
Redefining the role of the human resource professional (hrp) in the Nigerian public service for enhanced performance

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Keyword

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Abstract

The Nigerian public service is a product of British colonial administration, and it has since after independence in 1960 metamorphosed to a huge and complex system for harnessing the country's resources to facilitate economic growth. The public service has over the years undergone several reforms to make it more effective and efficient in service delivery. These reforms have not significantly improved the service offerings of the public service, due to its politicization, lack of neutrality and poor human resource management practices, where non-professionals without requisite skills and knowledge were made to handle the HR function.

This paper seeks to explore the gamut of human resource management practices that must be entrenched in and to reposition the public service for higher performance. It further identifies the role or responsibility and bench-skills and knowledge of the HR professional that will enhance optimum service delivery in the sector. The paper adopts the methodology of documentary analysis of current relevant literature. The issue of failed public enterprises and poor performance of the Nigerian public sector is of serious concern to both the people and government and has therefore attracted a plethora of public commentary.

The paper finds that the reforms of the public service were quite often structural in nature and paid little attention to the people-factor and people-management issues. HR professionals were not engaged to handle people as strategic resources, rather personnel administrators who lack professional expertise and competence were appointed to provide transactional and administrative support in the public service. This does not enhance strategic goal attainment and the competitive position of the public enterprises. The paper recommends a shift in paradigm and the engagement of HR professionals who have the expertise to design and implement human resource management strategies that can drive service delivery and enhance effectiveness and efficiency. The HR professional facilitates the development of high performing and competent workforce.
