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INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYEE'S BEHAVIOUR IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the influence of human resource management practices on agricultural employ-ees' behavior. Data were collected from 75 randomly selected agricultural employees using a well-structured questionnaire. Data gathered were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The mean age of the employees' was 43.2 years. In-service training ($\bar{x}$ =3.44), management reward employees who are committed to their job ($\bar{x}$ =3.41) and wide participation and activity is highly rewarded ($\bar{x}$ =3.41) were the major human resource management practices that influenced employees behaviors. Also, major employees' behavior include creation of conducive environment for better job performance ($\bar{x}$ =3.13) and praise, recognition and appreciation of effective performance/special effort ($\bar{x}$ =3.05). Factors affecting employees' behavior were inadequate training ($\bar{x}$ =2.93) and inadequate grants/funds to attend training programmes ($\bar{x}$ =2.81). Significant relationships existed between gender (χ^2 = 37.20, p<0.005), educational qualification (χ^2 = 59.09, p<0.005), income (r=0.12, p<0.005), human resource management practices (r = 0.57, p<0.005) and employees' be-havior. Management should encourage employees who are committed to their job through awards and recognition of work done.

Keywords: Human resources, management, practices, behaviour and agricultural employees

INTRODUCTION

Employee behaviour refers to the way in which employees respond to specific cir-cumstances or situations in their workplace (Jones and Goerge, 2000). There are some key elements that determine individual's behaviour in their respective workplace. Some of these elements are work environ-ment, available technology, employer-employee relationship and motivation in an organization.It is worthy of note that em-ployees background and organization's cul-

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ture help in shaping employee response (Holtom *et al.*, 2008).For effective operation and better productivity, organisations simply rely on employees to deliver high-quality products and services which are paramount to the achievement of organizational goals. On the other hand, this achievement may be impacted upon by a variety of forces which may be internal or external as employees attempt to perform their duties. It therefore become important that employers become aware of these forces(which may be positive or negative: environment for operation, available technology and motivational pattern)in other to prepared for leverage or improve the prevailing situation in other to positively influence employee's behaviour to the right path for increase or boost productivity(Mullins, 1999).

Considering production, there are three main resources that are of outmost importancein business(Shcermerhorn*et al.,*2000).These resources are the engine room for any economy and industrial growth. These resources may be natural, financial and human in nature.Among the three, human resources are the most important aspect(Harney and Jordan, 2008). Basically, human resources are the coordinators of other resources which will eventually resulted to the achievement of targeted goals. It therefore becomes very important that this resource should be given adequate care in other to excel in any organization. In any standard organization, issues relating to hierarchy in mode of operation are not taking for granted as this is often done in line with organizational organogram. This clearly spelt out the role of certain individualat the topwho are saddled with the responsibilities of utilizing other human resources at the bottom of the organization hierarchy (Akinmayowa, 2006).

Furthermore, human resource management practice can also be seen as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets.Individuals who work in such organization collectively contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives and goals (Elwood and James, 1996). Organizational input in terms of training and access to opportunities which can improve job delivery is therefore central to positively influence employee's behavior. In the rhythm and tapping of many new opportunities, human matrix plays a major role. Success of new business ventures across the borders is determined by the human factor and their contribution. Rundle(1997) argued that people and not the firm are the acclimatizing mechanism determining the responsiveness of an organization towards a competitive environment.

According to Gould-Williams(2007), the overall purpose of human resource management practices is to ensure that the organization is able to achieve success through people and ensure that the organization obtains and retains the skilled, committed and well-motivated workforce it needs. This means taking steps to assess and satisfy future people's needs and to enhance and develop the inherent capacities of people, their contributions, potential and employability by providing learning and continuous development opportunities(Nishii *et al.*, 2008). This also involves the operation of 'rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, performance contingent incentive compensation systems, and management development and training activities linked to the needs of the business' which also means engaging in talent management (Becker *et al.*, 1997). This study therefore tends to ascertain the influence of human resource management practices on agricultural employees' behavior in the Institute

of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T) in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. describe the personal characteristics of the respondents in the study area.
2. determine the various human resource management practices in Institute of Agricultural Research and Training Ibadan.
3. determine the levels of employees behavior in Institute of Agricultural Research and Training Ibadan.
4. identify the various constraints faced by the employees in the study area.

Hypotheses of the Study

- **HO₁**: There is no significant relationship between personal characteristic of the respondents and employees behavior.
- **HO₂**: There is no significant relationship between human resource management practices and employees behavior.
- **HO₃**: There is no significant relationship between constraints faced by respondents and employees behaviour.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in the Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T) in Oyo State. IAR&T is a Nigerian agricultural research institute with headquarters at Ibadan. Its history dates back to 1956 when the then western regional government under the Ministry of Agriculture and the Federal Government decided to share the research facilities of Moor plantation, Ibadan. When the regional government established a university at Ife, the institute became part of the University and was fully integrated in 1973. In 1975, the Institute was given a national mandate and

was later funded by the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology and then the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. The agency like few other research institutes has undergone various supervisory changes.

The population of this study comprise of staff of the Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IAR&T) in Oyo State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select the 75 respondents out of 710 employees in the study. Data were collected around May- July 2015 through a well-structured questionnaires. Data were collected on respondents personal characteristics, human resources management practices, employees' behavior and factors affecting employees' behaviour were measured using a 4 point rating scale: strongly agree =4, agree = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree =1. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation, Chi square and Pearson Product Moment Correlation)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that more than half (54.7%) of the respondents were male while 45.3% of them were female. This result corroborates the findings of Idowu *et al.,*(2012)who reported that there were more male workers in educational institutions. The mean age of the employees was 43.2 years. This implies that majority of the employees were still in their active age and still have many years to contribute to the attainment of the institutional goals. The results of this finding are supported by Adegbite and Olaoye(2009) who also recorded a larger percentage within the age bracket of 20-50 years are agile and active. Also, majority (61.3%) of the employees were married, 33.3% of the respondents were single and 5.3% were divorced. This indicates that most of the employees were

married in the study area because the marriage institution is considered important in this part of the world. The result is supported by the findings of Fapojuwo (2010) that a great importance is still attached to the marriage institution.

Also, most (62.7%) of the respondents had Higher National Diploma or Bachelor's degree, 25.3% of the respondents were master's or PhD degree and just a few (12.0%) of them were Ordinary National Diploma or NCE holder. This result is in line with Kelly(2006) who remarked that the capacities of individuals depends on their access to education. Majority (74.7%) of the respondents earned a monthly income below 100,000, 13.3% earned between 101,000-150,000 and 12.0% earned above 150,000. The mean income of employees was ₦93,300 this result indicates that employees' are high income earners. This result is contrary to Abiona (2015) who reported that people living in rural settlement are low income earners.

Table 1: Personal characteristic of the respondents n=75

Variables	Percentage	Mean
Sex		
Male	54.7	
Female	45.3	
Age(years)		
20-29	24.0	43.2years
30-39	37.3	
40-49	29.3	
50-59	6.7	
60-69	2.7	
Marital Status		
Single	33.3	
Married	61.3	
Divorced	5.3	
Edu. Qualification		
HND/ B.Sc	62.7	
M.Sc/ Ph.d	25.3	
NCE/OND	12.0	
Experience (years)		
Less than 6	56.0	8.03
6-10	12.0	
11-15	10.7	
16-20	13.3	
21 and above	8.0	
Income		
Below 100,000	74.7	₦93,300
101,000-150,000	13.3	
Above150,000	12.0	

Source: *Field survey, 2015*

Perceived Human Resource Management Practices

Table 2 shows respondents perceived human resource management practices on employee's behaviour. Major perceived human resources management practices identified were: Regular in-service training ($\bar{x}$ =3.44), management rewards committed employees ($\bar{x}$ =3.41), reward is designed to encourage wide participation and activity ($\bar{x}$ =3.41), timely presentations of awards ($\bar{x}$ =3.40), availability of bonus and incentives ($\bar{x}$ =3.35), awards are planned for workers ($\bar{x}$ =3.34) and criteria for selection are well spelt out through advertisement ($\bar{X}$ =3.33). The results of this finding imply that human resource management practices are very important among staffs in an organization. This result is in line with Swason (2006) who opined that human resources management practices facilitates the development of human capacities to achieve sustainable, inclusive, equitable development and at the same time, enhance the well-being of an individu-

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by human resources practices n = 75

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
In service training is given to employees on regular basis	-	1.3	53.3	45.3	3.44	0.53
Management reward employees who are committed to their job	2.5	-	50.7	46.7	3.41	0.64
Reward is design to encourage wide participation and activity	1.3	2.7	49.3	46.7	4.41	0.62
Presentation of award is timely and effective	1.3	1.3	53.3	44.0	4.40	0.59
Awards are planned to reward the work of employees	1.3	5.3	50.7	42.7	3.35	0.65
Bonus and incentives are available for staff in any organization	2.7	1.3	54.7	41.3	3.35	0.65
Criteria for selection are well spelt out during the advancement	4.0	1.3	52.0	42.7	3.33	0.70
Organization put appropriate plan on ground for the newly employed staff	1.3	4.0	60.0	34.7	3.28	0.61
Job are advertise using several media	6.7	4.0	44.0	45.3	3.28	0.83
The relationship between staff and organization is cordial	1.3	13.3	54.7	30.7	3.15	0.69
Criteria for selection area made known to applicant during interview	4.0	10.7	56.0	29.3	3.10	0.75
Staff appraisal is part of staff promotion in my workplace	4.0	10.7	58.7	26.7	3.08	0.73
We are encouraged to participate in various seminars and workshops	2.7	16.0	56.0	25.3	3.04	0.72
Training in our organization includes social skills, general problem solving skills and broader knowledge of the organization and business	6.7	13.3	50.7	29.3	3.02	0.83
Oral interview is used for selection	6.7	18.7	45.3	29.3	2.97	0.87

Source: Field survey (2015).NB: SA= Strongly agree, A= Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly disagree and SD =Standard deviation

Level of employee's behaviour

Table 3 shows employees' behavior. Major behaviors exhibited by employees were: managers and employees wants to create better job performance ($\overline{x}$ =3.13), team building ($\overline{x}$ =3.13). Administrator provides praise and recognition in appreciation for special effort ($\overline{x}$ =3.44), use their discretion to complete task ($\overline{x}$ =3.04), employees take responsibilities for their mistakes rec- orded ($\overline{x}$ =3.04), good leadership traits and respect for employees ($\overline{x}$ =3.00). This result implies that employees are working together as to help the organization in achieving its goals. This results is supported by Pfeffer (1998) who said employees help create work- forces whose contributions are valuable, unique and difficult for competitors to imi- tate. This result further shows that majority (62.7%) of the employees had a better level of behavior, (33.3%) had a good level of be- havior while (4.0%) had a fair level of behav- ior

Table 3: Distribution of employee's behaviour

Variables	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SD
Managers and employees want better job performance.	__	9.3	64.0	26.7	3.13	0.68
Spirit of team building encourages positive decision in my organization.	4.0	14..7	41.3	40.0	3.13	0.91
The administrators provide praise and recognition for effective performance and show appreciation for special effort.	5.3	13.3	48.0	33.3	3.05	0.89
Employees use their discretion in carrying out their duties.	5.3	17.3	41.3	36.0	3.04	0.94
Effective performances are rewarded with praise and recognition.	2.7	13.3	57.3	26.7	3.04	0.79
Employees feel their jobs hold high esteem and are of great value to the organization.	5.3	8.0	60.0	26.7	3.04	0.83
Managers display real leadership traits and respect for employees	4.0	13.3	61.3	21.3	3.00	0.72
Employees' feels real responsibility to make things work.	4.0	8.0	69.3	18.7	2.99	0.74
My organization leadership emphasizes team work and promote cooperation, cohesiveness and identify with the group	2.7	16.0	58.6	22.7	2.97	0.79
There is real feeling of team work among employees.	8.0	12.0	50.6	29.3	2.97	0.93
There is cordial relationship between employees and man- agement.	6.7	13.3	54.6	25.3	2.95	0.88
The actions of the administrator pose threat to employees' decision.	8.0	26.7	38.6	26.7	2.80	0.97
The level of relationship between administrators and subordinate is cordial.	8.0	26.7	42.6	22.7	2.76	0.94
Dispute settling style favourable and unbiased.	4.0	29.3	53.3	13.3	2.72	0.79
The decisions made by employees are mostly/ often inap- propriate.	13.3	24.0	41.3	21.3	2.67	1.00

Source: *Field Survey (2015). NB: SA = strongly agree   A = Agree   D = Disagree   SD = strongly disagree   SD = Standard Deviation*

Table 4: Level of employee's behaviour

Categories		Percentage
Better	(50-64)	62.7%
Good	(33-49)	33.3%
Fair	(16-32)	4.0%

Constraints affecting employees' behavior in the study area

Table 5 shows respondents views on the major factors to their behaviour. The results shows that training are not always provided ($\bar{x}$ =2.93), inadequate training ($\bar{x}$ =2.87), inadequate grants($\bar{x}$ =2.81), poor motivation ($\bar{x}$ =2.67) , unclear job description ($\bar{x}$ =2.67), job description is not clear ($\bar{x}$ =2.61), inadequate knowledge and skills ($\bar{x}$ =2.56) and irregular recognition and reward ($\bar{x}$ =2.41) were the major constraints affecting employees behaviour in the study. The results indicate that much attention is needed to be put in place to enhance training programs. This result is supported by Linder (2001), who said for any organization to survive, it must train and develop its employees to enhance workers performance

Table 5: Distribution of constraints affecting employee's behaviour in the study area

Variables	SD	D	A	SD	Mean	SD
Training is not always provided.	5.3	17.3	48.0	29.3	2.93	0.96
Inadequate local and international training.	4.0	22.7	48.0	25.3	2.87	0.93
Inadequate grant for training from the organization.	5.3	20.0	54.7	20.0	2.81	0.91
Staffs are not well motivated.	5.3	29.3	50.7	14.7	2.67	0.89
Expectations of the staff for the organization are clear.	10.7	18.7	56.0	14.7	2.67	0.95
Job description is not clear.	4.0	44.0	33.3	18.7	2.61	0.92
Inadequate knowledge and skills among employee.	10.7	30.7	42.7	16.0	2.56	0.98
Inadequate Recognition and reward from the organization.	9.3	38.7	45.4	6..7	2.41	0.86
Ineffective communication between employee and organization.	12.0	44.0	37.3	6.7	2.33	0.88
Workplace conflict is high among staff	17.3	50.7	24.0	(8.0	2.17	0.91
Unfavourable health policy for employees.	16.0	54.7	26.7	2.7	2.11	0.79
My superior is a barrier to my productivity.	22.7	49.4	22.7	5.3	2.05	0.88

Source: *Field Survey (2015). NB: SA = strongly agree, A = Agree D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree and SD = Standard Deviation*

Relationship between Personal Characteristics of the Respondents and Employees' Behavior

A significant relationship exists between gender ($\chi^2 = 37.204$, P<0.05), educational qualification ($\chi^2 = 59.093$, P<0.05) and income (r=0.122, P<0.05), human resource management practices (r = 0.573, P< 0.05) and employees' behavior. This implies that gender, educational qualification and amount earned by employees has influence on their behavior. Also, implies better human resource management practices in the area of study improve employee's behavior within the organization. When workers are efficiently managed in an organization, their morale is boosted and productivity is improved. This result is supported by Pfeffer (1998) reported that human resource systems help create workforces whose contributions are valuable, unique, and difficult for competitors to imitate.

Table 6: Test of association between personal characteristic and employees' behavior

Variables	χ^2	r	df	p	decision
Gender	37.204		1	0.041	S
Educational level	59.093		2	0.035	S
Income		0.122		0.021	S
Human resource management practices		0.573		0.003	S

Source: Field Survey, 2015. S = Significant @ 0.05 significance level, NS= Not Significant at > 0.05

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The organization reward employees who are committed to their job, design awards to encourage wide participation of activity, praise and recognizes effective performance of employees and shows appreciation for special efforts. Also, inadequate local and international training, poor clarity of job description and inadequate recognition and award from the organization were major constraints faced by the studied employees'. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Attitude of workers in any organization is very paramount, therefore adequate recognition must be provided for a worthy employee.
2. Management of organization should ensure that interest of their employees is protected; by this positive attitude towards achievement of organizational goals will be made possible.
3. Management should ensure that job description is clear and also ensure adequate local and international training to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of staff members.

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