

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: A PANACEA FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN NIGERIA

Eucharia Amaka Onu *PhD*

Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This research paper aimed to explore the role of strategic human resource development (SHRD) in promoting good governance and sustainable peace in Nigeria. The paper begins by providing an overview of the current challenges faced by Nigeria as a country in terms of governance and peace-building. It then delves into the concept of Strategic Human Resource Development (SHRD) and its potential to address these challenges. The paper discusses various strategies and approaches that can be employed in SHRD initiatives, including capacity building, leadership development, and talent management. Furthermore, it examines the linkages between SHRD, good governance, and sustainable peace, highlighting how effective SHRD practices can contribute to improved governance structures and conflict resolution mechanisms. The research paper also examines the benefits of SHRD programs to foster good governance and sustainable peace. Finally, the paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers, organizations, and other stakeholders on harnessing the potential of SHRD to achieve long-term stability and prosperity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Good governance, strategic human resources development, sustainable peace

Introduction

Africa has long been plagued by issues of governance and peace. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that strategic human resource development (SHRD) could serve as a potential solution to these problems. Strategic human resource development is an approach that goes beyond traditional HR practices to focus on the long-term development of employees. It involves identifying the skills and knowledge needed to achieve organizational goals, and then designing and implementing programs to develop these capabilities. This includes training, education, mentoring, and other developmental opportunities.

In the context of Africa, SHRD can play a vital role in addressing the challenges of governance and peace. By investing in the development of human capital, African governments can create a more skilled and capable workforce, which can lead to better governance and more effective implementation of policies. Additionally, by providing opportunities for education and employment, SHRD can help reduce poverty, inequality, and conflict, which are major contributors to instability in the region.

Conceptual analysis

Concept of Strategic Human Resource Development

It is accepted that Strategic Human Resource Development represents a particular model of HRD. According to Grieves (2003) suggested that: 'it emerged as a result of a new climate of disorganized capitalism and from debates within organizational development.' Garavan (2007) Strategic Human Resource Development was defined as "a coherent, horizontally integrated, vertically aligned set of learning and development activities which contribute to the achievement of strategic goals." The long-term development of human resources in organizations, its role as a shaper of business strategy in addition to its implementation, its emphasis on learning for the sake of performance, its use of a variety of strategies to facilitate performance, learning, and change in individuals and organizations, and its constant alignment with the organization's strategic goals are just a few of the characteristics that make up SHRD. The word 'strategic' emphasizes the organizational perspective and seeks to make the link between HRD, organizational goals and objectives (Wognum & Fond Lam, 2000). Robinson and Robinson (2005) argued that the mission of SHRD is to implement development strategies that enhance employee performance and lead to business results. The SHRD strategies utilized are fundamental to moving HRD from an operational to a strategic activity. Investment in HRD activities are linked to organizational performance in the belief that the greater the investment, the greater the likelihood that the organization will perform better. The concept of strategic HRD has been criticized on a number of fronts. Millmore et al (2007) highlight four particular limitations of the concept. There is a presumption that HRD specialists are actually important stakeholders in an organization; it is acknowledged that this may often not be the case. The concept has a strong managerialist focus in that it emphasizes the strategic imperatives of the organization and de-emphasizes employee needs. The concept of strategic integration is presented in a vertical way rather than as a multi-dimensional concept. Initial models of HRD such as McCracken and Wallace (2000) were somewhat silent in the articulation of the roles of different stakeholders such as top management and line managers. Subsequent explanatory models have accounted for these factors.

Good governance

"Good governance implies existence of rule of law, safeguard of human rights, and existence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability, and openness," according to Manguella, cited in Muhammed (2015). However, there is no aspect of Nigerian society where the government has demonstrated responsiveness and accountability to the people, making it impossible for the average Nigerian to live comfortably or reap the benefits of democratic governance.

"A system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process and the accountability of political leadership to the electorate as well as transparency in the operations of government," according to Odock (2006), is what constitutes good governance. According to him, transparency is the process by which the government conducts its operations in a clear, transparent, and open way, making it simple for regular citizens to verify the laws it makes, the policies it implements, and the outcomes. Adesola (2012) posits the characteristic of good governance to include, popular participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, and economic consensus oriented others are equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. The question is which of these characteristic or element of Good Governance can be said to be upholding in the administration of governance in Nigeria. However Good Governance is that type of government that are

responsive to their citizens' needs, provide an avenue for participations in governance process, publicize their activities, uphold the principle of rule of law and show equity and transparency in their dealings.

Going further, Egugbo (2015) asserts that the idea of governance has existed from the beginning of time. As society develops, governance is given ever-greater importance in order to guarantee the improvement of both the people and the society. This becomes unavoidable as society develops and interpersonal relationships become increasingly complex. If these intricacies are not effectively handled, they could result in severe catastrophe and crisis.

From the foregoing, it means we have two dimensions of governance and they are good and bad governance. Peace can be derived in any society when there is good governance and reverse would be the case when there is bad governance. According to Diamond (2004), there are several dimensions to good governance which include: the capacity of the state to function in the service of the public good; commitment to the public good; transparency, the openness of state business and conduct to the scrutiny of other state actors and of the public; rule of law; mechanism of participation and dialogue that enable the public to provide input to the policy process, to correct mistakes in policy design and implementation, and to promote social inclusion amongst others. From the foregoing, there is no gainsaying the fact that good governance not only bring about peace but also development. This is because it is a government that gives the people satisfaction and therefore, they would have little or no reason to act in such a way that could threaten the peace of the society.

Concept of peace

In any society where there is absence of peace no social, economic and political activities can thrive even governance is also withheld. So essential and imperative is the concept of peace, Even though the concept has diverse meanings to scholars. However, peace is the prime value in contemporary Africa, the most valuable public good, but yet the most elusive Francis, (2006) in Fashagba and Oshewolo, the word Peace originated from the Anglo-French word 'Pes', and the old French word 'Pais', meaning peace, reconciliation, silence, agreement and tranquility. It came into English language from the Hebrew translation 'Shalom' which is also similar to 'Salaam' in Arabic (General Studies, 2014).

Also, to Ibeanu, (2006) and Bangura, (2011), as cited in Fashagba and Oshewolo, the concept does not merely connote the absence of war or violent conflict stemming from ethnic, cultural, religious, or political differences, But the simultaneous presence of social justice, harmony, and equity. In a similar view UNESCO Director General (2013) stated that "peace is more than the absence of war, it is living together with our differences – of sex, race, language, religion or culture- while furthering universal respect for justice and human right on which such coexistence depends". These problems of living together have become a serious challenge in Nigeria in several states like, Kaduna, in the North- west, Plateau in North-central and, Onitsha in the south-east part of Nigeria, were Muslims settlement and markets differ from that of Christians. In other words, peace is a condition in which there is no social conflict and individuals and groups are able to meet their needs, aspirations and expectations.

In another development, Francis (2006), peace is commonly understood to be the absence of violence, suffering, conflict, fear, and war, as well as peaceful coexistence. Its main goals are the establishment and upkeep of a just social order and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Francis continued by saying that many peace researchers generally agree on six definitions of peace: within peace (spiritual peace); as the absence of war (absence of direct violence); as justice and development (absence of structural violence); as respect and tolerance

among people; as Gaia (balance in and with the ecosphere); and as "wholeness and making whole."

Supporting the definition of Francis, Galtung, cited in Francis (2006) outlines two dimensions of peace: 'negative peace' i.e. the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels, and 'positive peace' i.e. the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at individual level. The way the society is governed to a very large extent determines the nature and pattern of peace in that society. A condition of negative peace as identified by Galtung is not sustainable and desirable for man because there are tendencies inherent in that condition that can trigger serious threat of peace. But positive peace is a sustainable and desirable condition that is favorable and conducive for man to be able to operate and live a meaningful life. This type of peace can only be derived when there is good governance. Encarta, cited in Adebayo (2012) gave the following important meanings of peace, these are: Freedom from war, the end state of war. tranquility; a calm quiet state free from disturbance; A state of mental calm, serenity, devoid of anxiety; A state of harmony, free from conflict or disagreement; Law and order; a state devoid of violence, crime and other forms of disturbance amongst others.

In the words of Aja (2007), peace is a state of relative security and friendliness that enables interpersonal and group relationships to advance order and stability. In addition, Aja stated that "peace is the ordered state of human existence that permits both the ruler and the ruled to carry out their responsibilities in life with the least amount of risk to their own lives, liberty, and property." He went further to states that the following elements are necessary for sustainable peace: good governance, good followership, a nonviolent value system, the preservation of human rights, including the primary sanctity of life and liberty, respect for man and fear of a sovereign creator, security measures to ensure that there is no threat or fear to the subjects and fundamental values of a society, etc.

There is no gainsaying that fact that when all these points stated above are in place we have sustainable peace and sustainable peace is a precondition for development.

Strategies for Strategic Human Resource Development

The primary goal of SHRD is to align human resource activities with the overall strategic goals of the organization, thereby fostering a high-performing workforce capable of driving business success. Dave et al. (2019) suggested the following strategies:

1. Workforce Planning

Workforce planning involves identifying the organization's current and future human resource needs and determining the most effective ways to meet those needs. This process typically includes assessing the organization's workforce capabilities, analyzing external factors such as market trends and demographics, and aligning human resource strategies with overall business objectives.

2. Talent Management

Talent management involves attracting, retaining, and developing top talent within an organization. Key strategies include robust recruitment, competitive compensation, and career development opportunities to ensure high-performing employees have the necessary skills and knowledge for success.

3. Performance Management

Performance management involves setting clear expectations, monitoring employee progress, and providing feedback for continuous improvement. Key strategies include aligning performance management with organizational goals, providing constructive feedback, and offering professional development opportunities.

4. Learning and Development

Learning and development involves equipping employees with necessary skills and knowledge for effective job performance. Key strategies include comprehensive needs assessments, diverse learning opportunities, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and development through a growth mindset.

5. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture, encompassing shared values, beliefs, and behaviors, is crucial for a positive work environment, employee engagement, and strategic objectives. Strategies include clear communication, open communication, and recognition of individual and collective contributions.

Linkages between SHRD, Good Governance and Sustainable peace

In today's rapidly changing and complex world, organizations and governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of strategic human resource development (SHRD), good governance, and sustainable peace for their long-term success and stability. These three concepts are interconnected, as they all contribute to the overall well-being and development of societies. Strategic human resource development (SHRD) is a comprehensive approach to managing human resources that focuses on aligning human resource practices with organizational strategies and goals. It involves identifying, attracting, developing, and retaining high-quality talent, as well as fostering a work culture that encourages innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

SHRD plays a crucial role in fostering sustainable peace by promoting inclusive growth, reducing inequality, and creating opportunities for all members of society. By investing in the education and training of its workforce, an organization or government can enhance its competitiveness, foster innovation, and ultimately contribute to the overall well-being of its people. (Tung, 2003). Good governance is a concept that encompasses transparent, participatory, and accountable decision-making processes, which promote the effective use of resources and the equitable distribution of benefits. According to Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido (2002), Good governance is essential for the development and stability of any nation, as it ensures that the interests of all citizens are represented and protected.

SHRD and good governance are closely linked, as effective human resource management practices can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive, transparent, and accountable government. By investing in the development of public sector employees, governments can improve their capacity to deliver public services, reduce corruption, and foster sustainable peace. Sustainable peace is a state of harmony and stability that is maintained through a combination of political, economic, and social factors. It is characterized by the absence of violence, the resolution of conflicts, and the promotion of inclusive and equitable

development. Sustainable peace is essential for the well-being of societies, as it provides a conducive environment for growth, innovation, and prosperity.

SHRD and good governance play a crucial role in promoting sustainable peace by fostering inclusive growth, reducing inequality, and addressing the underlying causes of conflict. By investing in the development of human resources and promoting good governance, organizations and governments can create an environment that is conducive to sustainable peace (Doyle, 2001).

Benefits of Integrating SHRD into Governance and Peace building Strategies

Dave et al. (2019) outlined the following benefits and importance of SHRD:

1. **Strengthening Capacity Building:** Integrating SHRD into governance and peace-building programs allows policymakers to prioritize capacity-building projects, enhancing decision-making, conflict resolution, and managing challenging situations through workshops, mentoring, and training courses.
2. **Encouraging Diversity and Inclusivity:** SHRD promotes diversity and inclusivity in peacekeeping and governance processes by providing equal opportunities for growth and training, fostering a welcoming atmosphere for diverse perspectives, and enhancing decision-making processes.
3. **Strengthening Collaboration and Communication:** SHRD training programs enhance collaboration, communication, and connection in governance and peace-building initiatives by providing interpersonal skills, teamwork, and conflict resolution training to stakeholders.
4. **Developing Leadership Capacity:** Policymakers can enhance leadership skills in governance and peace-building by incorporating SHRD into strategies, identifying potential leaders, offering specialized training, and mentoring them towards shared objectives.
5. **Encouraging Sustainable Development:** Integrating SHRD into governance and peace-building initiatives promotes sustainable development by ensuring long-term capacity building, providing training, and enhancing resilience in communities and institutions.

Recommendations for Policymakers

1. **Develop a Comprehensive SHRD Framework:** Policymakers should develop a comprehensive SHRD framework that outlines the objectives, strategies, and implementation plans for integrating SHRD into governance and peace-building strategies. This framework should consider the specific needs and context of the target population, ensuring that training programs and capacity-building initiatives are tailored accordingly.
2. **Align SHRD with Organizational Goals:** It is essential to align SHRD initiatives with the overall goals and objectives of governance and peace-building strategies. Policymakers should identify the key competencies required for effective governance and peace-building and design training programs that address these competencies. This alignment ensures that SHRD efforts are directly contributing to the desired outcomes.
3. **Promote Collaboration between Stakeholders:** Policymakers should encourage collaboration among stakeholders in governance and peace-building processes through joint training programs, workshops, and forums, fostering collective learning and understanding of goals and challenges.

4. Ensure Sustainability of SHRD Initiatives: Policymakers should implement monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for long-term SHRD impact, allocate resources for continuous implementation, and identify gaps for improvement to ensure sustainability beyond short-term projects.
5. Promote Research and Knowledge Sharing: Policymakers should support research and knowledge sharing in SHRD, integrating it into governance and peace-building strategies, to inform future policymaking and enhance SHRD effectiveness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, strategic human resource development, good governance, and sustainable peace are interconnected concepts that are essential for the well-being and development of societies. By investing in the development of human resources, promoting good governance, and fostering sustainable peace, organizations and governments can create an environment that is conducive to growth, innovation, and prosperity. By understanding and leveraging these linkages, societies can work towards a more stable, inclusive, and equitable future.

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