



International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research
P-ISSN: 2664-3588, E-ISSN: 2664-3596
Volume 3, Issue 2, P.No. 45-56, February, 2021
DOI: 10.51594/ijmer.v3i2.209
Fair East Publishers
Journal Homepage: www.fepbl.com/index.php/ijmer



SUSTAINING INNOVATIVE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ACHIEVING ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

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Article Received:28-01-21

Accepted: 12-02-21

Published:05-03-21

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ABSTRACT

Business organisations are facing the challenges of innovative adaptation in human resource management in Nigeria. The study aims at highlighting the various areas of conscious alignment of human resource management to the ever changing technology in the Nigerian work environment as a boost to achieving organizational productivity. Data used for the research were secondary and primary. In a field research of Petterson Group Ltd, an Onitsha based human resource consultancy firm, a likert structured questionnaire containing eight (8) items were designed and administered on the management staff. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested using Z-test in the SPSS software. Findings reveal that functional areas of human resources; recruitment, training and development as well as salary and wage administration are experiencing noticeable innovations. It is recommended that close cooperation between employers and relevant agencies and organs of government will go

a long way in facilitating effective implementation of statutory innovations and reforms like in the areas of contributory pension scheme, monetization, minimum wage, etc.

Keywords: Innovation, Human Resource Management, Organizational Productivity.

INTRODUCTION

The aphorism that the only permanent institution is change itself underscores the pervasive nature of change. Modern business organizations are continuously adjusting strategies to meet customer tastes and preferences by providing better products and services and achieving competitive advantages. This coupled with the strive for market growth, expansion and diversification has made technological adaptation imperative. The introduction of machines, new methods, and maintenance would be complimented by a requisite alignment of the human resource capacity of the firms, usually through right sizing, re-training and re-orientation. However, it has been widely observed that human resource management has been severely constrained by the problem of adaptation to modern best practices. This had led to poor human resource utilization and declining productivity.

Becker (1996) notes that the problem of technological adaptation is the challenge of a proactive human resources management which is strategic to corporate effectiveness. He is of the view that a range of requisite human resource management policies and practices and which are regarded as superior and which when implemented would make the organisations perform better (Wolfe, et al, 2014). Human Resources innovative practices that are considered best fit is contingent on the type and needs of the organisation. Kaufman and Miller (2011) suggest that the best practices are not fit for all organizations. The need for their application and the contents is interpreted in the context of the characteristics of the focal organizations.

Statement of the Problem

One of the most prominent tasks of modern businesses is the challenge of innovative adaptation in human resource management resulting from changes in technology and the need to boost organisation's productivity. In spite of this, government and its organs appear weak in the coordination and implementation of statutory regulations for effective human resource utilization. These short comings have created a technology bug and limited the capacity of business organizations to achieve strategic objectives. There is therefore, the dire need to thoroughly establish and implement vigorous human resources management innovations and adaptations as a predisposition to attaining organizational productivity.

Objectives of the Study

The major focus of the study is to examine the various strategies deployed by business firms in sustaining innovative human resources practices. Specific objectives include to:

- (i) Highlight the various possible areas of innovative human resource adaptations as a boost to achieving organizational productivity.
- (ii) Assess the level of regulatory and participatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to organizational productivity.

Research Questions

A number of research questions have been raised to guide the study:

- (i) What are the various human resource management innovations in place to boost organizational productivity?
- (ii) What are the various human resource management policies and regulations of government in achieving productivity in working firms?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: The possible areas of innovative human resource adaptations as a boost to achieving organizational productivity is significantly low.

Ho₂: The level of regulatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to organizational productivity is significantly low.

Scope of the Study

Efforts were made to thoroughly examine the existing human resource innovations in the operations of business firms. Policy and regulatory efforts of the government were also investigated as they affect operating firms. Petterson Group Ltd, a Human Resource Consultancy firm was studied in a field survey.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Rensis Likert's Participative Decision Making (PDM) Theory

Supervisors with strong worker productivity tend to be employee centered and not work centered. He emphasized that effective management results when superiors treat their subordinates as human beings rather than working beings. The emphasis on the human aspects of the subordinates problems also requires subordinates participation in decision making on tasks that relate to them. This will invariably translate to high achievement. This orientation, Likert regarded as productive management as opposed to subordinate alienation in decision making and work centeredness of superiors, which is unproductive management (Likert, 1967), In advancement of this management, philosophy, Likert identified four distinct managerial styles.

(i) Exploitative Authoritative Management

Here, there is total lack of trust and confidence by the superior on subordinate capabilities and capacities in decision making. The manager takes decisions arbitrary and imposes them on the subordinate who comply for fear of imminent threat of sanction or punishment even on issues that are opposed to their interests.

(ii) Benevolent Authoritative System

Here the assumption is rife that workers or subordinates will accept decisions which confers some rewards and benefits to them while decision making remains the prerogatives or exclusive preserves of the manager. The subordinate is motivated to high performance on account of the perception that the leaders though authoritative are benevolent, generous and acting in the best interest of the members.

(iii) Consultative Approach

In this circumstance, the manager seeks for the inputs and opinions of the subordinate who are excited at such prospects. The inputs from the subordinates may form part of the final decision making of the manager who reserves the right to make decisions. There is improved perception of a relatively growing trust on the subordinate, a veritable grounds for employee motivation.

(iv) Participative Management

This approach to human resource management is predicated on the disposition that organizational goal setting and goal attainment can only be most effective and efficient if there is joint participation and mutual collaboration between the superiors and subordinates. In this regard, decision making, participation, team work, satisfaction and motivation is high.

Ndubuisi (2011) in assessment of the impact this managerial style has on motivation and productivity, describes it as an incremental system with a blend of trust, confidence, mutual participation, reward, motivation, output, and productivity.

The Harvard Model

As outlined by Gratton (1999) HRM models often combine principles of soft and hard HRM, but with emphasis more in one of the two. Developed in 1984, the model has five major components. Situational factors, stakeholder interests, HRM policies, HRM outcomes, and long term consequences.

In consideration of the HR framework, the correlation between situational factors and stakeholder interests largely influences and determines HRM standing lines and when implemented, will facilitate the attainment of desired HRM outcomes as indices in commitment, competence, congruence, and cost-effectiveness. According to the model, effective pursuit of the objective function to optimize these afore mentioned four C's result to favourable consequences for the individual, organisation, and the society. The model accentuates that when workers are treated as assets rather than costs, the organisation attains competitions advantage. Such attention to employee is emotionally satisfying and consequently, hugely productive.

Conceptual Literature

Organizational Productivity

This relates to the capacity of an organization, institution, firm, or business to produce and attain projected results or targets with minimum cost factors. Goodman and Harris (1984) see Productivity as the favourable ratio of the output of the enterprise to the inputs. An organization consists of technology and people organized to accomplish specific objectives. They opined that the success of an enterprise can be measured on the basis of its output and/or the processes and inputs that generate the output. Mahoney (1988) notes that productivity defines the efficiency profile of an organization whereas there is minimal expenditure in human and material resources in attaining output (goods and services). The expenditure items in time, materials, technology, equipment, tools, capital, human assets are minimized, while profits, turnover, goodwill, research and innovation are maximized. Ndubuisi (2011) describes productivity as the setting and accomplishment of the efficiency criteria leading to the minimization of all costs and unsought consequences (expenditure on input factors, human and non human) and the maximization of benefits, and desirable outcomes (output in products, profits, social responsibility, etc).

Domiciling Research and Productivity

We exist in an increasingly competitive global economy. The propensity of organizations and countries to enhance their productivity is critical for their sustenance. Most advanced economies have been introducing innovations to enhance productivity and hence their competitive positions. The returns from such investments though positive but appear to be relatively small (National Academy of Engineering and National Research Council, 1991). Enhancing productivity is a national challenge. As competition increases in the global economy, new methods and techniques become imminent to enhance organizational

productivity. New knowledge development will stimulate linkage to new innovations, technologies, organizational structures, and capital to enhance organizational productivity (Goodman, et al, 1990).

Integration of Individual Productivity into Organizational Productivity

There is little known about how changes in productivity at the individual levels affects that of the organizational level. Experts recommend examining various types of linkages in order to determine how changes in individual productivity affects organizational productivity. Productivity linkages within jobs gives significant clues to assessing individual and organizational productivity. Jobs are bundles of linked activities. There is the evidence that increasing the productivity of certain sets of activities within a job can reduce the productivity of other job activities. Kraut, et al (1989) examines such productivity linkages and on account of a study conclude that jobs in organizations are interdependent in varying degrees; productivity increase in a particular job may reduce productivity in other jobs; may create slacks that does not lead to any increase in productivity in other jobs, or may encounter constraints in interdependent jobs that may hinder the productivity increase from having an impact on any other parts of the organization. There is a need for a well developed theory or research paradigm to aid in predicting when increase in productivity in one job would enhance productivity in a horizontally or vertically linked jobs and translate to productivity increase at organizational or corporate level.

Integrated Human Resource Management

This is used to describe the modern human resource concept that is all inclusive. The relevant areas of the integrated H.R.M. encompasses.

- (i) Organizational management.
- (ii) Personnel administration
- (iii) Manpower management
- (iv) Industrial management.

But the above areas are seen to be more traditional and restrictive in respective cases. The concept of human resource management is more integrative, innovative and proactive. Human resources management is predicated on the assumption that employees are individuals with varying goals and needs and cannot be thought as basic business resources like trucks, machines or filing cabinets. Human resources management takes a positive view of workers, assuming that virtually all wish to contribute to the enterprise productivity and that the main obstacle are lack of knowledge, insufficient training, poor reward, and uncertainties about the future.

It is essentially a more innovative/proactive view of workplace management than the traditional/reactionary approach which personnel management offers. Goals are expressed with specificity so that it can be understood and undertaken by the workforce. When properly practiced. Human resource management techniques are expressive of the goals and operating practices of the overall enterprise.

Armstrong (2006) opines that Human resources management includes those decisions and actions which concern the management of employees at all levels in the business and which are related to the implementation of strategies directed towards creating and sustaining competitive advantage in achieving set goals.

Overall, the concept of human resources management is the realization that it aims at helping an organisation to meet strategic goals by attracting and maintaining employees and also

managing them effectively. In other words, it strives to achieve a fit. This means it is an approach that seeks to ensure a fit between the management of an organisation's employees and the overall strategic direction of the company.

Human Resources Management Strategies in Adaptation

Human resources management is essentially the management of technology adaptation. Ulrich (1996) notes that the modern global business is continuously grappling with the challenges of satisfying ever changing customer tastes, preferences and expectations. Better, faster and more efficient devices, techniques and methods are evolving in creating products and services. The decision to adopt new technology is the decision to adapt the human resource capacity of the organisation to the emerging technology.

Obviously, this adaptation will impact on all the strategic and functional units in human resource management. All the functional areas need to be re-aligned and correlated to the dynamics in the business environment. Greater adoption of automated technology including computerization and information technology will make it imperative that the recruitment procedures, employment size, training and development programmes, etc will be adjusted for effectiveness.

According to Hong et al (2012), an organisation human resource functions may pose recruitment and selection policies, training and development policies, etc. All these functional areas need to correlate to the overall business strategy. In other words, the firm's personnel needs must be integrated with the goals/objectives of the organisation. For example, an automobile dealer's corporate strategy of increasing car sales by 5% over a five year period must be supported by a human resources management strategy to sustain personnel in order to achieve the 5% increase. Thus, a senior representative of human resource department must be involved in the devising of the corporate objectives.

Categories of Human Resources Management Strategy

These are:

- (i) The people strategy
- (ii) The human relations functional strategy

The people strategy pertains to the careful correlation of the human relations management policies/actions to attain the goals laid down in the corporate strategy. On the other hand, the human relations functional strategy relates to the policies employed within the human relations functional areas itself, regarding the management of persons internal to it, to ensure that departmental goals are met, (Fritsch, U and Gorg, H, 2015).

In trying to adapt to best practices for overall organizational effectiveness, the organisation now has attractive options in making use of human resource consultants and specialized management agencies in recruitment, training and development, compensation and benefits. In this respect, there is even increasing demand for compensation analysts, salary and benefit administrators.

The Modern Situation

According to Wilkinson (1988) in performing its roles, human resource management in organisation has incorporated a significant level of innovation in the following areas:

(i) Recruitment

In deciding the staffing and manpower needs, a decision as to whether to engage independent contractor or direct hiring, on-line advertisement and recruitment, out-sourcing options, etc.

(ii) Training and Development

The most pragmatic adaptation in modern HRM is noticeable in training and development programme of business organizations. In addition to all traditional on-the-job and off-the job training, management development programmes like seminars, conferences, workshops are common.

(iii)Ezigbo (2007) opines that since decision making is a vital function of the executive, programmes like in-basket, business games, case studies are handy in improving the decision making proficiency of executives. Most significantly, computer and internet knowledge.

(iv)Compensation and Maintenance

Ulrich (1996) notes that an adequate wage and salary administration and extra-compensatory benefits sustains the employee moral. The modern concept is to engage compensation analysts/salary administrators in the determination and administration of compensation benefits. A good example is the contributory pension scheme and the fund/asset management set up for that purpose.

Another instance of modern innovation in compensation/benefits is the monetization scheme where provision of housing, car(s), driver(s) for public servants is outlawed and monetary allowances paid in lieu.

Fopohunda (2013) in assessing contributory pension scheme in Nigeria, notes that inspite of the immediate and long term benefits of the scheme and the legal enactments that introduced the employee welfare innovation since 2004, and subsequent reforms, there is the challenge of lack of widespread implementation, very low acceptance by the private sector, delayed remittances, difficulty in processing claims, etc. A robust reform is imperative if the scheme is to achieve its goals and objectives.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study as to facilitate personal contact with elements in the population from whom data were collected for processing. The data were sourced from Petterson Group and across all the Top Management staff using a Likert structured questionnaire containing 8 items in alignment with the objectives. The sample size for the study is 30. A test retest method was used to ensure reliability. Content validity was used to obtain validity of the research instrument. The copies of the questionnaire were made available to some management experts for scrutiny and criticisms before they were moderated and administered on respondents. Data were presented in tabular form and analysed using mean and standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested using Z-test statistic in the SPSS software.

Data Presentation and Analyses

The various possible areas of innovative human resources adaptation as a boost to achieving productivity.

Table 1

Responses to the Various Possible Areas of Innovative Human Resources Adaptation as a Boost to Achieving Productivity

			5	4	3	2	1	ΣFX	-	SD	Decision
			SA	A	N	DA	SD		X		
1	Computer/internet	training	60	16	9	14	4	103	3.43	1.547	Agree
			12	4	3	7	4	30			

		40.0	13.3	10.0	23.3	13.3	100%			
2	Online vacancy/recruitment	55	16	9	16	4	100	3.33	1.539	Agree
		11	4	3	8	4	30			
		36.7	13.3	10.0	26.7	13.3	100%			
3	Monetization	65	16	4	18	2	105	3.50	1.478	Agree
		13	4	2	9	2	30			
		43.3	13.3	6.7	30.0	6.7	100%			
4	Outsourcing	65	16	3	10	7	101	3.37	1.712	Agree
		13	4	1	5	7	30			
		43.3	13.3	3.3	16.7	23.3	100%			
5	Recruitment agency	45	16	6	18	6	91	3.03	1.586	Agree
		9	4	2	9	6	30			
		30.0	13.3	6.7	30.0	20.0	100%			
Total grand mean and standard deviation								3.33	1.572	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 1 indicated that 16 respondents out of 30 representing 53.3 percent agreed that the Computer/internet training was a possible area of innovative human resources adaptation as a boost to achieving productivity with mean score of 3.43 and standard deviation of 1.547, Online vacancy/recruitment with 15 respondents representing 50 percent agreed with mean score of 3.33 and standard deviation of 1.539; Monetization with 17 respondents representing 56.6 percent agreed with mean score of 3.50 and standard deviation of 1.478, Outsourcing with 17 respondents representing 56.6 percent agreed with mean score of 3.37 and standard deviation 1.712 and Recruitment agency with 13 respondents representing 43.3 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.586 that these are possible areas of innovative human resources adaptation as a boost to achieving productivity

The level of regulatory and participatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to firm's productivity.

Table 2

Responses to the Level of Regulatory and Participatory Support by the Government in Sustaining Innovative Human Resource Practices as Enabler to Firm's Productivity

		5	4	3	2	1	∑FX	-	SD	Decision
		SA	A	N	DA	SD		X		
6	Workshops/seminars	20	40	15	10	6	91	3.03	1.690	Agree
		4	10	5	5	6	30			
		13.3	33.3	16.7	16.7	20	100%			
7	Minimum wage	60	16	15	16	5	112	3.73	1.398	Agree
		12	4	5	4	5	30			
		40.0	13.3	16.7	13.3	16.7	100%			
8	Contributory pension scheme	20	48	3	14	6	91	3.03	1.202	Agree
		4	12	1	7	6	30			
		13.3	40.0	3.3	23.3	20.0	100%			
9	Industrial Relations	60	1	15	14	5	95	3.17	1.426	Agree
		12	1	5	7	5	30			
		40.0	3.3	16.7	23.3	16.7	100%			
10	Working from home	10	52	9	15	5	91	3.03	1.596	Agree
		2	13	3	7	5	30			

	6.7	43.3	10.0	23.3	16.7	100%
Total grand mean and standard deviation						3.20 1.462

Sourc: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 shows that 14 respondents out of 30 representing 46.6 percent agreed on Workshops/seminars with mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.690 as the best regulatory and participatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to firm's productivity. Minimum wage legislations was the opinion of 16 respondents representing 53.3 percent who agreed with mean score of 3.73 and standard deviation of 1.398. Contributory pension scheme was the agreement of 16 respondents representing 53.3 percent with mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.202. 13 respondents representing 43.3 percent agreed with Industrial Relation support at mean score of 3.17 and standard deviation of 1.426. 15 respondents representing 50 percent with a mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.596 agreed that the level of regulatory and participatory support by the government was boosted through working from home policy as to minimize overcrowding in offices.

Test of Hypotheses

The possible areas of innovative human resources adaptation as a boost to achieving productivity is significantly low.

Table 3

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Computer/internet training	On-line recruitment	Monetization	On-line vacancy	Out-sourcing
N		30	30	30	30	30
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	3.43	3.33	3.57	3.37	3.03
	Std. Deviation	1.547	1.539	1.478	1.712	1.586
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.244	.227	.267	.263	.243
	Positive	.190	.207	.222	.188	.243
	Negative	-.244	-.227	-.267	-.263	-.192
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		2.339	2.245	2.464	2.442	2.329
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.031	.008

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e. $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis accordingly.

Result

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z – values ranges from $2.245 < 2.464$ and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, responses from the respondents as displayed in Table 3 is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of most of the respondents that the possible areas of innovative human resources adaptation as a boost to achieving productivity were significantly high.

Decision

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- values ranges from $2.245 < 2.464$ against the critical Z- value of 1.96 (2-tailed test at 95% level of confidence) the null hypothesis was rejected. While the alternate hypothesis was accepted which states that the possible areas of innovative human resources adaptation as a boost to achieving productivity was significantly high.

The level of regulatory and participatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to firm's productivity is significantly low

Table 4

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Recruitment agency	Computer/internet training	Workshops/seminars	Under-studying	Contributory pension scheme
N		30	30	30	30	30
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	3.20	3.10	2.73	3.03	3.27
	Std. Deviation	1.690	1.398	1.202	1.426	1.596
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.290	.307	.254	.284	.261
	Positive	.228	.218	.196	.199	.186
	Negative	-.290	-.307	-.254	-.284	-.261
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		2.588	2.680	2.392	2.558	2.431
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.007	.000	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Z-value is greater than the critical Z-value (i.e. $Z_{cal} > Z_{critical}$), reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis accordingly.

Result

With Kolmogorov-Smirnon Z – values ranges from $2.392 < 2.680$ and on Asymp. Significance of 0.000, responses from the respondents as displayed in Table 4 is normally distributed. This affirms the assertion of most of the respondents that the level of regulatory and participatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to firm's productivity was significantly high.

Decision

Furthermore, comparing the calculated Z- values ranges from $2.392 < 2.680$ against the critical Z- value of 1.96 (2-tailed test at 95% level of confidence) the null hypothesis was rejected. While the alternate hypothesis was accepted which states that the level of regulatory and participatory support by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practices as enabler to firm's productivity was significantly high

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The payment of monetization in lieu of direct provision of some essential working staff benefits as well as out-sourcing of staff are the most prominent areas of modern human resource innovative adaptation as agreed by majority of respondents 56.6%. However, 43.4% of respondents were either undecided or disagreed with the opinion. Next is computer/Internet proficiency (53.3%), Online Recruitment (50%), and Recruitment agency (43.3%). These opinions were however in contrast to the views of a significant number of respondents who were undecided and in outright disagreement.

It is therefore obvious that these various options though exigent and widely practiced are not very applicable in depth across organizations. They are designed in the context of efficiency and benefits. Thus Ulrich (1996) sees them as efforts in evolving technologies for better, faster and more efficient operations. The hypothesis Z-test result was largely in alignment with the findings that the various areas of human resource innovative adaptations are significantly high in business firms.

Furthermore, majority of respondents (53.3%) agreed that the regulatory support of government was more prominent in the areas of enactment of minimum wage laws and contributory pension schemes. On the other hand 46.7% of respondents either disagreed or undecided.

Similarly, working from home policy is the next in the opinion of respondents (50%), as the most prominent regulatory support, while workshops/seminars (46.6%) and conducive Industrial Relations Policy (43.3%) was least mentioned. Substantial number of respondents either disagreed or remained undecided. This further attests to the fact that though the regulatory role of government is manifest and high, there is the need to strengthen the mechanisms for greater effectiveness. That is the challenge of Bureaucratic red-tapism in the implementation of regulatory enactments.

The Hypothesis Z-test result also affirms that there is significantly high regulatory and participating role by the government in sustaining innovative human resource practice in organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

Human resource management is a dynamic process and requires continuous adaptations in strategies and techniques. As organizational goals and strategic objectives change in the light of new products, expansion, growth etc, human resources must be continuously re-positioned through right – sourcing, requisite training/orientation, and adequate remuneration. This ensure that the enabling motivation and quality assurance is in place for projected corporate effectiveness.

Recommendations

- (1) Organisations are encouraged to facilitate the commitment with which they embrace computerization and information technology as well as the requisite human resource training and skill acquisition, since it remains the most strategic development in technological growth.
- (2) All agencies and bodies concerned with the effective implementation and management of the Contributory Pensions Scheme Policy of Federal government of Nigeria must work with mutual cooperation and synergy with the employers to ensure that bureaucratic bottlenecks do not hinder the scheme.
- (3) Relevant organs and agencies of government must ensure proper coordination and implementation of statutory regulations and standards in human resource management and technological adaptation, example, the minimum wage, broadcasting standards, and other issues of quality assurance.
- (4) Managers of human resources must continuously research into what constitutes industrial best practices in human resource management and ensuring that their organisations implement same for competitive leveraging.

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