

WOMEN IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND NIGERIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

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ABSTRACT

Women are unique beings on the planet. Their roles in the society cannot be underrated. In the olden days, women were barred from participating in some activities thus prevented them from occupying top positions in the society (country). During this period, the labour force was low and the GDP of the country was low as well. But as soon as the government formulated a policy about gender equality, this embargo on feminine recognition was removed. Though, they may be termed “weaker vessels”, but strong in action and always determined to utilize themselves. They are good instrument in reducing poverty and increase economic growth with better understanding of their existence that they are not only for sex and reproduction but also to be useful in the society. This paper defined HRM, economic growth and

Introduction:

Handling people requires a tactical approach because of responsiveness nature of man which makes them think, feel and act. Human being cannot be operated like machine, because they differ widely and are subject to many varied influences.

The management of man is a very important and challenging job because of the dynamic nature of the people.

Ganesan, (2014) opined that human beings, as one of the vital resources, need a tactful handling by management personnel. Over the years, men were given full autonomy to boss

examined the inclusion of women in some spheres in HRM like agriculture, education and politics and how they have contributed positively to the economic. It also explained the reasons why they have a better chance of contributing to the economic growth. Lastly it concluded that women are strong and capable of positively influencing wherever they are and made some recommendations.

Keywords: *Women, gender, Equality, Economy, Human Resources Management*

Actually all the organizations which has marginalized the women. These disparities in term of social, political and other aspects between men and women brought about low participation of women in politics and limited rights in terms of access to some resources and opportunities (opportunities in terms of education, training, occupation, etc.). The argument has been that they are naturally mothers, and their greatest pleasure and true fulfillment lies in maternity, the one out of a few things that women are good at as contributed by Okoycuzu, Obiamaka and Onwumere (2012). These kinds of ideologies about women have tended to marginalize them and have belittled their work in the home and outside the home and prevented them from contributing to economic wellbeing of the home and society until 1999, when the constitution of Nigeria clearly stipulates gender equality.

Bradshaw, Castellino and Diop (2013) observe that while gender equality will help bring economic growth, economic growth will not necessarily bring gender equality. Alphizar (2010) opined that advancing gender equality requires strengthening different dimensions of women's autonomy: economic, political autonomy, full citizenship and freedom from all forms of violence, and sexual and reproductive autonomy. Therefore, increase in goods and services tending to economic growth could be attributed to improvement in the citizen's workforce.

There is valuable relationship between human resources management and economic growth the success of any organization lies greatly on the

efficiency and effectiveness of the management team. According to Geet, Deshpande and Deshpande (2009), human resources has a paramount importance in the success of any organization because most of the problems in organizational setting are human and social rather than physical, technical, or economical failure.

The truth remains that when a woman has understanding of how to run a home, then, she can understand the problems inherent in running a business and a country. Nigeria as a nation is blessed with courageous, hardworking and aggressive women who cannot be ignored in the economic, political and social growth of the country. They made selfless efforts to ensure the growth of the economy in their generation.

This paper tends to eradicate gender inequality and appreciate female participation in all spheres of the economy towards its growth. The ideology that women should remain at home to care for the family (children and husband) should be changed, we should rather exploit the inbuilt talents and gifts in them.

During the regime of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, he appointed Dr. Ngozi Iweala to be the Minister for Finance. Not only that, there are still other women in the realm of politics, commerce, agriculture, education, etc. whose landmark cannot be forsaken in the country.

This paper serves as an eye opener to the religion and community leaders who still believe that women are not relevant and cannot meet up with men, thus marginalizing them. Also, when a woman loses her husband (widow) she is no more relevant in some area (due to their cultural belief). This should be addressed in order to let out the nature, beauty and ability of such woman.

Furthermore, this paper will be a protective apron for women in the society against public embarrassment and harassment in the practice of gender equality.

Not only that, the idea of some men that if you allow women to be educated, their response to sex will be low. There must be a change of idea that, if you educate a woman, you have educated a nation, as educated women are good agents in HRM which eventually increases the nation's economy.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study of Okoycuzu, Obiamaka and Onwumere (2012) had shown that women which constitute half of the world's human capital are one of the most underutilized resources in the world. According to Okoycuzu, Obiamaka and Onwumere (2012), Nigeria still falls short of the desired result of giving males and females equal opportunities and equal access to opportunities to advance socially, economically and politically. But since the constitution recommends gender equality, women have been fully contributing to the economic growth.

Despite the active contributions and selfless efforts of women, some of them are still marginalized when it comes to some activities on the ground of religion, and cultural belief. There is need to sensitize all about making full use of feminine impact in our society for sustainable development and growth in all ramifications.

This underutilization of the feminine power, knowledge and wisdom could still be attributed to gender inequality in such areas. Women are good instrument, advertising agents and good representatives. They are always ready to serve and be utilized. Therefore, change of action and orientation is called for in such area or part of the country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual framework of Economic Growth

Amadeo (2019) defines economic growth as an increase in the production of goods and services over a specific period. To be most accurate, the measurement of economic growth removes the effect of inflation in a country.

He stressed further that, economic growth creates more profit for businesses. As a result, stock prices rise. That gives companies, both private and public, capital to invest and hire more employees. As more jobs are created and there is rise in income, consumers have more money to buy additional products and services.

Amadeo (2019) opined that Gross domestic product is the best way to measure economic growth. It takes into account the country's entire economic output. It includes all goods and services that businesses in the

country produce for sale. It doesn't matter whether they are sold domestically or overseas.

GDP measures final production. It doesn't include the parts that are manufactured to make a product. It includes exports because they are produced in the country. Imports are subtracted from economic growth. The most accurate measurement of growth is real GDP. It removes the effects of inflation. The GDP growth rate uses real GDP.

He further explains that GDP doesn't include unpaid services. It leaves out child care, unpaid volunteer work, or illegal black-market activities. It does not count the environmental costs. A country will improve its standard of living when it factors in environmental costs. A society only measures what it values.

According to Online Management Study guide, there are two different definitions. The first definition of HRM is that "it is the process of managing people in organizations in a structured and thorough manner. This covers the fields of staffing (hiring people), retention of people, pay and perks setting and management, performance management, change management and taking care of exits from the company to round off the activities. This is the traditional definition of HRM which leads some experts to define it as a modern version of the Personnel Management function that was used earlier.

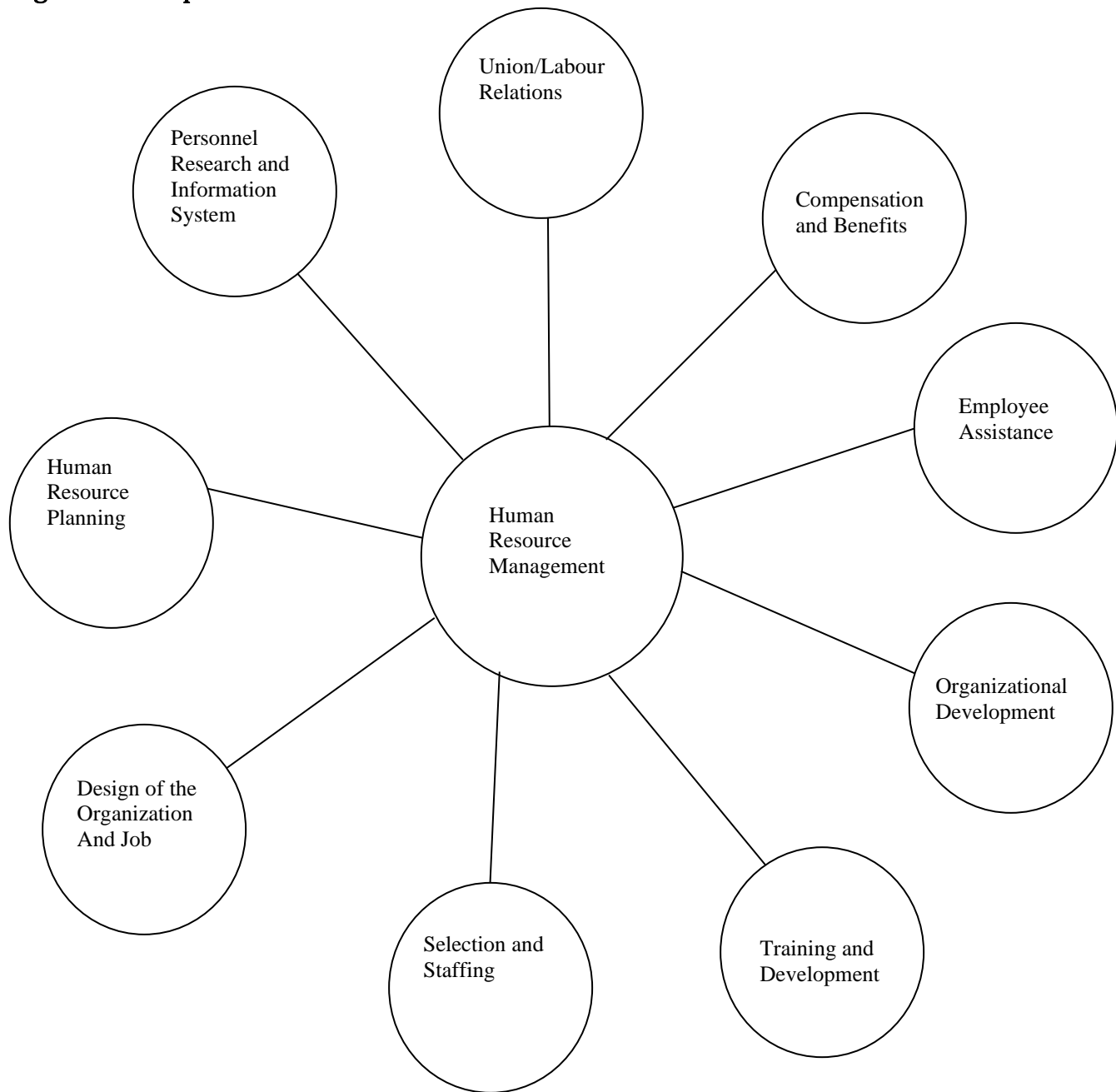
The second definition of HRM encompasses "The management of people in organizations from a macro perspective. i.e. managing people in the form of a collective relationship between management and employees." This approach focuses on the objectives and outcomes of the HRM functions. It means that the HR function in contemporary organizations is concerned with the notions of people enabling, people development and a focus on making the "employment relationship" fulfilling for both the management and employees.

The scope of HRM is indeed vast. All major activities in the working life of a worker – from the time of his or her entry into an organization until he or she leaves the organization comes under the preview of HRM.

The scope of Human Resources Management extends to:

- i. All the decisions, strategies, factors, principles, operations, practices, functions, activities and methods related to the management of people as employees in any type of organization.
- ii. All the dimensions related to people in their employment relationships and all the dynamics that flow from it.

Figure 1.1 Scope of HRM



(Source: Ms. Sinha Ragini, Civil India Service, Section III, Human Resource Management Online)

Theoretical framework

Different theories have been used to explain and address gender inequalities in the society, which include Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, Radical feminism and Social feminism according to Samkange (2015). These theories generally agree that there is oppression and inequality based on gender but only differ on the approaches they advocate to have these imbalances within Society addressed as stressed by Samkange (2015). This paper is limited to Liberal feminism theory which advocates for a moderate approach to bringing about change in gender treatment.

Liberal Feminist Theory

Owens (1994) defines the theory as a thought process or way of thinking about reality which becomes a model of that of thinking about reality which becomes a model of that reality. Brookes (2008) explains the theory within this context as an individualistic form which concentrates on women having their equality through being responsible for their actions and choices.

Giddens (2001) also defines Liberal feminist theory as a theory that believes gender inequality is produced by reduced access for women and girls to civil rights and allocation of social resources such as education and employment.

Tong (2009) added that feminist theories attempt to describe women's oppression, explains its causes and consequences, and prescribe strategies for women's liberation. According to Khattak (2011), Liberal feminist theory is characterized by an individualistic emphasis on equality. Gender equality allows women to enjoy their right to education, politics, agriculture, e.t.c. this holds that women should live lives of their own choosing in terms of carrier, employment opportunities, e.t.c.

Although both governmental and non-governmental organizations have made tremendous efforts with the framework of liberal feminism, the achievement is not sufficient. This means that women are still victims of various economic, political and socio-cultural problems which become challenges facing the women to overcome the state of being barred from

occupying top positions and achieve gender equality as opined by Enyew and Mihrete (2018).

Empirical Review

Identification of women as bring a reliable and productive labour force makes them to be prepared. They are also recognized to be more efficient distributors of goods and services within the household. Therefore they have been targeted to be a good instrument in HRM for the growth of the economy which eventually aimed at alleviating poverty.

Today, economic benefits from gender diversity in the workforce are being stressed in addition to equal opportunity norms or mere compliance with the Equal Opportunities legislation which employers often feel coerced to comply with. Equal Opportunity norms demanding gender diversity in highly visible organizational positions come from a number of different stakeholders, including the media, investors and employees themselves.

In addition, the reputation and credibility of a firm in both internal and external labour markets seems to improve by including, women on the board (Daily & Schwenk, 1996; Hambrick & D'Aveni 1992). The persistence of sexual stereotypes has led organizations to allocate women within top management to a function that is strongly associated with female stereotypes such as the HRM function. In this respect, assigning women to HRM offered a solution for organizations to deal with growth demands for enhancing diversity within top management without giving up the traditional classification of female and male work. When these two mechanisms: interest of organizations to include women in highly visible positions and sexual stereotyping prevail correspondingly, this leads to the rise in female representation and a parallel rise in status of the occupation which can be seen from this recent study on women in HRM in 11 western European countries as observed by Riechel, Bradl and Mayrhofer (2010). Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) and Amazons Watch magazine 2018 make a list of some Nigeria women who through their involvement in Human Resources Management have contributed to the growth of Nigerian

economic in diverse ways like politics, agriculture, religion, industry, education, e.t.c

Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome – Kuti and Mrs. Margaret Ekpo in the Nigerian Pre-independence political struggles of the 1950's. Mrs. Kuti was a strong advocate and campaigner for women's rights across the country. Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, was the only female member of the seven-man committee set up in 1951 to organize a national political organization toward achieving self employment within five years.

Professor (Mrs.) Grace allele – Williams in the field of mathematics education and rose to become the University of Benin.

The battle of women to become equal with men in all aspects of life and work has been in existence over the years. Enormous advances in education and career have been made but to equalize them in pay and promotions in the workplace was a mirage to them. The belief was that they are the property of their husbands. Over the last 93 years, women have made great advances toward equality but total equality in pay, executive positions and high earning positions still elude them making it imperative for HR managers to alleviate this lingering quandary as observed by Kaifi (2013). According to Parcheta, Kaifi and Khanfar (2013), as of 1963, the equal pay Act requires employers to pay similar wages to employees who perform the same tasks without regard to gender. Although, some employees do earn more than others because of performance, seniority and/or work conditions. Education has been the key that gave women entrance into the realm and arena of earning more money.

Involvement of women in different career and getting degrees in different areas that are income producing like Engineering, IT, Business, Finance, Construction, e.t.c. has given them opportunity to rise to the top to be leaders in one area or the other. Some women are bold and more competent than some men, hence, their management style has been an asset to the company or the organization they are. In this respect, Afugoo D. (2011) observes that, assigning women to HRM offers a solution for

organization to deal with growing demands i.e. to improve the production of goods and services in order to enhance economic growth.

Late Prof. Dora Nkem Akunyili (OFR) was the former Director of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) who reduced the incidence of fake drugs from about 90% to 68% in 2001 as confessed in one of her addresses in April, 2006.

Dr. Mrs. Okonjo Iweala under the Obasanjo regime (2003 – 2006) as the Nigerian Minister of finance who successfully transformed the Nigerian economic platform by negotiating a debt relief package for Nigeria. She also stressed the need to reduce the country's recurrent expenditure and embark on capital projects which could improve the 14% employment rate in the country as reported by Aina, (2012); McGroaty (2012) and Osa-Okunbor (2012)

There are more women in managerial positions in various establishments. Okoyeuzu, Obiamaka and Onwumere (2012) express the participation of women to have astounding impacts in Commerce, Industry, Banking, Education, Administration as well as politics. He believes that when you educate a woman you educate a nation. When education is achieved, skills are developed for active participation in all aspect of life in the society.

He further asserts that the contributions of women have been felt in reducing poverty through agriculture thus increasing the growth of the economy.

According to World Bank (2002), the primary pathways through which gender systems affect growth are by influencing the productivity of labour and the allocate efficiency of the economy.

Identification of women as being a reliable, productive and cheap labour force makes them the preferred work force in many organisations. Perception of women as 'good with money,' including being better at paying back loans, has led them to be targeted in microfinance programmes. Recognition of women as more efficient distributors of goods and services within the household has led to the being targeted with

resources aimed at alleviating poverty, such as cash transfer programmes as explained by Bradshaw, Casterline and Bineta (2013).

Alphizar (2010) opined that the justification for including women in development in economic growth has been an efficiency argument, with equity concerns being somewhat secondary. Critics suggest this instrumentalist approach to engendering development, while bringing economic growth gains, will not fundamentally change the position and situation of women.

Julie (1995) concludes that, "indeed our monetary economy is dependent on women's reproductive and care giving work for the health, wellbeing and indeed the very existence of the paid work force. The economy also relies heavily on women to pick up slack which the paid economy ignores – nursing elderly people, tutoring, child care and supporting new immigrants".

Sulaiman, Babalola and Idris (2013) added that most economists and women activities (including international institutions like ILO, and other), have considered that women productivity contribution as important and subsidized the overall output in the economy.

In industry, According to Sulaiman, Babalola and Idris (2013) As industrialization grows to respond to export demand it relies on female labour. This is because historically, developing nations start their export industries with the manufacture of products which use female labour. With the rapid development of the export sector, it is therefore expected that female labour will play an important role in the development of the industrial sector in Nigeria, change the indexes and speed the overall hallmarks of growth. These (female labour and overall growth policies) are important towards achieving the targets of the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015 for empowering women in Nigeria which is still a long way.

In agriculture, the international development community has recognized that agriculture is an engine of growth and poverty reduction in countries where it is the main occupation of the poor. But the agricultural sector in many developing countries is underperforming, in part because women,

who represent a crucial resource in agriculture and the rural economy through their roles as farmers, labourers and entrepreneurs, almost everywhere face more severed constraints than men in access to productive resources. Efforts by national governments and the international community to achieve their goals for agricultural development, economic growth and food security will be strengthened and accelerated if they build on the contributions that women make and take steps to alleviate these constraints.

Sofa and Chery (2011) opined that women make essential contributions to the agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries. Their roles vary considerably between and within regions and are changing rapidly in many parts of the world, where economic and social forces are transforming the agricultural sector. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes.

FACTORS FOR WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Parcheta, Kaifi and Khanfar (2013) asserts that women are at more concerned with the wellbeing of others compared to men; they are more approachable as managers which leads to more creativity and stronger teams.

When these characteristics prevail in women, the organization/company earns more, the workers enjoy their working environment which makes them to produce more and increase their productivity.

All these (goods – production and services – management) contribute to the increase in the level of economic state of the country or the environment in question.

Riechel, Bradl and Mayrhofer (2010) argue that the inclusion of women in HRM top positions since the 1990s is as result of two related mechanisms –

the inherent limitations of the equal opportunities legislations and the mounting rhetoric about the link between diversity and performance accompanied with the increasing societal pressures to include women at all organizational levels.

Gender Assessment Report in Nigeria (2009) cited by Sulaiman, Babalola and Umar (2013) reports that women constitute about 60% of the agricultural labour force and performed more than 70% of farm labour.

These reasons have made organizations include women into top management positions and since the beginning of their inclusion, women have changed their emphasis from the mere inclusion in the workforce to enabling them to reach top management.

The findings of Fagool (2011) shows that that in societal contexts, countries displaying higher gender egalitarian values showed less sex-role differences between male and female directors. The incidence of such gender egalitarian values opens up elite male domains to women in the HR field. In the HRM include functional HR responsibilities which were usually considered as a male stereotypes domain.

Country gender profile Nigeria (2011) establishes that the national Gender Policy focuses on women empowerment while taking action in basic education and the abolishment of traditional practices which are harmful to women. The aim is to reduce gender bias that arises from traditional cultural customs.

The Strategic Initiative on Gender holds goals to achieve empowerment for women's political capacity, and has established a gender-sensitive framework for both public and private sector. It also aims to have 30% of managerial positions occupied by women by 2015. Also, although CEDAW was ratified in 1985, implementation and operation on a practical level is insufficient. This has sustained the women to participate in the different areas to boost the economy.

CONCLUSION

The contribution of women in HRM towards economic growth cannot be sidelined. It is glaring that women are good resources to be tapped unto

promote efficiency in some spheres of the country towards economic growth.

Women's contribution in HRM via politics, education, agriculture, small scale business and others is a good measure of economic growth being goods and services. Their risk taking behaviour worths appreciating in the economy. The policy of gender equality has unveiled the marginalization of women to the top. Women are self dependent unlike when they were not allowed to exert their being which made them poor and depend their total being on men as they remained unpaid from their domestic work. As soon as they entered paid work, many things turned around and become bread winners in the family.

In actual sense, the present status of any country depends on the extent their women are allowed to participate in HRM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the fact that the women who have been allowed to get to top positions and play a visible and outstanding role in HRM contribute greatly to the economic growth, the following recommendations are made.

1. Religion and cultural belief should not prevent the women from performing their right as the citizen in politics (right to vote and to be voted) education (acquire good education as an adage says "education is light), etc.
2. There should not be limitation to their participation in the leadership
3. There should be a law enacted by the government to allow widow to do what he could in HRM (this might be particular to some ethnic group).
4. Women who have not come out of their shell should do so, to demonstrate their natural intelligence.
5. There must be understanding that managing women is not like managing men. Women might not like to open up like men.

6. There must not be underestimation of what any woman can do. Not the face, outlook but the inward, knowledge, experience and wisdom that matter.
7. It is important to close gender gap by either mentoring and training or awareness and accountability or work life balance.
8. It should be noted in any organization or society that having gender parity as a checklist of action do not produce result but long time commitment to it.

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