

The Aspect of Human Character: Human Resource Management Concern

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to identify and explore the contemporary greatest challenge facing human resource practitioners which is the ability to recruit worthy character with talents and skill. The intensity of today's human resource planning concern about strategic management and organizational effectiveness to achieve the desired goals no doubt relies on character of the employees no matter how talented and skillful they are. But, the relevance on character has been de-emphasized on its necessity and importance by most organizations both in public and private sectors. Human character and not education (knowledge, skill & ability) are critical competencies required for organizations to grow more and better succeed in business environment. Character determines the psychosocial cognition of employees that will build up nimble organization. Guided by the defined boundaries of this discourse, the paper emphasized on trait and functionalism theories in examining the theme. Also, the paper found it convenient to use explorative methodology and it benefited from library sources on examining and analyzing the theme.

Keywords: Human character, Human resource management, Organization, Management, Nimble organization

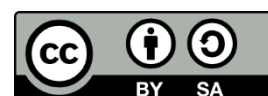
1. Introduction

We have come to realize in organizational management that until we give the right human character its place in managing people, we would always end up bankrupt regardless of how buoyant the organization is. According to Kenton (2020), he opines that: "we should hire character, and train skill". Knowledge, skills and ability (KSAs) required to meet needs vary in different organizations, but all organizations do not vary in their need for people with good character. One may not really know the skills that would be in high demand in the next decades, but it is certain that there is no organization that outgrows the need for people with good character.

Knowledge, skills and ability (KSAs) may not be useful without good character (Macalear & Shannon, 2003). This implies that, the only disability in life vis a vis organizations is a bad and corrupt human character. Bad and corrupt human character brings about ineffective and miserable leadership, failure in labour /industrial relations, abysmal employee relations and unproductive human resource management. In the practice of human resource management, one of the major regrets of many human resource practitioners has been the issue of bringing people into the organization that were full of zeal, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills, but were deeply flawed character wise. According to Lohr (2016), in both public and private sectors,

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character defect has initiated a chain reaction that has brought down many institutions or organizations. Knowledge, skills and ability can be acquired and mastered overtime, but character defect are most times irredeemable and corrupt the organizational system.

It is dangerous and delusive approaches in human resource management in compensating for character defects than in improving on employees' skills. Skill can never compensate for character rather employees with character flaws are not only self-destructive, but can also most times, bring the whole organization to its failure and bankrupts (Dokko & Jiang 2017). A character flawed employee that is not checked, is just a disaster in industrial relations and employee relations. The fundamental desire of human resource planning is to recruit good character with skill. But, the character of a person brings into the job is more important than the skills he/she brings into the job.

It is very appalling to know that most times, human resource planning recruit skilled people into the organization, that they end up been fired for character issues. This scenario has played out in most organizations repeatedly over and over again in Nigeria. It appears that, this defective cycle would continue until we put priority on staff character. Torabi (2019) in support of this assertion observed that lack of ethics, corrupt practices, self-centered behavior, unhealthy teamwork/ employee relations, lying, cheating, and poisonous attitudes are the most common reasons skilled people and organization most times fail to maintain organizational effectiveness and performance.

However, the question is what is human character? What are its multiplier effects in an organization? How do we ensure it's near perfection practice as a human resource management concern that will enhance the organization's performance? To contribute an answer to the questions, the paper attempted a definition of human character and debunked the nihilistic thought on human character in human resource management. It examined the concept of human character as the fundamental strategy to achieve organizational goals. The paper further discussed the influence of human character as a guide on how to use knowledge, skill and ability (KSAs) that will derive a nimble organization. The paper used explorative discuss as methodology and benefited from library sources in the examination of the theme.

2. Human Character: An Overview

Sociology as a study attempts to explain and understand the behavior of human beings in the society. It is hard to think of any significant area of social life that has never been the subject of a sociological investigation. To this note, the concept of 'human character' in an organization is on focus. Human character can be defined through the personality lens. The word personality is derived from a Greek word 'persona' which means 'to speak through'. Expressively, personality is the combination of human character qualities and features that make a person, forms a person's unique identity"(Source: <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=what-is+human+character+in+organizational>)

The term personality consequently refers to the individual as object (the object of external evaluation) where as the concept of self refers to the individual as subject (as the source of action and self-reflection) (Scott & Marshal, 2005). By implication, personality encompasses a person's relativities, stable feelings, individual thoughts, behavioral patterns, and innate character. In this perception, "personality" refers to individual character and differences that has patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. The character defines the interesting or unusual quality that a person has (Ayton, 2021). This implies that, the character of a person determines his/her social actions within a given context. It is a pivot in the person's socialization process. However, the concept of human character places more emphasis upon the 'subjective states of individuals, their feelings, the meanings they attach to events and the motives they have for behaving in particular ways"(Haralambos & Holborn, 2013).

In organizational management, human being is the basic building block of organizations (Daft & Bowerman, 1998). In this perspective, organizations differ from other types of social systems. Organization in

this lens is group of individuals that deliberately and collectively work to achieve economic benefits as a pay-back. The individuals have a clear and specific link that formed as an entity to achieve objectives of the organization. It is a pattern that includes employers and employees working towards common results. An institution established as a means to achieve specific objectives. To effectively achieve these objectives; such organization needs trusted and reliable human characters that are knowledgeable, skillful and has the ability to effectively perform to make possible organization's profitable goals.

As such, successful organizations depend on getting the right mix of individuals in the right positions at the right times. Individuals bring a number of differences to work. They have a variety of personalities, values and attitude (character) when they enter into organizations, their stable or transient characteristics affect how they behave and perform. Moreover, organizations hire people with the expectation that they have certain knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), but individual personalities and values will influence or put into application the KSAs to function to the advantages and success of the organization (Maharijan, 2018).

The organization is more complex than other types of social systems because of human characteristics (Adebambo, 2020). Machine and finance systems do not have intangible characteristics such as norms and values. Humans are less predictable and more complicated than that part of a machine. Many variables influence each other in unpredictable ways of man. Human resource managers must be sensitive to human character social system complexity if they are to successfully understand and manager the organization. They need to remember that a single human character cause does not have a single effect but multiplier effect that may ruin or make the organization (Adedire, 2014).

Management is making use of people to achieve the desired objectives. According to Herrity (2023), he asserts that, management is synchronizing and direction of duties to attain a goal. Such direction pursuits involve fixing the organization's plan of action and harmonizing the endeavor of the workers to realize the attempt of employees to achieve these intentions. In the administrative lens, management has become a procedure of drafting, resolution and recommendation making, marshaling, conducting, stimulating and influence the human assets, monetary, tangible and enlightenment resources of an organization to arrive at its objectives dexterously and effectively (iEduNote; www.iedunote.com).

The successes of every management heavily rely on the stability of the possible human character(s) that are involved in a specific organization. The aspect of human character makes a different. It is the human factor that makes use of patterns on how business enterprise is put in-order and harmonize workflow, running performance to achieve establishment desired aims. When reliable and decent human character is involved the basic aims of management to design a work condition that will encourage workers execute their duties adequately and productively becomes achievable. Even at level of management positions, human character and mental perception matters a lot. A corrupt and monocratic manager may not be generally acceptable to be at the top of the organization's affairs. Such a corrupt and dictatorial character with resounding knowledge, skill, and ability will still create ruination for the organization.

3. Theoretical Frame-work

In this study, trait and functionalism theories were employed to buttress that human character cannot be over-emphasized in the management of any organization. To start with, 'trait' is the underlying catalyst that forms the personality that project human character. While functionalism theory, provides the organic interconnectivity activities with human character in the body of an organizations. Trait theory talks about particular quality in ones personality and dispositions (Lathan, 2007). This means, it is a word finder of a person's character, a tendency to act or react in certain ways. Trait as character quality controls the personality. Trait theory approach has proven popular among investigators of 'employee behavior' in the organization (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly, Jr., 1994). Trait as a theory identify several characteristics that describe individuals, and to examine association of these trait with behavior.

The trait approach identifies the behavioral disposition of employees and employer in industrial relations. On leadership, the trait theory projects the character of being a liberal or dictatorial leader in the organization and the larger society. Most times the attitudinal pattern of the leader or manager influences and affects the behavior of employees in the workplace. Once the character trait of the leader, manager or any employee is bad, the person becomes a dangerous liability in the organization. An employee with bad character trait becomes destructive and corrupts the system and the organization will suffer if the person is still retained (Wehrich et al., 2011).

From the functionalism theory perspective, an organization is seen as an 'organic analogy' (Scott & Marshall, 2005). As an organic whole where each of its organizational constituent parts (departments or sections) working to maintain the others just as the parts of the body also work to maintain each other and the body (organization) as a whole. Functionalism explanation accounts that an employee with bad character trait in one department or section of the organization, his/her bad attitude may influence and generate corruptive tendencies in other sections at workplace. If care is not taken, the bad character will adversely affect the psychosocial cognition of other employees in the organization. For instance, an employee with bad character trait can disorganize and/or close an organization as a result of financial fraud, equipment damage, aggressive and touchy behaviour, letting-out official secret or misplacement of classified official documents. The bad character activities of an employee in one department may adversely affect other departments in the organization. The bad character trait will become a menace in the population of the organization. An organization with wrong character culture may not grow in business. However, in today's business environment, human character and ethical conducts are critical competencies for organizational leadership and employees, without them, an incapable person is just another major risk. As a human resource practitioner and an employer, always look out for "human character and do not be distracted by human talent" (Josephson Michael, quoted in Guardian Newspaper (2020).

4. Human Resource Management and Organizational Goals

Human Resource Management (HRM) concern is to provide an understanding on how organizations can gain sustainable competitive advantage through people. HRM develops the flexible and skilled workforce needed in organizations to compete effectively in business competitiveness. Human resource is all about human being as the main building block of an organization. The main focus of HRM in an organization is planning for and providing effective dynamic workforce (Walker, 1980), this is so because organizations are entities for goal attainment. This is the purpose that would determine recruitment strategies and needs. This is done to avoid problems of unexpected shortages of manpower, wastage, blockages in the promotion flow and needless redundancies.

Unfortunately, the intensity of today's human resource concern about strategic management and organizational effectiveness to achieve the desired goals has been de-emphasized on its importance. In relation to the workplace, the term 'human resource' refers to the human beings on the staff list (Ejiogu, 2005). It has implication for their individual total personalities including their inherited and acquired attitudes of intelligence, knowledge and skill in a body of functions as well as their attitude to work. Human resource concern emphasizes on the job requirement such as education (KSAs) and other personal characteristics required to perform the job. In this direction, human resource department should hire human character, and train human skill. Both the character and skill stimulate job redesign. By job redesign, redesigning the job of the employees is to improve productivity and performance (Gibson, Ivancevich & Donnelly Jr., 1994). This implies that it is used as intervention in organization's development.

However, the education (KSAs) acquired, the most fundamental human resource concern should be on the human character that can be considered more valuable than education. A person can have all the necessary experience and skills, but his/her personality does not fit-in the organization's culture, is he/she the

right person to hire? Human intelligence plus character, is the true education and carriage in employee relations that mostly can result good productivity. A person's high school degree(s) is just a piece of paper, but education is seen in ones human character and behavior which serve as a necessary guide for a worker in industrial relations.

In looking for people to hire or recruit into an organization, the human resource practitioners concern should look for three important qualities, 'integrity, intelligence and energy' (Buffet, quoted in Guardian Newspaper, 2020). It is easier to train an employee of good character than unprincipled employee. The basic drive of industrial relations is good character employee, and employee skills can be acquired and mastered over the time, but character defect are most times irredeemable and corrupts the organization as a social system. To this note, 'a bad human character is like a flat tire, you cannot go anywhere until you change it (Zig Ziglar, quoted in Guardian Newspaper, 2020).

5. Human Character and Building of a Nimble Organization

Building of human character comes before building anything else. Many organizations recruit employees for their character and then train them for the job. They do this in the belief that organization can teach skill but very difficult or cannot change a person's character. On this note, human character and not skill builds a nimble organization.

5.1 What is a Nimble Organization?

Conner (1998:71) describes a nimble organization as: "that which is able to consistently succeed in unpredictable and contested environments by implementing rapid changes more efficiently and effectively than its competitors". Nimbleness means more than flexibility (Ejiogu, 2003). Ejiogu continued that, it is a term that conveys speed, grace, dexterity, resilience and resourcefulness. A nimble organization is both malleable within its existing boundaries of operation and capable of redefining the same boundaries so it can shift its success formula whenever necessary (Opara, 2021).

Nimble organization is able to constantly calibrate their agility against not only what it takes to successfully implement their chosen changes but also consider the response time of their competitors. The modern human resource practitioner has a critical challenge to provide the manpower that are trusted and tools that can enable environment to facilitate the growth of this kind of organization. We need to understand and apply the principles of building such an enterprise, nimble organization.

6. Principles of Building a Nimble Organization

According to (Adebambo, 2020), management desiring to build a nimble organization must do four things:

- Must ensure to hire or recruit good human character and train human skill.
- Ensure the organization is an open system (i.e keeping people and things in an unending growth and renewal mode); such an open system which must operate democratically.
- Take steps to increase the organization's absorption limits, and,
- Constantly introduce as many important changes as possible without over extending available adaptation resources.

6.1 Employing only the Good Character and Agile Mind

The most important step in building a nimble organization is recruiting people with good and effectual character that have agile mind. Also, maintaining only people with good character that are trustworthy, who has the capacity to translate the desired corporate vision into tangible reality. Only such personnel function as managers, supervisors and employees, people who are able and willing to demonstrate worthy character that will resourcefully go beyond the guidance provided are fit to engage to provide support for top management (Wehrich et al, 2011).

Good human character and agile mind generate resilient people who can succeed in unfamiliar circumstances and remained focused on objectives during times of confusion. Such people should be proactive, ready to engage change rather than run from it. They must be resourceful, highly trusted, skilled and sufficiently motivated. They should have high tolerance for ambiguity and desire to experiment, that is been scientifically creative minded employees. Such people must have the willingness to appropriately challenge authority, though constructively.

When an organization is able to create a critical mass of people with good human character of this kind, its capacity to respond to shifting demands accelerates dramatically. Zig Ziglar (quoted in Guarding Newspaper, 2020) opines that the greatest overall challenge of the human resource practitioners today is the identification, recruitment and sustenance of this kind of pedigree of employees (good character and agile mind) across the board. When staffing the organization for nimbleness, it is recommended that about eighty (80%) per-cent of the vote for personnel development should be mobilized for the recruitment of such good character and resilient people already prone towards attributes. Then, only twenty (20%) per-cent deployed for training and coaching them to develop new propensities for contributing to the growth of the nimble organization.

7. Human Character and Recruitment

Human being is the fundamental building block of any organization and as such, when recruiting, human resource practitioners should look for people that are educated in mind and morals, people with strong moral compass and good character. Character education fosters development of mind, moral and ethical citizens by teaching them good values. A concerted character is the key that would transform employee relations. Human character should not be optional, but it is sacrosanct to the future growth of an organization. The greatest fraud in management leadership and industrial relations is education without good character (Adebambo, 2020). A man without good character cannot manage people and is recklessly alive (Zig Ziglar quoted in Guarding Newspaper, 2020).

The paper would like to briefly share some indicators in recruiting people with educated character, while also not neglecting the place of competence. A scale of 100% and the parameters are as follows:

- Reliability- 20%
- Teachable- 20%
- Confidence- 20%
- Communication-20%
- Appearance- 20%

Under these five parameters, there are sub-parameters that the paper might not be able to delve into because of space.

A good recruiting process must be able to discern whether the applicant is reliable and trustworthy. Being teachable is also very important, as this will ensure that the applicant can be trained on the job. But, being un-teachable is worse than training your employee and having him/her stay. Confidence measures the level of experience and applicant's competence. Without hope and confidence nothing can be achieved (Albert Einsten, quoted in Guardian Newspaper, 2020). Ability to communicate efficiently and effectively is sacrosanct, as over 70% of any employee's job is linked to communication. Lastly, appearance must never be trivialized, as it is a deeper reflection of the applicant's approach to presentation.

8. Conclusion

Employees cannot become what they need by remaining what they are. A combination of good work ethics, humility, integrity, simplicity and habit of punctuality, courage, selflessness, dedication, empathy, and maturity would always beat talent, knowledge and skills at any time and space (Opara, 2021). A bad human

character is organization's major liability. It is relatively impossible to be in an organization with people of wrong character.

The paper has come to diagnostic conclusion that the greatest of all human problems is character problem. There is no amount of skills and education that can substitute for character. Sometimes, one need character not just the acquisition of education. There is more hope in life for a poor man with the right character than a rich man with the wrong character. 'Nothing can stop the man with the right character for achieving his goal, nothing on earth can help a man with the 'wrong character'' (Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd President of the United States of America), this is also the case for formal organization.

9. Recommendations

During recruitment it may be difficult to access employee's character but when employed it becomes the duty of human resource department should involve the following in order to improve positive employees' character to enhance production:

- Apply incentives as motivations to improve the welfare of the employees.
- Always embark on periodic performance appraisals and reward incentives.
- Incorporate the employees as stakeholders of the organization.
- Apply transparent leadership and accountability to give sense of belonging to employees of the organization.
- Embark on career development programmes for the employees.

And, always carry out periodic training and re-training programmes to enable the employees to enhance their capabilities of skill set(s).

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