



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

THE CHALLENGES OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA: A SYNERGY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

IHEONUKWU, Solomon E.

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku

Correspondence Email: Solobeze4real@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

In this study, the challenges of human resources management in hospitality and tourism industry were addressed. The current trend and wide interest in the industry make it rather imperative for this focus to be unavoidable. However, the numerous misgivings regarding the effectiveness of tourism and hospitality industry in Nigeria as a veritable organ for social and economic transformation and employment generation deserve clarifications. That is why relevant events such as the management of human resources become important as a subject of investigation. The result of the survey indicated that the employment practices and conditions in which the hospitality and tourism industry operates constrain human resources management to a large extent. Incidental problems are lack of trained/qualified staff, inadequate remuneration, and poor human relations among others. As a way forward, recommendations were made to address the challenges. However, the issues related to human resources management and developments are largely compromised in so many organizations as tourism and hospitality was not left out. This paper therefore, object to such compromise and would rather want human resources management to occupy more vital and central position in the management of hospitality and tourism outfit.



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

INTRODUCTION

The efficiency with which an organization can perform will depend to a large extent upon how its human resources can be managed and utilized. The importance of hospitality and tourism employment in both developed and developing countries is attested to by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), who suggest travel and tourism related activities account for over 230 million jobs, or 8.7 percent of jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2006). Therefore every manager in this industry must be able to work effectively with people and also be able to solve the varied problems the management of people may entail.

Today, human resources is seen as the most important resources required for the production of goods and services, and the key to rapid socio-economic development and efficient service delivery. No wonder Mac Donald and Sirianni (1996) recognize the challenges of living and working in a service society which, according to them is characterized by two kinds of service jobs "large numbers of low-skill, low-pay jobs and a smaller number of high-skill, high-income jobs, with few jobs being in the middle of these two extremes.

Onah (2000), suggest that without adequate skilled and a well-motivated workforce, operating within a sound human resource management system, development is not possible. However, organizations and managers in hospitality and tourism face real challenges in recruiting, developing and maintaining a committed, competent, well-managed and well-motivated workforce which is focused on offering high quality services to the increasingly demanding and discerning customers. Considering the above submission, the objective of this study therefore, is to identify some of those challenges associated with human resources management in the hospitality and tourism industry and make useful/practical suggestions for eradicating them in Nigeria.

CONCEPT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (HRM)

There have been several attempts to define HRM by many scholars. Heery and Noon (2001) recognize that it is a subject of considerable academic analysis and that, there is no common agreement on what HRM means. Based on this, they offer several definitions which they feel capture the complexity and dynamism of HRM as a subject of academic study. However, only four of these definitions will be discussed.

- *A label* HRM is seen as simply being another name for personnel management and there is nothing distinct or special about HRM.
- *A convenient shorthand* term that allows for the growing together of a whole series of disciplines that are broadly concerned with people management such as employee relations, industrial/labour relations, personnel management and organizational behavior.
- *A map* to help guide students and practitioners to understand the concept and ideas associated with the management of people.
- *A set of professional practices* suggest that there are a range of personnel practices that can be integrated to ensure a professional approach to managing people. In this view, a potentially key role is likely to be played by the chartered institute for personnel



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

management (CIPM), which is the professional association for those entering the HR and personnel profession.

Clearly, what the above discussion point to is that human resources management means many things to many people, depending on whether you are a manager, an employee or an academic and there is no one definition that will adequately capture the potential complexity of the topic.

In another definition, Eric Frank (1974) in Onah (2000), defines human resource management as a series of activities in which the job, the individual and the organization all interact as each develops and changes. He further identifies two major activities within the human resource area. The first concern with the recruitment, selection, placement, compensation and appraisal of human resources. This group of functions is usually referred to as "personnel or human resource utilization. The other groups of functions are those directed towards working with the existing human resources in order to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

The activities are designed to enable the existing members of the organization to assume new roles and functions. Those activities are concerned with human resource development.

Human resource management can also be defined as a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques (Storey, 2005).

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

In the early stage, the theories and practices of management dwelt more on the technology and work as well as the work place. That was why some scholars like Max Weber, Fredrick Taylor, Eric Frank to mention but few emphasizes more on how to organize work especially at the shop floor level.

But in the recent past, the early schools were criticized because they ignored the human side of management. The critics argued that the organization is a social system and instead of focusing on work and work place technology, more attention should be on the human side of the enterprise. Some critics like Mc Gregor Douglas, Chris Argyris, Abraham Maslow among others were prominent in this human relation school (Onah, 2000). They adopt organization structures and processes to the socio-psychological needs of human beings within each organization.

Based on this, some contemporary scholars interested in personnel or human resource management base their principles of personnel policies on the teachings of the human relations school. For instance Cuming (1986) developed three principles upon which personnel policies are based using industry and commerce as instance which can be directly applied to hospitality and tourism as follows:

1. **The needs of employees must be recognized-** These include their desire for job satisfaction, due consultation before changes affecting them take place, and for knowledge of what is going on within the organization.



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

2. All employees should be treated with justice- These include a code of conduct and fair play (having regard for equity). Favoritism or antagonism should not be shown towards individuals, and there should be consistency in treatment between all employees.

3. An organization or business will function better democratically, rather than autocratically- Success is more likely if the co-operation of employees are sought in achieving organizational goal/objectives than the use of force or by trying to coerce them to these and with the use of authority.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

To many, hospitality and tourism is just a business of cooking and travelling. And to some people, hospitality industry consists only of hotels and restaurants, while Tourism to them is just travelling and enjoying. However, many academics, industrialists and policy-makers have attempted to define the nature of the tourism industry and the place of the hospitality sub-sector within this broader conceptualization – yet there is no one commonly accepted definition. The Chambers Concise Dictionary (2009) defines hospitality as the friendly welcome and entertainment of guests or strangers, which usually includes offering them food and drink.

According to Sue Barker, Jeremy H, and Brandley P. (2000) hospitality industry is the collection of businesses providing accommodation, food and beverages to people who are away from home. Lucas (2004) in her work on employment relations in the hospitality and tourism industries chose to talk in broad terms about the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Sector (HCTS). This characterization of the HCTS recognizes that, in reality many jobs in hospitality and tourism, share common attributes and are associated with both hospitality and tourism activities. It is pertinent therefore, to know that hospitality industry provides services for people who are away from home regardless of whether it is for long or short period of time. These services include accommodation, restaurants such as food/beverages, entertainment such as night club, movie/theatre etc.

Therefore, it is noteworthy that hospitality industry is a part of a wider group of economic activities called tourism. However, this wide economic activities “Tourism” have been a subject of long debate thereby drawing the attentions of most academic disciplines. To this effect, the Oxford English Dictionary defines tourism as the business of providing services such as transport, place to stay or entertainment for people who are on holiday.

Goeldner and Brent (2009), defines tourism as the entire world industry of travel, hotels, transportation and all other components including promotion that serve the needs and wants of travelers.

According to United Nation World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO), tourism is the movement and activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for at least twenty four hours but not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activities remunerated from within the place visited. From the above definition, Okpoko P.U, Okonkwo E.E, and Diminyi C.A, (2011) identified five notable characteristics associated with tourism.



Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

- i. That tourism arises from the movement of people to and stay in various destinations as well as their activities therein.
- ii. That the journey to and the stay take place outside one's normal place of residence and work.
- iii. That the movement must not be less than twenty hours and more than one year.
- iv. That the movement to other destinations is temporary and short term with the intention of returning home a few days, weeks or months.
- v. That the money spent during such travel and stay is derived from home and not earned in the places visited.

For the purpose of this study, tourism can be defined as the amalgamation of industries providing necessary and essential services to the travelling public. These services include:

- a. **Transportation:** car rental, travel agents and airline.
- b. **Specialist shops:** gift shops, souvenir shops, shopping centers.
- c. **Food and beverage operations:** restaurants, bars, fast food outlets etc.
- d. **Accommodation:** hotels, guest houses, conferences and exhibition centers etc.
- e. **Leisure/recreational activities:** sports, theme parks, festivals, events etc.

For clarifications and better understanding, figure 1.1 below illustrates the relationship between hospitality and tourism industry.

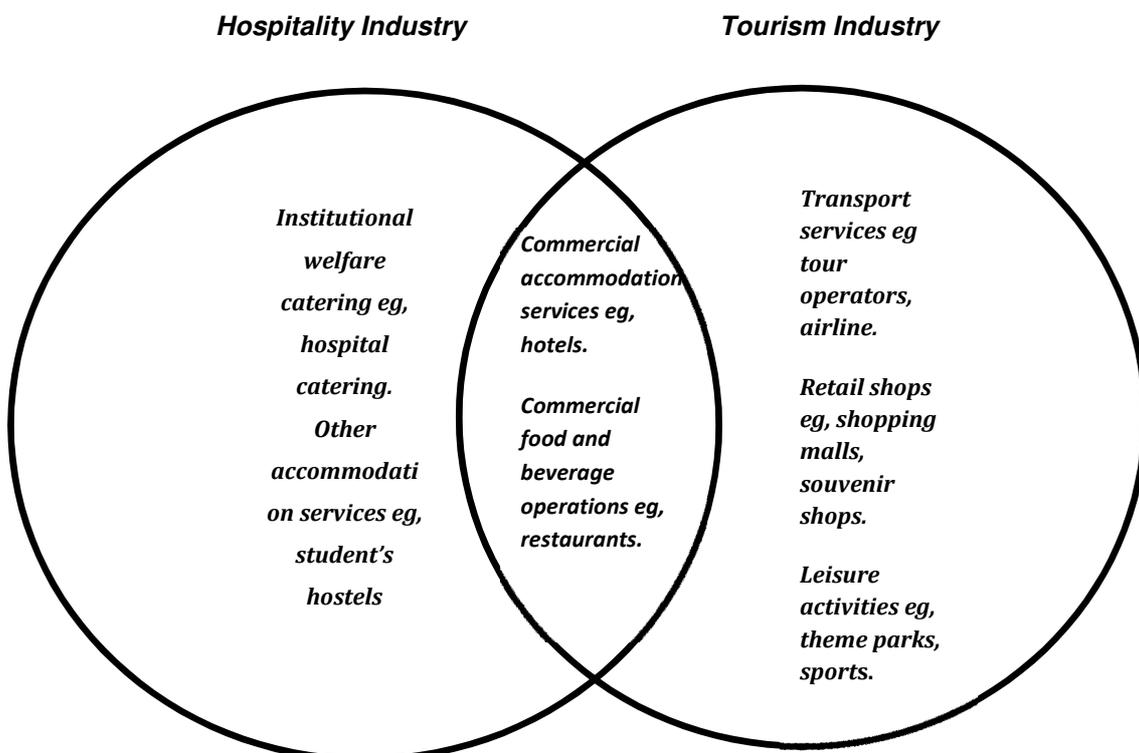


Figure 1.1, adapted from Sue Baker et al (2000).



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

Generally, hospitality and tourism has often struggled with negative perceptions about employment practices and conditions and this perception has often been matched by the reality. However, some of the problems affecting the human resources management in the industry include:

1. **Lack of Skilled/ Qualified Managers:** The relevance of human resources to hospitality and tourism development is so obvious that it cannot be over-emphasized. It is a truism that

without experienced and professional management, tourism development would be a farce (Okpoko and Okpoko, (2002). Hospitality and tourism has its own norms, terminologies as well as theories and practices, and these should form the bases for the teaching and training of her personnel. It will not be out of context to argue that Nigeria is presently lacking experienced and professional hospitality and tourism personnel. Apart from those “few” trained on the job, studies has showed that only few of our institutions are currently awarding OND and HND certificates in hospitality and tourism with just microscopic few of our universities doing likewise at the undergraduate and post-graduate level.

2. **Cheap Labour (generally low wages):** It is a known fact that hospitality and tourism industry is mainly occupied by large numbers of low-skill personnel, thus resulting to low pay, low wage remuneration. However, most hospitality outfit in Nigeria are owned by private individuals who have little or no knowledge about the industry as well, most do not understand the importance of employing skilled personnel (professionals) in every department of the organization especially at the management level, rather they go for non-professionals/ unqualified persons mostly SSCE/ ND holders in different disciplines with little or no experience whom they feel can receive lesser or cheaper wage.

3. **Human Relation Problems:** Hospitality and tourism is a service organization, therefore the objective of every skilled personnel in this organization is to satisfy his guest/visitor and this will mostly happen if the human resources are cordial, the people therein keep and maintain friendly and cooperative relations. When the contrary is true, the people who put their effort together in ensuring excellent service delivery for the growth of the organization will now have a biased perception of each other and consequently treat each other with disdain and unfriendly and

uncooperative manner. This will however, affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the workers, thus resulting to inefficient/ineffective services to the guest/visitors.

4. **Indiscipline:** Discipline in a broad sense means orderliness. According to Onah (1997) it is doing the right thing at the right time, whether or not we are being watched or supervised. Discipline is very important in every organization be it public, private or co-operate. This is probably why it is important that the status of discipline in some hospitality industry is poor as a result of cultural/religious influences. This is true when the owner of such organization employs close relations from the same cultural background to work indirectly as a spy, as means of checking corruption in the organization. It is obvious therefore, that such person (s) will not work



in line with the management, noticeable in such system are various acts which include crass insubordination, lateness, inefficiency and nonchalant attitude etc.

5. Understaffing: The problem encountered in staffing in this industry is basically the inadequacy of the management to carry out required job analysis before embarking on recruitment, selection and placement of staff. Thereby acting contrary to the basis staffing policies where the management should evaluate demand, recruit and place workers based on need. However, recruitment in most cases is based on the command and instructions of the owner or major stakeholders of the organization without evaluating the need of such staff. Most times, adequate numbers of staff are not employed thereby making or comparing the existing staff work extra hours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Hospitality and tourism industry as earlier discussed employ a large number of unskilled personnel, which lead to unprofessional practices in most cases. But the reverse should be the case. Trained/qualified personnel should be employed with at least ND certificates in hospitality and tourism management without bias to the area or department such person will be placed. This will bring professional practices and ethical behavior to a high standard. A skilled professional with a background in hospitality and tourism rooted in customer service management, will be able to handle sensitive issues in the discharge of his duties because hospitality and tourism is a service industry that deals with the satisfaction of people's need not minding the ethnic/religious background, language, colour or status.
2. Hospitality and tourism industry often encounter staffing problem because of over reliance on informal recruitment method. Therefore management in this industry should not base their recruitment on political, ethnic or religious influence. Employment should be based on merit and necessity; also there should be adequate number of staff to avoid complications in service delivery.
3. There should be self-discipline at all level especially at the management level, this is necessary because it is the reality of leadership. For instance, if a manager often comes late to work or irregularly, he cannot be in position to check others who do the same.
4. It is a known fact that hospitality and tourism industry employ's mostly low skill workers. As a result, wages are unreasonable. This is one reason the industry have a very high level of labour turnover and little or no trade union existence. This study therefore suggest that there should be a guiding policies on Salary/remuneration in the industry that will affect every staff from the top management to the least staff just the way it exist in civil service system
5. Most of the hospitality and tourism organizations lack quality welfare scheme. The industry should be deeply involved in the welfare of staff in times of celebration and in times of sorrow. Staff should also not be in want of information they need to work with or what they need to know. Information on events and developments in the system should be promptly communicated to staff through the appropriate channels.
6. The state of human relations has a primary relationship with the performance and adjustment of workers in any system. It is therefore necessary to devote energy to the event in other to develop sound human resources in the hospitality and tourism industry. The easiest means of improving human relations is to lay more emphasis on fairness than on equality.



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

CONCLUSION

All the activities of hospitality and tourism organization are initiated and determined by the persons that make up that organization especially the management team. Offices, computers, equipment and policies are unproductive without human effort and direction. Therefore, every aspect of the organization is determined by the competence, motivation and general effectiveness of its human organization. It is only a well-articulated human resources management policies based on the understanding of the full knowledge of man in the organization, his attitude, values and interests that can enable the hospitality and tourism organization achieve its challenging objectives.

REFERENCES

- Chambers Concise Dictionary, (2009) "Hospitality" (2nd Edition), Chambers Harrap Publishes Ltd, Edinburgh.
- Cuming, M. N. (1986) The theory and practice of personnel management, in management of personnel Quarterly, 1. (1)
- Goeldner, C.R and J.R. Brent (2009), Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies (11th Edition) John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
- Heery, E. and Noon, M. (2001) A Dictionary of human resource management, Oxford University Press
- Lucas, R. (2004) Employment relations in the hospitality and tourism industry, Routledge
- Mac Donald, C. and Sirianni, C. (1996) Working in the service society, Temple University Press
- Okpoko, P. U. et al (2011) Understanding tourism, EFS Allied Publishers Ltd, Onitsha
- Okpoko, A. I and Okpoko, P. U. (2002) Tourism in Nigeria, Afro-orbis Publications Ltd Nsukka
- Onah, F. O. (2000) The challenges of human resource management in the local Government in Nigeria: Nigeria Journal of Administration and Local Government, 10 (1), 63-76
- Onah, F.O (1997), "Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Staff Discipline in Public Organization" *In Ife Psychologic*. Vol 5 No. 1.
- Sue, B. et al (2000), Principles of hotel front office operations, (2nd edition), Continuum London
- Storey, J. (1995) Human Resource Management, still marching out?, in J. Storey (ed) Human Resource Management : A critical Text, Routledge, 3-32



DSPG , 1-00011 manuscripts; doi:01.00011/dspgjournal 08/2016

Delta State Polytechnic Ogwashi-uku Journal

www.dspgjournal.com

World Travel and Tourism Council, (2006) Travel and Tourism climbing new highs: The

Travel and tourism economic research, from [http://www.wttc.org/2006 TSA pdf/](http://www.wttc.org/2006_TSA.pdf/)

Summary

United Nation World Tourism Organization, (2010) from <http://www.world-tourism.org/>

document

©2016 By the authors; licensee DSPG. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license.