

Rethinking Management Practice in Agency for Mass Education through Knowledge Management Initiatives in Nigeria

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Abstract

Organization it has been in existence sine time in memorial traditional or modern organization. The practice of management within the organization over time has yielded tremendous achievement both in productivity and job performances of staff. Therefore, this paper critically looked at what has been obtainable in Agencies for Mass Education in terms of management practice covered from planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and staffing. Today's practice of management has changed direction in the international community's most especially Business firm, Commercial industries and some Government and private Organizations. Therefore, this paper has focused on Knowledge Management Initiatives of which transform the thinking and direction of organization in the world economy. The paper defined the concept Knowledge Management and also discussed the Knowledge Sharing and its impacts towards job performances and productivity of staff. Equally the paper discussed on Knowledge Collaboration and its contributions on job productivity. Finally recommendations and conclusion were drawn.

Introduction

Organization formal or informal is been run through managerial process to enable the organization attain its stated goals. Human organization cannot exist without proper and careful management of resources available in the organization; the establishment of any organization comprised both the human and non human material resources that make up a meaningful and well recognized establishment. In essence, to manage the resources, there must be qualified, experience and highly skilful personnel to lead the affairs of individual and non human resources. The management practices in

established firm or organization are well known to do with planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling, staffing and evaluation. Agency for Mass Education management practice is not different with what has been mentioned above to achieve its purpose because what constitute the agency are both human and non human resources. However the world of today is not static it keeps on changing in many ramifications such as: technologically, scientific and management styles. The business firm, commercial organizations and even private and government establishment around western world embrace the new pattern of management which is called knowledge management. It is found worthy of implementation and practice within the organization because it enhances productivity, job performances and bring mutual understanding and cooperation among members of staff. For instance knowledge management is progressively acknowledged as an essential constituent of an organization's strategy to improve organization performance. Nonaka (1994) believed that organizational knowledge is generated through the assimilation of the experience and individual intuitive knowledge into distinct and recordable knowledge, with group and organizational processes reforming, integrating, refining, institutionalizing and testing it.

Problems of Management Practice in Agency for Mass Education in Nigeria

Nigeria as a country with over population of 144 million people has high rate of illiterate people which mostly are from rural areas. The federal government on her effort to tackle the issues established an agency of which is to charge with the responsibility of carrying out campaign on literacy over the years. The campaign was basically conducted to reduce the level of illiteracy as it mentioned 44 million out of 144 million are illiterate this happened as a result of not having the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic that will make them functional members of the society, improve their socio-economic empowerment and self reliance (Olaniran, 2010).

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) was established in 1990 by the Federal Government of Nigeria with specific references to organized, monitor and assess the adult literacy practice in the country. The commission activities are decentralized, with offices in the six geo-political zones of the country, the 36 states and all 774 local government areas. The commission is mandated with coordination and supervision of literacy classes through local adult education officers, supervisors and literacy instructors among others (Non-Formal Education in Nigeria, 2010)

Despite all these laudable policy still the commission face with a lot of challenges. The commission is characterized by numerous problems which negatively affect the management of its activities. The Non-Formal Education in Nigeria (2010) has identified some problems which include:

1. Poor funding
2. Lack of adequate, well trained and qualified personnel across each level of government
3. Policy implementation
4. Lack or in adequate awareness of the significant role of Non-formal Education among political leaders
5. Miss appropriation of task to employee. And so on.

Concept of Management

The primary goal of any established organization is the attainment of its optimum objectives through effectiveness and efficient utilization of scarce both the human and material resources. Therefore, managers are charge with diligent management functions to realize its objectives. Concept management According to Lulsegged, (1981) as cited in Akhabute and Okosun (1998) describe from the point functions perform by the managers. And further defines as the organization of minds, hands, materials and the use of time for efficient, effective and contributive work. Farnham and Pimlott, (1979), as cited in Akhabute and Okosun (1998) they perceive management from three interrelated perspectives as follows:

- i. Management is an economic resource which performs series of functions involving the organizing and administrating of other resources within the organization;
- ii. Management is a system of authority through which organizational policies are translate into execution of task within the organization;
- iii. Management is social elite which in acting as an economic resource maintains an organization's associated system of authority scope force and balance.

However, management is what keeps an organization functions to maximum level and attend their objectives. According to Okedara (1981), as cited in Akhabute and Okosun (1998) management referred to effective utilization of human and material resources to achieve the objectives of organization. One can be clearly understood that management is a careful and systematic study of what form the establishment of an organization, its compositions and ability for the managers to take good use of

what is available at his disposal for the purpose of the organization to meet its objectives. Therefore, Loomba, (1978), as cited in Akhabute and Okosun (1998) sees management as the sum total of all activities undertaken to achieve the goals and objectives of an individual or an organization. It is simultaneously the integration of efforts, the design of organizational structure, the acquisition and judicious use of resources, motivating people, providing leadership, controlling, innovating and otherwise creating an environment in which individual and group goals can be achieved.

Therefore, management is to perform certain functions for other sector to work effectively and efficiently within the organization. According to Rakich, Longest & Darr (2000). Managers can be described by the functions they perform, the skills they use, the roles they play, and the competencies they must have to succeed. This emphasizes the process of managing. And equally managers in organizations display certain skills or roles that will enable them to take control over their subordinate to influence them to work. These include:

- i. Technical skills are the abilities of managers to use the methods, processes and techniques of managing (such as preparing a budget or a pro forma, planning a new process, or reorganizing a workgroup);
- ii. Conceptual skills are the mental ability to see how various factors in a given situation fit together and interact to lesser and ease work serious boarding on a particular sector; and
- iii. Human/interpersonal skills these include cooperating with others, understanding them, motivating and leading them in the workplace.

Management Practice in Agency for Mass Education in Nigeria

Management practices in organization are the usual practice which is obtainable almost in every human organization. The management practice are the daily routine which used by the managers to perpetuate the effort of members of the organization to achieve the desired objectives. The agency for Mass Education is not in exception of the managerial practice that is obtainable in every business industry, commercial firm, government and any other established organizations. It has been the usual practice because it practicalized and its effect had been manifested in achieving the objectives of different programme or projects executed. Therefore, the management practices in agency for Mass Education are: Planning, Organizing, Directing, Coordinating, Controlling and staffing these are the usual practice for many years in any established agency or organization. For, managers/administrators to achieve their desired objectives they make use of these management functions to persuade,

influence, control and attract attention of staff through very sound and comprehensive utilization of these functions as follows:

According to Oluborode, (2007) emphasized the used of the following functions as the management practice in formal organization which agency for mass education inclusive.

1. **Planning:** planning is the first and, perhaps, the most important function of management. The essence of planning is to prepare for and predict future events. Planning goes beyond attempting to attain stated organizational objectives. It involves the development of strategies and procedures required for effective realization of the entire plan.
2. **Organizing:** organizing involves a determination and enumeration of activities required to achieve objectives, the grouping of these activities, the assignment of such group to a department headed by a manager, the delegation of authority and exaction of responsibility to carry them out and provision for coordination of authority and informational relationships horizontally and vertically in the organizational structure.
3. **Directing:** directing occurs when managers initiate action. Effectively directing depends on being able to lead, motivate, and communicate with the staff for which one is available. The various demands of effectively leading necessitate a variety of leadership styles.
4. **Control:** controlling is the measurement and correction of activities of those for whom a manager is responsible to make sure that goals are accomplished. It, thus, involves measuring performance, correcting negative deviations and assuring accomplishment of plans.
5. **Staff:** managers may give little thought to human resources until there is a problem with staffing, which includes acquiring, maintaining, and retaining human capital in the organization.

Agency for Mass Education is a state own which has its headquarters in Abuja National Commission for Mass Education (NMEC). The essence of it establishment is to serve as a body which will carry out activities related to Adult Education programme across the state. And those programme may range between adult literacy class, continue education, vocational and skills acquisitions to mention but few. Therefore, the programme it depend upon the strategies and procedures employ to follow enable the agency to meet it objectives. It remained the order of the day practices of each every established organization mass education agency inclusive in the management practice through: proper planning, organizing, directing,

coordinating and staffing of both human and material resources if managers want to record a remarkable achievement.

The world of today as a result of globalization things has change seriously on both scientific, technological and management practice. The business firm, commercial industries, companies, government agencies, and institutions of higher learning around the global world had now embraced the new initiative of management which is called Knowledge Management. It has been found effective in terms of job performances and job productivity in organization. Therefore, it is imperative for agencies for Mass Education in Nigeria to change the pattern of their administration and management to enable them to compete around the world market today through knowledge management initiatives.

Concept of Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is an effective utilization of an existing knowledge within the organization for better productivity and performance. Knowledge is a major creative force of members of staff. The quality of work of staff in organization depends not only on their ability to create, distribute and share knowledge but also on how the work with knowledge is organized in their organizations. For example Tobin (1996) defines knowledge as information plus intuition and experience. Beckman (1997) as cited in Mladkova (nd) sees knowledge as information plus selection, experience, principles, limitations and learning. Veber (2000) understands knowledge as a changing system with interactions around experience, skills, facts, relations, values, thinking processes and meanings. It is the role of organizations to prepare an environment where members of staff can create, share and use both explicit and tacit knowledge. Knowledge it consists of two dimensions, explicit and tacit. The explicit dimension of knowledge can be expressed in formal and systematic language and can be shared in the form of data, scientific formulae, specifications and manuals. The tacit dimension of knowledge is highly personal and difficult to discover and formalize. Explicit knowledge and intuition is created by mental models, experience, abilities, and skills etc. It is deeply rooted in action, procedures, routines, commitments, ideas, values and emotions. It is difficult to share and communicate.

Knowledge management helps organizations to meet its roles. Gupta, Iyer, & Aronson, (2000) as cited in Theriou, Maditinos and Theriou, (2011) Knowledge management enables the existing individual knowledge to be captured and transformed into organizational knowledge, which in turn must be diffused and shared by many employees. These employees use this knowledge but they also create new individual, which becomes organizational, and so on. Knowledge management is

also the management of organization's knowledge that can improve many features of organizational performance so as to be more "intelligent acting". But to Holsapple and Joshi (2004) as cited in Theriou, Maditinos and Theriou, (2011), knowledge management is an entity's systematic and deliberate efforts to expend, cultivate, and supply available knowledge in ways that add value to the entity in the sense of positive results in accomplishing its objectives of fulfilling its purpose. Wiig, (1995). Viewed, that knowledge management is a group of clearly defined process or methods used to search important knowledge among different knowledge management operations. He also clarified that knowledge management aims were firstly to facilitate an organization in acting intelligently, in order to secure its viability and success, and secondly to make an organization to realize the best value of its knowledge assets.

It is clear evidence that knowledge management now is the practice in organization for better productivity, performance and competition in the world economy. Therefore, agencies for Mass Education in Nigeria can employ the use of knowledge management to enhance staff performance, accelerate programme productivity, recognized each staff potentialities and utilizes both the tacit and explicit knowledge. Agencies were best established to take care the issues around illiteracy, provide vocational skills, organize continuing education, gives opportunity to drop out to attend remedial education, women education and rural development projects for better living as a citizen of the country. Meanwhile, the use of knowledge management in agency for Mass Education would be of greater advantage to both staff and participant of a programme due to the fact that it allow free interactions, sharing experience, decision making and understanding each other position with the regard to the issue concerns.

Knowledge Management Initiatives

The practice of knowledge management in organization enables them to have control and produce the desired out come. According to Theriou, Maditinos and Theriou, (2011) Knowledge management enables organization to gain insight and understanding from its own experience and procedures. One of the key concerns that have related to knowledge management is how to accomplish it successfully. Thus, it is considered crucial to identify the factors that influence the success of knowledge management initiatives. The knowledge management initiatives to this effect are:

1. Knowledge sharing
2. Knowledge collaboration

Knowledge Sharing

The knowledge sharing in organization in view of Choi and Lee, (2003) becomes a factor to obtain and maintain a competitive advantage, and improved business performance. Sharing knowledge is not merely a neutral exchanged of information but it affects distribution of power, working relationships, models of influence and changes how individual identify their responsibilities (Willet, 2002) as cited in Nassuora, (2011) Knowledge sharing involves the processes through which knowledge is channeled between a source and a recipient. Knowledge can be shared between two parties' recipient and the knowledge owner. For an organization to compete and maintain standard, knowledge sharing is the act of capturing, organizing, reusing, and transferring experience-based knowledge that reside within the organization and making that knowledge available to others in the business (Hsiu-Fen, 2006). Knowledge sharing is the main key to the success of all knowledge management strategies.

Impact of Knowledge Sharing to Organizational Performance

- It is evidently found that organization is successfully shared knowledge where there is trust, Swowden (2000) as cited in Theriou, Maditinos and Theriou, (2011) trust is the most crucial requirement for knowledge transfer.
- Davenport and Prusak (1998) believe that without trust, knowledge initiatives will fail, regardless of how thoroughly they are supported by technology and rhetoric. Therefore, knowledge is share where there is mutual trust among staff in organization.
- Evidently found that, the use of modern technology allowed successful knowledge sharing through personal contact, instruction, trust and apprenticeship.
- Equally successful knowledge sharing often is the sense of identify and belonging between the parties in organization.
- Through the knowledge sharing and people transfer within organization enable to figure out who is good at a particular activities promote job performance and productivity.
- Davenport and Prusak (1998). Leadership creates a climate that encourages the distribution of knowledge, so that people feel safe to contribute in every way, and the contributions are recognized by them. Equally, they should have the will to share and offer their knowledge to others in the organization, to learn constantly, and to seek new ideas and knowledge (Storey and Barnett 2000) as cited in Davenport and Prusak (1998).

Knowledge Collaboration in Organization

Organization exist attained its goals through possible means. According to Gray (1998) believed that collaboration can be seen as process through which people that see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. Gray further clarified that collaboration generates new ideas and new solutions that emerge from the interplay of these perspectives, experience and knowledge that help us get work done, coming from people both inside and outside an organization. According to Roschelle and Teasley (1995) as cited in Emiley, (2011) defined collaboration as “coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a continued attempt to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem”. Therefore, collaboration is the ability to fore see problems and come up with desirable and possible means of talking it within or outside the organization. Collaboration in organization is all about meeting goals of organization, therefore there some certain qualities to meet for collaboration work effectively. For instance, Dillenbourg (1999) notes, there are several qualities that characterize truly collaborative interactions. First, collaboration is characterized by a relatively symmetrical structure, however that symmetry is accomplished. For example, in situations with symmetry of action, each participant has access to the same range of actions. This contrasts with the typical division of labor in cooperative learning structures; partners split up the work, solve sub-tasks individually, and then put their respective contributions together. Symmetry of knowledge occurs when all participants have roughly the same level of knowledge, although they may have difference perspectives. Symmetry of status involves collaboration among peers rather than interactions involving supervisor/subordinate relationships. Finally, symmetry of goals involves common group goals rather than individual goals that may conflict. Here, collaboration is about mutual understanding, appreciation of effort, regarding individual knowledge, accomplished of task, and above all achieving common goals rather than individual. It could also involving or seeking expertise of development partners in training and re-training of staff to update their knowledge, skills and attitude toward work and improve organizational standard.

Agencies for Mass Education can be better in utilizing collaboration to enhance better productivity among its staff, enrich their performance, design better programmes and enhance mutual understanding and cooperation in the agency.

Knowledge Collaboration and Organizational Effectiveness

The scenery of work has changed, however, and the management styles and knowledge silos that were created in the 20th century are no longer tenable today if organizations are to succeed. Knowledge collaboration helps break down those silos so that organizations can be creative, flexible, and ready to meet the changing, demanding needs of today's organizational activities. Therefore, for knowledge collaboration to enable effective performances of workers should take the advantage of the following aspects:

Kelly (2014) identified the following aspect as key factor for organizational effectiveness:

Trust

Trust is the foundation of effective collaboration. There are many facets to trust, but vulnerability is the aspect that most affects the collaborative process. Without vulnerability, people will not fully invest themselves or their ideas in collective efforts.

Communication

There is no collaboration without effective communication. Leaders must communicate why collaboration is important to the organization's success and must outline the strategy and roadmap for how the organization will work collaboratively. Both employees and leaders must share and build ideas, constructively criticize, and provide feedback.

Shared Vision and Purpose

The best way to get employees invested in the collaborative process is to give them an opportunity to contribute to a shared vision and purpose. This is about taking the time to articulate the "why" to everyone involved in the collaborative process on a particular project or initiative. Leaders must ensure that all employees understand how their work contributes to the goals of the team and organization and how collaboration will help them meet their goals. When employees understand their broader purpose, they can make more meaningful contributions to their teams.

Recommendations

1. Agencies for Mass Education should encourage the practice of knowledge management for better productivity;
2. Managers in the agencies for Mass Education should create environment that would help in knowledge sharing, innovation and creativity;
3. The leadership styles in Agencies for Mass Education in Nigeria should recognize the impact of knowledge collaboration and its importance toward job performance of staff;
4. Nigeria government should provide enough infrastructural facilities that will enhance both tacit and explicit knowledge, sharing and collaborations; and
5. Adequate funding should be provided to cater for the execution of projects and programmes in the Agencies for Mass Education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The paper titled Rethinking Management Practice in Agencies for Mass Education through Knowledge Management in Nigeria. The paper highlighted some problems that faced agencies for Mass Education in Nigeria; it also discussed the concept of management and identified management practice in the agencies. The paper looked at what is the current management practice around the world. However, modern Business firm, Commercial industries and companies has now turn or embrace the concept Knowledge Management. Therefore, this paper looked at Knowledge Management Initiatives and their focuses toward job performances and job productivity of staff in organization.

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