

Strategic Human and Financial Resource Management: Imperative for Improvement of Military Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the strategic human resource management (SHRM) and financial resource management (SFRM) practices in Nigerian military secondary schools with a view to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the schools in this new millennium of knowledge based economy. The input of strategic management will help prepare global studentship as resources will be used judiciously. Of recent, the Chief of Army Staff made a call for command schools to return to their old glory in the face of overpopulation and shortage of facilities. So there is need for improvement that should be strategically planned so as to prepare military secondary schools to meet the knowledge economy requirement of the 21st century. Most global secondary schools prepare students for international and cross border education in Nigeria and it becomes a source of finance for them. Why are the military secondary schools not involved? Using a descriptive survey design, out of 33 military secondary schools in Nigeria, 11 were sampled for the study. The teacher/student ratio, permanent teacher/temporary teacher ratio as well the income generation and expenditure patterns were examined. The result shows there are a high teacher/student as well as permanent/temporary ratio. Also there is no systematic training of teachers and in most schools the payment of temporary teachers was by the Parents Teachers' Association and the payment is below living wage. Based on the findings, among the recommendations made was the harmonization of structures and practices of these schools since they have a common goal through the establishment of an Armed Forces Military Schools Board.

Keywords: strategic human resources management, strategic financial resources management, systematic improvement and military secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

The first military secondary school to be established in Nigeria is the Nigerian Military School, Zaria in 1954 with the aim of providing an avenue for boys to be recruited into the Nigerian Army system among other objectives. The establishment of Command, Navy and Air Force secondary schools could be traced to the explosive increases in the number of officers and men of the Nigerian Armed Forces as a result of the civil war, and to the peculiar location of barracks which were geographically located far from towns in the 60's and 70's. Also the irregularity of movement of the officers and men without due consideration to the schooling of their children and wards made it imperative that schools should be established to cater for their special movements between sessions.

The military secondary schools started in earnest with the establishment of the first command secondary schools in the divisional headquarters of the Nigerian Army with a view to establishing both a boarding and a day school in each division. The first set of Command Secondary Schools were established in 1977 and today there are nineteen of them with a plan

to establish more in Kano and other northern locations where Nigerian Army Units are located. The first navy secondary was at Navy Town in 1982, followed by the one in Abeokuta in 1991 and today, there are four navy secondary schools. The first Air Force Secondary School is Nigerian Air Force Military School at Jos, established in 1980 and presently there are nine Air Force secondary schools. Today, there are thirty three military secondary schools in Nigeria.

The initial objectives of these schools have been achieved to the extent that they have extended their mandate to providing quality education to civilian children. According to Tsoho (2010), the stable calendar of military schools has made civilian parents to seek admission into them. This has resulted to problems of overpopulation with teacher/student ratio of 1:60 on the average. Intricately linked to this problem is shortage of facilities. According to the findings of Ifebuo (2007), the state of facilities in Lagos State secondary schools has resulted in poor performance

The Chief of Army Staff recently called for a restoration of command schools to its former glory and there is a policy now in place that no class should be more than thirty students. If there is plan of restoration, the researchers are advocating in this paper that it should be strategically planned such that the improvement of these schools can lead not only to a better standard but also that the return on investment should be assured and used judiciously to better the welfare of the personnel.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the human relations and financial management practices in

Nigerian Military Secondary Schools in view of the concepts of Strategic Human Resources Management and Strategic Financial Resources Management bearing in mind the planned improvement of these schools.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

The challenges of location of some of the military secondary schools and the restrictions of military information system posed a hindrance to data collection up to a point but they did not deter or affect the result of the study.

Table 1: Military Secondary Schools in Nigeria

S/No	Military Secondary Schools	Year Established	Special Characteristics
1.	Nigerian Military School, Zaria, Kaduna State	1954	All Boys/Boarding
2.	Command Secondary School, Ipaja, Lagos State	1977	Mixed/ Boarding
3.	Command Secondary School, Ibadan, Oyo State	1977	Mixed/ Boarding
4.	Command Secondary School, Abakaliki	1977	Mixed/ Boarding
5.	Command Secondary School, Jos	1977	Mixed/ Boarding
6.	Command Secondary School, Kaduna	1977	Mixed/ Boarding
7.	Command Secondary School, Markurdi	2004	Mixed/ Boarding
8.	Command Day Secondary School, Markurdi	2004	Mixed/Day
9.	Command Secondary School, Mbiri	2004	Mixed/ Boarding
10.	Command Secondary School, Suleja	2004	Mixed/ Boarding
11.	Command Day Secondary School, Enugu	1996	Mixed/Day
12.	Command Day Secondary School, Ikeja	1981	Mixed/Day
13.	Command Day Secondary School, Oshodi	1996	Mixed/Day
14.	Command Day Secondary School, Ijebu Ode	2005	Mixed/Day
15.	Command Day Secondary School, Ojo	1981	Mixed/Day
16.	Command Day Secondary School, Mokola Ibadan	2009	Mixed/Day
	Command Day Secondary School, Odogbo, Ibadan	2004	Mixed/Day
17.	Command Day Secondary School, Ede, Osun State	2001	Mixed/Day
18.	Command Day Secondary School, Rukuba, Jos	1981	Mixed/Day
19.	Command Day Secondary School, Kaduna	1996	Mixed/Day
20.	Command Day Secondary School, Abuja	1992	Mixed/Day
21.	Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Ojo	1982	Mixed/Day/Boarding for Girls
22.	Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Abeokuta	1991	All Boys/Boarding
23.	Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Calabar	2006	All boarding/Mixed
24.	Nigerian Navy Secondary School, Port Harcourt		Mixed/Day
25.	Nigerian Air Force Military School, Jos	1980	All Boys/Boarding
26.	Nigerian Air-force School, Ikeja	1981	Mixed/Day
27.	Nigerian Air Force Girls' Comprehensive School, Jos	1991	All Girls/ Boarding
28.	Nigerian Air Force Comprehensive School, Uyo	1998	Mixed/Day
29.	Nigerian Air Force Secondary School, Ibadan	1991	Mixed/Day
30.	Nigeria Air Force Secondary School, Port Harcourt	1991	Mixed/Day
31.	Nigeria Air Force Secondary School, Kaduna	1983	Mixed/Day
32.	Nigeria Air Force Secondary School, Enugu	2001	Mixed/Day
33.	Nigeria Air Force Secondary School, Markurdi	1981	Mixed/Day

Source: Field work, 2011

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Concept of Strategic Human Resources Management (SHRM)

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is an off-shoot of Strategic Management and Human Resource Management. Strategic Management is the futuristic determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an organization or an individual and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of

resources necessary for carrying out those goals. It is being proactive- anticipating changes and how to respond to them, recognizing tomorrow's opportunity today. Before the concept of Human Resource Management gained ground in the 90's, Personnel Management was the term used to describe the corporate activities of mainly engaging, managing and disengaging people in the organization. Human Resources Management is broader as it includes human resources' functions performed by staff

outside the Personnel Department. The traditional Human Resource functions tend to limit to staffing (filling in vacancies without adequate measure of how they will contribute to organizational objectives), training, appraisal and compensation. But strategic priorities should be based on team-based job design, flexible workforces, quality and planned improvement, employee empowerment, and incentive compensation. (Jing and Huang 2005 in Darwish, 2009.) It is the systematic and proactive approach to the acquisition, utilization, development, retention and disengagement of human resources in an organization in line with its corporate mission, vision and values.

Dyer (1984) in Akhtar, Ding and Ge (2008) viewed SHRM as a systematic set of decisions regarding the acquisition, allocation, utilization and development of human resources that affect organizational performance. Delery and Doty (1996) defined SHRM practices that are theoretically or empirically related to overall organizational performances namely internal career opportunities, formal training systems, result oriented appraisals, employment security, participation, job description and profit sharing.

The various approaches to SHRM are Universalistic, Contingency and Configurational. Universalistic approach tends to identify best practices in HRM practices nationally or globally. Contingency approach contends that the success of SHRM is contingent upon the achievement of a match between human resource policies and other aspects of the organization. Configurational approach deals with identifying configurations or unique patterns of factors that are posited to be maximally effective in the practice of managing personnel.

Akhtar et al (2008) detailed the internal career opportunity as the organizational preferences for hiring from within. Formal training systems is concerned with organizations providing extensive training opportunities for their employees or whether they depend on selection and socialization processes to obtain required skills. Appraisals are conceptualized in terms of outcome-based performances ratings and the extent to which subordinates views are taken into account in these ratings. Employment security reflects the degree to which employees feel secured about continued employment in their jobs. Employee participation is in terms of taking part in decision making as well as having opportunities to communicate suggestion for improvement. Job description describes the extent to which jobs are tightly and clearly defined so that employees know what is expected of them. Profit sharing which may not be applicable to governmental organizations reflects the concern for overall organizational performances on a substantial basis as

employees who share in the gains of the organization will endure the pains therein.

Finally, strategic human resource management involves: identifying the organization's strategic objectives, developing human resources objectives consistent with the organizational goals- (vertical integration), and aligning human resources policies and practices with each other – (horizontal integration). How far is SHRM practiced in Nigeria Military Secondary schools?

The Concept of Strategic Financial Resource Management (SFRM)

A financial resource which is the monies needed to expend in the running of the school system has an overarching influence on both the internal and external dynamics of any system. The quantum of money available determines the quality and quantity of human and material resources. SFRM is basically the practice of financial management at a higher level. The importance of Financial Management is based on the fact that nothing can be achieved without money in any organization. The role of financial management is such that it can be referred to as an organization's nervous system as every need and goal achievement is dependent on it.

Obafemi (on-line) noted that strategic financial management is basically about the identification of the possible strategies capable of maximizing an organization's market value. It involves the allocation of scarce capital resources among competing opportunities. It also encompasses the implementation and monitoring of the chosen strategy so as to achieve agreed objectives. SFRM is concerned with an organization's quest for knowledge of its entire future and present income based on past income and how the income will be expended to achieve its goal and objectives. It answers beyond the basic question of how much money do we need and have; and how are we spending it to include expansion of income and expenditure base to cater for future improvement or expansion of operations of the organization. The question of why, how and who of the expected change must be included in the SFRM Plan. According to Klein (2008), this means supporting traditional organizational budgeting, accounting, and forecasting processes. Financial Management adheres to an organizational approach, following the enterprise's functional hierarchy of entities such as subsidiaries, divisions, departments, and groups within departments. Organizations budget, control spending, and maintain accountability within this framework due to the need to support financial accounting and external reporting requirements are parts of SFRM.

SFRM complements Organizational Financial Management, overcoming its limitations by improving strategic alignment and financial transparency to achieve the strategic plan. It provides support to Organizational Financial Management with procedures and controls, and can be implemented in stages as an enterprise develops its strategic planning ability and maturity.

The Concept of School Improvement

Another word for improvement is reform which implies positive change in the management of any system. School Improvement planning according to Education Improvement Commission (EIC) (2000) is a process through which schools set goals for improvement and make decisions about how to and when these goals will be achieved. It is a plan through which the public can hold schools accountable for students' success and through which it can measure improvement. Every school wants their students to succeed and keep improving on the success. But schools can only make a lasting difference when they focus on specific goals and strategies for change. For there to be improvement, there must be efficiency in resources utilization by all stakeholders. Efficiency simply implies the quality of doing things well with no wastages in terms of money, time or human beings. According to Oyedele and Ilusanya (2006), efficiency is concerned with doing things right in order to achieve the goals stated with the least amount of resource. Akangbou in Oyedele et al (op.cit) defined efficiency as the ratio between the output of an organization and the input used in pursuing the output. Educational efficiency is the ability to perform well and achieve result with minimal wastages of resources. Example, no dropouts or repetitions as the turnouts are well behaved students who also can fit into the society thereby contributing to its socioeconomic development. Efficiency in education can be classified into two: internal and external as noted by Adepoju, Okebukola in Oyedele et al (2006). Internal efficiency is the extent of an educational system's ability to minimize cost and reduce wastages resulting from repetition, dropouts and failures. It is a measure of how successful the system is in processing inputs into outputs. External efficiency is the ability of the systems output to meet the expectation of the populace.

Inbuilt in the concept of efficiency is effectiveness which deals with achievement of a purpose. It is the production of intended result. An efficient system could be adjudged effective as input, output ratio is optimized leading to improvement automatically. What resources are to be improved upon in the military school system as a result of efficiency in the system? Teachers are the most important resource yet they are the most neglected in public schools. In this globalized economy where information is available at

the click of the mouse, teachers are not trained to look for information on the web for example. They are hardly paid their worth, ill – motivated with no promotion, overloaded and treated like subordinates and not like professional by the school heads.

Highly effective schools share the following characteristics according to EIC (2000):

- A clear and focused vision.
- A safe and orderly environment
- A climate of high expectation for students success with well-motivated teachers
- A focus on high levels of student achievement that emphasizes activities related to learning
- A school head who provides instructional leadership
- A frequent monitoring of students problems
- Strong home-school relations

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study based on the activities of the sample schools in the last five years.

Population and Sample of Study

The total population of Military School in Nigeria is thirty-five and thirteen schools were randomly selected as the sample of the study. Seven Command Secondary Schools, three Navy Secondary Schools and three Air-Force Secondary Schools.

Research Questions

- What is the state of human resource management in Nigerian Military Schools as it relates to teacher/student ratio?
- What is the state of human resource management in Nigerian Military Schools as it relates to the permanent/temporary teacher ratio?
- Is there a systematic training system for teachers?
- Who pays the temporary teachers and do they earn a living wage?
- What are the sources of income available to Nigerian Military Secondary Schools?
- Are there sources of financing available that are not utilized?

RESULTS

- Teacher/student ratio 1: 50
- Permanent Staff/ Temporary staff ratio 1: 4
- There is no systematic training for teachers except the one organized by the Ministry of Defense in recent years.
- PTA pays temporary staff below minimum wage.
- Tuition fees
- Yes. Education Trust Fund and Corporate Social Responsibility Projects.

DISCUSSION

From the results obtained, the Nigerian Military Secondary Schools are not practicing SHRM. Any organization that practices SHRM will not rely so much on temporary staff that are not committed and motivated towards the achievement of the organizational goals. The embargo on recruitment in the Federal civil Service affected the state of staffing in military secondary schools in Nigeria. Even after the lifting of the embargo a few years ago, some of the temporary staff had their appointment ratified to permanent status yet the ratio is still high. The school authorities should bear in mind that the non-posting of new staff to these schools is likely to affect the schools performance now or in near future. There must be an arrangement to recruit qualified teachers and pay them properly from the tuition fees paid by the students as private secondary schools in Lagos break even after a period of ten-fifteen years.

From the survey, it was found that the teacher/student ratio of military secondary schools in Nigeria is 1: 50 on the average. This goes to show that the call by the transformative drive set up by the Chief of Army Staff in 2009 according to Kadai (2010) is yet to be effective. The admission quota of 120 students based on class-size of 30 students in 4 streams is yet to be felt in Command Secondary Schools. Even in the Navy and Air Force Secondary schools, the same trend is obtained. Class sizes have effect on teaching-learning achievement. Kadai (2010) noted that class-size of 50 and above has significant negative effect on the teacher's ability to handle students taken into consideration on individualized instruction as observed by education experts. He recommended that teachers need to be assisted by a system that makes individualization feasible through acceptable class-size.

The permanent/temporary teacher ratio is 1: 4 on the average. This means for every permanent teacher, there are four temporary teachers. This is the opposite of the recommendation in human resource management where it is recommended that for every one temporary staff, there should be four permanent staff. This shows that there is no SHRM in these schools.

It was found out that the temporary staff was paid by an internal arrangement by mostly the Parents Teachers Association and they do not earn a living wage as none of the schools pay the recommended minimum wage to these graduate teachers. The implication of such payment is that they are not motivated to give their best and there is no commitment as they can leave at any time if they have a better offer. The observation by Tshoho (2010) that only four Command Secondary Schools get the Education Trust Fund Subvention show that not all the Military Secondary Schools exhaust their

sources of income. The other sources of financing could be in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility. This may not be on cash basis but might involve the building or furnishing of facilities based on good will from the various publics that interact with these military schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, this study has examined the practice of human resource management and financial management in Nigerian military secondary schools. It also reviewed literature on the concept of strategic human resource management and strategic financial resource management which formed the basis for the examination of the practices stated above. The findings showed that SHRM and SFRM are not practiced in these schools. Based on the findings, this study recommends that there should be harmonization of human and financial resources practices in these schools if there is going to be a planned improvement. The concepts of SHRM and SFRM cannot be introduced haphazardly. This harmonization should be in the establishment of Armed Forces School Board to see the future development of these schools and strategically place them where they will not only fulfill their initial objectives of providing sound and competitive education for the children of Armed Forces personnel but become a source of income which will be channeled towards the well being of the personnel.

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