

Manpower Planning and Development in Academic Libraries

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Abstract

This paper surveyed the importance of human resources planning and development in academic libraries, where it plays a significant role in sustaining competent employees to provide quality service to customers and enhance the decision-making skills of librarians. The inadequate workforce in an organisation affects the function and service in academic libraries adversely. Manpower is needed to know about the staff pattern, functions of the organisation, job analysis, and adequate provision of library services to customers. Therefore, it is essential to plan for the present and the future of manpower in academic libraries to improve on their service and to put forward ways of training and development of professional librarians.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Development, Manpower Planning, Organization

Introduction

A major challenge that confronts the management of any organisation is the issue of finding the most effective way or means of matching people with the tasks of the organisation. In most cases, the idea about which takes precedence often comes to the mind of experts as to whether the functions should be designed to suit the individual or get the individual to fit the tasks. It is worthy of note to say that one of the very fundamental functions of management in any organisations to determine its human resources needs. Manpower, according to Fagbanle and Ojo (2004), is essentially an aggregate of skills and attitudes from education and training, which equips a labour-force with the capacity to plan, organise and carry out economic processes when adequately allocated. In other words, it means that not just the availability of manpower that matters, but its proper allocation to carry out the designed tasks that will eventually lead to the attainment of the organisational goals or objectives. Management, on the other hand, has been defined as the practice of consciously and continually shaping organisations (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert 2009). In the words of Fagbenle and Ojo (2004), management has been ascribed with different meanings of why some people see it as a process demanding the performance of a specific function.

Manpower Planning

It has been earlier identified that one of the fundamental functions of management is to determine the resources both human and non-human needs of the organisation. This determination and identification is a process; this process by which management attempts to provide for its human resources to carry out its tasks is referred to as manpower planning.

According to MacBeath (2016), manpower planning involves two stages. The first stage concerned with the detailed planning of manpower requirements for all types and levels of employees throughout the plan. The second stage is concerned with the planning of manpower supplies to provide the organisation with the right types of people from all sources to meet the planned requirements.

Manpower planning can also be described as a process by which management determines how the organisation should move from its current manpower position to its desired one. Through planning, management strives to have the right number and the right kinds of people, at the right places, at the right time, doing things which result in both the organisation and the individual receiving long-run benefit (Yetter, 2016). Strategy for the acquisition, utilisation, improvement, and preservation of an enterprise human resources are what Stainer (2016) defined as manpower planning,

From these few descriptions of what manpower planning is by the various scholars, it is an essential thing in all organisations because, according to Nwachukwu (1988), manpower planning is required for recruitment. Without it, it would be practically difficult to determine the number of personnel necessary for recruitment, to be reassigned, due for recruitment, or that need to be retained for better utilisation. It is, therefore, essential that all organisations must plan their manpower needs formally or informally. Planning your manpower need brings to minimum excessive recruitment, training, and transfer and thereby saves the organisation cost and time (Fagbenle & Ojo, 2004). Arab British Academy for Higher Education (2016) stated that the significant changes in population, technological innovation as well as size and complexity of organisations had made informal methods of human resource planning obsolete for all but very small and stable organisations.

The situation in Nigeria and the library profession, especially at the middle and top-level where there is the scarcity of qualified manpower to fill existing positions, have made formal manpower planning and development crucial. The writer agrees with Ojo (2004), who posited that manpower planning is very compelling to effectively and efficiently utilise the available personnel. It also aids the organisation to start very early to seek and find capable hands to replace those about to retire to cushion the effect of their exit from the organisation.

Human resource planning and development is a process that seeks to ensure efficient utilisation of the workers; it is key to managerial functions in terms of planning, organising, directing, and controlling. It also assists in the area of identifying

shortages and surpluses so that quick action can be taken whenever required, recruitment and selection programmes becomes systematic, reduces the labour cost to identify excess staff, and thereby avoid overstaffing. It is an instrument for the identification of available talents in an organisation. Accordingly, training programmes can be chalked out to develop those talents. Through manpower planning, human resources can be readily available and be used in the best manner.

Essential Steps in Manpower Planning

In human resource planning, the following steps are crucial:

- Analysing the current manpower in inventory
- Making future manpower forecast
- Development of employment programmes
- Design training programmes

Analysing the current manpower inventory is a kind of stock-taking of the organisations' employees in the various units, divisions, and departments, and various categories of such employees. This step, according to Burauck (1965), is a critical analysis of the current manpower resources available in the organisation that will reveal two areas for possible management action, that of overstaffing and that of underemployment. Here, it is expected that the organisation's management will initiate a meeting of all heads of divisions in which a consensus is arrived at based on the size of activities in each department. Information obtained enables them to decide on the fore goings.

- i. Whether a unit or department has surplus staff who are not needed or who could be transferred to other sections instead of recruiting new ones;
- ii. Whether employees are usefully employed. Where employees are underemployed, they get demoralised as the job becomes unsatisfying. In these circumstances, it is possible to discover through the exercise when people are overworked in a section. This phase is followed by a manpower audit, which gives the actual number of employees on the establishment (Fagbenle & Ojo 2004).

Making future manpower forecast - The moment the current status of the human resources of the organisation is determined and agreed upon, the next step is to predict for the future, or rather plan for the future in terms of your human resource needs. In carrying out this, the work is made more accessible by estimates of staff losses through turn over, retirements, dismissals, transfers, promotions, demotions, and deaths.

Developing employment programmes is done once the current inventory is compared with the future forecast. The employment programme can be framed and designed accordingly, and this includes recruitment, selection procedures, and placement plans.

Design training programmes, this is based upon the extent of diversification, expansion plans, development programmes, and work environment dynamics. Training programmes depend upon the degree of improvement in technology and advancement to take place. It is also done to improve upon the skills, capabilities, and knowledge of the workers, Management Study Guide (2016).

The manpower forecasting techniques commonly employed by the organisations are:

- i. Expert forecast - This includes spontaneous decisions, formal expert surveys, and Delphi techniques.
- ii. Trend analysis - Manpower needs can be projected through extrapolation (projecting past trends), indexation using base year as a basis), and statistical analysis.
- iii. Workload analysis - It is dependent upon the nature of workload in a department, in a branch, or a division.
- iv. Workforce Analysis - Whenever production and period have to be analysed, due allowances have to be made for getting net manpower requirements, Management Study Guide (2016).

This step, when done, should acknowledge the manpower environment, which could affect the forecast plan. These are, according to Fagbenle and Ojo (2004).

Technological changes.

- ✓ Social changes
- ✓ Economic changes and
- ✓ Political changes

Manpower Planning in Academic Libraries

The contribution of the library in the generation, creation, and transmission of knowledge and eventually, the economy of any society cannot be ruled out. Academic libraries are those libraries that are located and found in tertiary educational institutions. They are very vital organs of any knowledge-creating industry. The issue of human resources within the academic libraries is so important that it should not be left unplanned. Manpower planning in the sector has become essential. The composition of the staff of the academic library has the following:

- Academic librarians
- The executive cadre senior non-academic staff
- The library attendants, assistants, and porters and
- Other supportive teams that include typists, secretaries, and computer operators, sometimes admin officers, are posted to the library from the registry.

Each of the above categories of staff has its requirements and qualifications to belong. Even though they are in the same library, each has its work schedule to perform.

Academic librarians in Nigeria, for example, are expected to be University graduates with at least (2.1) at their entry point. This category of staff is appointed and or promoted with the same appointment and promotion guidelines with faculty staff. It is among this category that emerges the head of such libraries with the nomenclature of a University librarian, College librarian, or Polytechnic librarian. All these categories are essential for library operation. Therefore, it will be very unproductive and failure on the part of the library management not to have a manpower plan that will bring effective and efficient library operation.

Manpower Development in Academic Libraries

The newly recruited employees of any organisation do not come fully prepared for the work. This is as a result of either different work environment, organisational behaviour, including the culture of the employees' new workplace. The person who comes fresh from the library school will discover that what he/she was taught in the library school was ideal or close to the ideal situation. He/she then discovers to his astonishment that the information organisation he was taught using any of the classification schemes is almost impossible to achieve. When he/she is assigned the responsibility of shelving or shelf reading, for example, it is for the above reasons that it becomes crucial that libraries develop their human resources through training. There is a relationship between human resources plan and development because it is during a manpower plan that the training programmes are designed, and the training needs of various categories of staff are identified. The new employees' must

Learn to adjust to a new environment, increase and sharpen the skills they have, become understanding participants in organisational endeavours, and meet challenges of changing conditions. Such improvements may be left to chance or guesswork. Nevertheless, modern manpower management relies upon formal programmes of development for all kinds and levels of employees through training, education, and effective communication (Fagbenle & Ojo, 2004).

Training Methods of Academic Librarians

There are so many training methods that can be used in the human resource development of an organisation. The method of training adopted by an organisation is determined by how effective it is in helping the employees perform optimally.

The following, however, are the conventional training methods in use.

- i. Apprenticeship programme: This method of training is employed when an extensive practice or technical knowledge is required to perform a task.
- ii. On the job training: This is the most popular and in some cases the only form of training used by organisations. This kind of training is right because it does not

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interfere with the operation of the organisation. However, there is every tendency for the trainer to pick up bad habits (Fagbenle & Ojo 2004).

- iii. Job Rotation: This is a training method that makes it necessary to move the trainee from one department, unit, or section to another to learn and master what goes on in that section.
- iv. Vestibule Training: This is a training device that trains the employee off his work that is regular but in an environment closely resembling his place of work. He practices his skill with the same tools that he uses at his workplace.
- v. Role-Playing: This is a method when the trainee plays the part of a specific character or acts in an event. He is taught to do a job or make decisions the way he thinks his boss could have made it.
- vi. Outside courses: This could be by way of vocational, correspondences, trade, evening schools, conferences, workshops/seminars.

Strategies for Manpower Development in Academic Libraries

The following guidelines would form the cornerstone of human resources policy organisation (Library) this is an adoption of guideline policy for the construction industry as given by (Wahab, 1990). The development of a set of objectives to assist in the realisation of the goals.

The following guidelines and objectives should be followed to achieve the strategies for manpower development in academic libraries:

- i. The librarians' registration council, in collaboration with the ministry of education, labour, and other relevant professional bodies in librarianship should be charged with the promotion and monitoring of policies specified.
- ii. The training of the library attendants, library assistants, porters, and supervisors should be as formal as those of middle and high-level manpower.
- iii. Those at the top level should be exposed to a high level of training in institutions like Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), among others. This is important because, at this level, they need more of "decision-making skill" than involvement skills."

Conclusion

The importance of manpower planning and development in the academic library is so vital and should be taken with a serious and deliberate effort. The human resources of any organisation are the main lifeline that enables the effective utilisation of other resources. The overall role of the human resources planning function is to allow the organisation to achieve its objectives by taking initiatives and providing guidance and support on all matters relating to its employees. Moreover, the attainment

of higher productivity in every industry of the nation's economy can only be achieved through appropriate strategies for manpower planning and development.

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