers have argued that an overwhelming theme in African HRM literature is the pertinence of western management principles and practices (April & Shockley, 2007; Jackson, 2004; Jackson et al., 2013; Kamoche & Newenham-Kahindi, 2013; Mangaliso, 2001). This phenomenon is problematic for organisations operating in Nigeria because many adopt western practices with little or no consideration for the African indigenous systems and models of leadership, culture, and environment factors (Jackson et al., 2013; Mangaliso, 2001; Mbigi, 2000). This chapter, thus, highlights a unique, distinctive workable approach for the management of HR functions in Nigeria which many researchers have previously called for (an NHRM model) (Anakwe, 2002; Fajana et al., 2011; Kamoche, 2002; Nyamabegera, 2002).

Although there has been no agreement on the nature of the NHRM model, this chapter proposes a suitable NHRM model for industries and organisations operating in Nigeria. An NHRM typology must be contextualised within the framework of the specific socio-cultural, economic, and other institutional determinants of organisational existence, survival, and continuity. With a deep understanding of these factors, the best HR policies and practices will be assured and the right people will be deployed in the right places, performing the right tasks (Fig. 2.1). It is hoped that

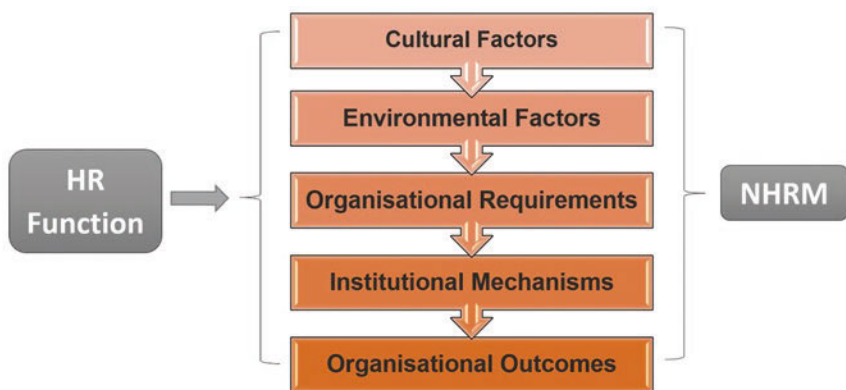


Fig. 2.1 Proposed Nigerian HRM (NHRM) model

this chapter will stimulate impactful research on the development of an NHRM typology as well as further research on HRM in Nigeria, which is limited. This would be useful for international organisations that are required to incorporate local nuances to enhance international HRM policies and practices. Such an approach would reduce over-reliance on western HRM models and practices, moving on from this reliance to the development of an appropriate NHRM typology which will add value to HR practices.

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