The Emerging Roles of Human Resource Managers: The Post-Covid-19 Experience in Nigeria

Abel Segun Adesanya[1], Christopher Femi Ogunlusi[2], Babalola Oluwayemi Oginni[3], Abiola Jamiu Eniayewu[4], E. A. Olowu[5]

[1] Department of Business Administration, College of Applied Social Sciences, Lagos State University of Science and Technology, Lagos State, Nigeria

[2] Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management, Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria

[3] Department of Human Resource Development, Faculty of Management Science, Osun State University, Osun State, Nigeria

[4] Department of Business Administration and Management, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria

[5] Department of Business Administration, College of Applied Social Sciences, Lagos State University of Science and Technology, Lagos State, Nigeria

*Corresponding Author: babalola.oginni@uniosun.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study focused on the emerging roles of human resource managers with a focus on post-COVID-19 using the Nigerian experience as the unit of analysis. It was identified among others that the advent of Coronavirus caused the world at large to suffer many consequences mainly in human health and the workplace was not excluded. The secondary source of data collection was used to elicit information and exploratory research design was adopted for the study. It was found that the world of work in Nigeria was locked down as a preventive measure to curb the spread of the virus leading to the emergence of a new order in the workplace where work can be done from home, remote area and virtual meeting takes precedence over face-to-face interaction. It was concluded that the focus of Human Resource (HR) managers' role should be on the well-being, health, safety, and security of employees, technology, and communication as well as reconfiguration of workflow. Thus, recommended that HR managers should avoid or be against developing a one-size - fit - all strategy to remain relevant or survive the pandemic.

Keywords: *Human Resource Manager, COVID-19, HR Activities, Remote Work, Reconfigure workflow*

INTRODUCTION

Every organization be it a business or social organization /institution and whether it is classified as a private or public organization /institution consists of people who will work together to achieve the predetermined objective of the organization (Oginni, 2017). The objective of a social organization /institution is somewhat contingent upon the rationale behind the formation of the social organization /institution; therefore, their objectives are not usually specific or the same as that of a business organization /institution whose objectives are to survive, grow and make a profit (Adewale, 2000). The services of these people are required by these organizations /institutions to achieve their identified objectives and by implication, the quality of the people in the service of any organization /institution will to a large extent determine the success ratio of any organization /institution with recourse to different dynamic business environment (Fadiora & Gbolahan, 2012; Akindele, 2007) and this explains why every

organization /institution strives to attract qualified and competent employees into their service. Thus, leading to the acquisition of people to join the course of the organization /institution, motivation of the workforce, and retention of only competent employees in the organization /institution.

These people are unique and dynamic in their formative characteristics because they are sources of competitive advantage and cannot be imitated when placed side by side with other resources in the business organization irrespective of the size or nature of the sector of the economy (Oginni, 2017). In the views of Asa and Balogun, (2000) organizational resources were Materials, Machines, Money, Methods, Man, and Market, and out of these resources, MAN is the only resource that cannot be substituted or imitated. While other resources are owned by the organization, MAN is not owned by the organization, and this explains the mobility of employees from one organization to another. Therefore, there is a need to carefully look after this service, especially in expectation alignment with the overall objective of the organization and this is done through various human resource management practices which is being coordinated by the human resource department.

The activities of the human resource department revolve around recruitment, selection, and placement; training and development; wages and salary administration (compensation management); performance appraisal, human resources planning, and employee and labor relations (Fajana, 2002) although the views expressed by Armstrong (2009) shed more light on this i.e., the activities can be placed under two main subheadings; namely managerial and operative functions. Under managerial functions, issues such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling were found while operative functions have issues such as recruiting/hiring; job analysis and design; performance appraisal; training and development, employee welfare; salary administration; maintenance; labor relations, personnel research, and personnel records. Analysis of these views on the activities of the human resource department reveals that there is no opposing view rather the two views complement each other because both will accomplish the essence of the human resource department. However, Akindele, (2007) opined that these activities do not change in terms of contents but vary significantly in practice because of environmental factors, size and nature of the industry, as well as budget and market constraints.

For a human resource department to accomplish its main objective through the performance of these activities, the human resource manager has certain roles to play to facilitate the attainment of the activities of the human resource management widely known as functions of human resource manager in the world of business. Since these activities do not change in terms of contents but vary significantly in practice due to environmental factors, size and nature of the industry, as well as budget and market constraints, it is therefore pertinent to ask the same question about the status of the roles of human resource (HR) manager. It is also obvious that the same conditions apply to these roles of human resource manager i.e., these roles do not change in terms of contents but vary significantly in practice due to environmental factors, size and nature of the industry, as well as budget and market constraints.

It has been established that the roles of HR managers do not change in content but in practice and three major reasons have been adduced forward for this change i.e., environmental factors, size and nature of the industry, as well as budget and market constraints. Among these three variables, environmental factors were said to be the most prominent in terms of domineering force, and within the environmental factors, there were many variables such as the structure of an organization, leadership style, funds, the ideology of stakeholders and shareholder as well as economic, physical, technological, socio-cultural, political, and legal factors. Akindele, Olajide, and Ajayi (2012) opined that environmental factors, as a variable, accounted for 65% of the rationale behind the change in the practice of HR functions and by extension the roles of the HR managers although each of the variables in the environmental factors has indices that further serves as determinant to the extent to which the change in

the roles of HR manager could be found operational in a business organization. Among all the environmental factor variables, economic factor indices such as inflation, nature of the economy, employment ratio, health and safety measures, as well as security and others, accounted for 60% of the change in the performance of the roles of HR manager because man (people) is the center of all economic activities in economic factor indices (Mullins, 2002; Akindele et al, 2012; Oginni, 2017).

If economic factor indices were to be predominant in the environment of business, then focusing on such activities in the business environment is worth examining to understand how the roles of HR managers will be significantly affected in practice by the recent happenings in the health sector of Nigerian economy i.e., the challenges to be posed by COVID - 19 vis - a - vis the roles of HR managers. COVID-19 falls under health-related issues which are domiciled in the health sector of the economy which is embedded in the external environment of business. The presence of COVID-19 has introduced another dimension to the world of work in terms of change in the modus operandi of business organizations as organizations have subjected some or all of their workforce to remote working, others staggered work shifts and adapted work environments to ensure social distancing, thus, heralding reduced working hours, short-time working or periods of lay off, although it is anticipated that these measures are temporary, the impact right now is significant. Hence, the study.

METHODS

The paper adopted an exploratory research design due to the nature of the study being a problem that has not been thoroughly investigated in the time past and the focus was to provide a better understanding of the new outlook in the world of work as influenced by COVID - 19 Pandemic. At the same, to gain familiarity with the subject matter. Secondary data was the source of data collection adopted and this implies that the researchers relied solely on existing research materials available as against gathering data directly (field research design) and the sources of the secondary data accessed were archives, organizational reports, and libraries, as well as internet and educational Institute. The researchers also ensured that the data collected were valid for the purpose in focus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Human Resource Management

Organization as a system has many different but interrelated components that function together to achieve the same purpose and these components are classified as departments in Nigeria. The department that is charged with the responsibility of managing people in the world of work is known as the human resource management department and the core of the activities in this department centers around how to bring competent hands into the organization through adequate planning, the appropriate place and time to get these individuals knowing fully well that the output on an individual will determine the overall success of the organization with recourse to her veritable objectives. In addition to this, to ensure that the performance of every individual in the workplace is evaluated and rewarded accordingly as a way to motivate and make them loyal and committed to the course of the organization over a long period while at the same time operating within rules and regulation either by the one put in place internally (management) or externally (government and community). These activities are seen as the main content in the human resource management practices in Nigeria.

The Contents of the Activities in HR

The roles of HR managers evolve from the main activities of the human resource department to include staffing, compensation and benefits administration, retention, development of workplace policies,

training, and development, interpretation of employment laws, and workers' protection. All these activities are carried out with recourse to the dictate of external factors in the business environment.

1. **Staffing:** this is the process by which people are brought into the organization to carry out certain tasks that will facilitate the accomplishment of the organizational objectives at any given time. It involves job analysis (nature of the job and human elements required for success on the job), recruitment (the search to fill an existing vacant position with people whose personalities are in agreement with organizational beliefs and ethics of the workplace), selection (choosing the most suitable person to fill existing vacant position bearing in mind the nature of the organization, characteristics of individuals and compensation) and placement (matching job with individual knowledge and skill to determine job to be assigned for efficiency and effectiveness).

2. **Compensation and Benefits Administration**: this involves monetary and non-monetary rewards given to employees in exchange for services rendered over some time such as wages, salary, incentives, commissions, health benefits, retirement plans, stock purchase plans, vacation time/leave, financial support, sick leave, bonuses, tuition reimbursement etc. This should be fair, meets industry standards, and good enough to entice people to work for the organization as well as withstanding comparability test by relying on some factors such as number of years with the organization, years of experience, education, exposure, sensitivity, and nature of the job**.**

3. **Development of Workplace Policies**: this revolves around creating policies that will ensure and enhance good human resource management practices in terms of fairness and continuity within the organization. It goes beyond all the activities performed by the HR department, for example, relationships in the organization, creation of a family-like atmosphere, discipline, acceptable ethical behavior, dress code, etc. these policies once formulated, must be communicated to all the employees in the organization without any exception and should be free from any form of ambiguities.

4. **Employee Retention**: the effort it takes to retain an employee in an organization is far greater than what it takes to attract the same employee into the organization because employee retention is a function of many activities that are independent, interdependent, and interrelated such as compensation, fit with organizational culture, workplace environment, the relationship between superior and subordinates, matching job with individual, fair appraisal and promotion, etc. Retention involves keeping, persuading, and motivating competent employees to remain with an organization over a long period (Oginni, 2014). To achieve this a lot of retention strategies have been adopted by different organizations including **Onboarding and orientation, mentorship programs, offering competitive and attractive compensation, perks**, w**ellness offerings**, c**ommunication and feedback, fair annual performance reviews and promotion, training and development, recognition and rewards systems, work-life balance, flexible working arrangements,** d**ealing with change,** f**ostering teamwork and acknowledge milestones large and small** (Oginni, 2014).

5. **Training and Development**: this activity is required after the organization has spent quality time to get new people into the organization as well as those who have been in the organization i.e., it is required for both new and old employees (Akindele, 2007; Akindele et al, 2012). Training is a program designed to acquire job-specific skills to enhance quality of job performance and development is the totality of knowledge acquired to enhance quality of job performance. It is worth noting that the two can use either on the job or off the job as a method to achieve the goal of quality job performance. Aside from this, training and development programs must be based on the needs analysis of the organization to achieve the goal of quality job performance.

6. **Employment Law and Interpretation**: this is all about rules and regulations guiding the relationship between employer and employee in the world of work. This falls within the legal environment of

business and the government is solely responsible for this whatever law is put in place, it is the responsibility of the HR department to interpret and adapt this to the well-being of their business organization. The legal environment of HRM is dynamic and subject to constant changes therefore, it is imperative for the HR department to monitor and be conversant with the changes taking place and then communicate those changes to the entire management and after getting approval, disseminate them to other members of the organization. In Nigeria, there are many laws in this regard such as Nigerian labor law, Factory Acts of 1987, and Workmen Compensation Acts of 1987 as well as minimum wage legislation.

7. **Human Resource Planning**: this is about ensuring that an organization has the right number of people and the right kind of people at the right place, at the right time, and at the right quality doing things for which they are economically most useful. It is an important activity in the HR department because it is the only tool used to avoid overstaffing as well as understaffing. In addition, it provides a link to procurement, development, and allocation as well as the utilization of human resources in the organization. It is sometimes known as manpower planning (Obisi, 1996) and it is usually contingent on organization situational analysis (Rao & Marayana, 1989).

8. **Appraisal of Employee's Performance**: this is concerned with the assessment of the performance level of workers to identify individual levels of performance, highlight potentials, training, and development needs i.e., it is an avenue to get feedback from all the categories of employees in terms of assignment, task, accountability, and responsibility (Akindele, 2007; Flippo, 1986). The views of Fajana (2012) corroborated the position of Akindele and Flippo, however, Fajana added that the assessment of employees' level of performance should be systematic and measured over a specific period usually a year. Obisi's contribution cautioned on the fairness of the process because of what was termed as the "Nigerian factor" therefore, employees must be communicated to know exactly what is expected of them, the yardstick by which their performance results would be measured.

All these activities are carried out with recourse to the dictate of external factors in the business environment such as globalization and offshoring, a more sophisticated educated workforce, changes in employment law, employee expectations, government legislations on wages and salaries, political stability and policy implementation, diversity of the workforce, changing demographics of the workforce, layoffs and downsizing, technology pace and increase in the use of social networking to distribute information to employees.

Based on the activities in the HR department, the basic roles of HR managers in business organizations are the auditing role, monitoring role, and advisory role. executive role. facilitator role and linkage role.

1. **Monitoring role**: this is about observing activities in the business environment to analyze and interpret information obtained either in the internal or external environment for managerial decisions on employee matters. Under the internal environment, this examines all the activities in the component units to ensure that personnel policies are being followed on all matters concerning employees in the organization. Under the external environment, the manager keeps track of changes outside the organization in labor-management relations and employment legislation of the country and applies appropriately e.g., tax regulations, minimum wage legislation, insurance, health and safety regulations, retirement, medical leave, and other statutory leave legislations, etc.

2. **Advisory role**: in this role, the HR department interprets various sections of the labor law to other managers and employees in the organization to ensure cooperation and compliance. It is also the instrument used by the government to provide a good framework to regulate the relationship between the employee and the employer. Most of the information contained in the employees' handbook in the workplace is usually derived from the interpretations of the labor law wherein

policies guiding the relationship between employee and employer are formulated for practice in the world of work. Relative peace in the workplace is a function of this role because the kind of personnel policies to put into practice will either make the organization volatile or otherwise and where there is unavoidable conflict manifesting in terms of dissatisfaction or grievance, employees should understand the procedure to follow (Akindele, 2012; Oginni, 2017).

3. **Executive role:** this role sees the HR department as a specialist department most especially in the area that encompasses people management in the world of work, and this explains why their opinions are sought and respected on all matters relating to people in the workplace. Based on this role, the HR department advises managers as heads of different units in the organization on how to relate with people and treat issues professionally in the workplace. This role has saved organizations from a lot of challenges such as litigation, unhealthy discrimination, sudden resignation, discipline, and other related ethical issues.

4. **Auditing role:** this role was derived from one of the HR activities in the workplace which is known as Human Resource Planning whose focus is on an organization having the right number of employees with the right quality and quantity in the right place at the time over a specific period (Fajana, 2012). This role enables the HR department to ensure that component units are adequately staffed with no record of redundancy in the organization. At the same time to ensure that there is no under or over-staffing in any department and no ghost workers as well as taking adequate account of labor turnover rate (movement in and out)

5. **Facilitator role:** this role is an offshoot of the auditing role because the HR department assists other departments to achieve their goals or standards as contained in the business objective of the organization by meeting their manpower needs. The manpower needs required in each of the units in the organization to function effectively towards the attainment of the set objectives of the organization are catered for by the HR department through recruitment, selection, and placement. The focus is always on attracting qualified candidate(s) for any vacancy and filling accordingly concerning the owner's belief, vision, and mission of the organization as well as dictate of the economy indices.

6. **Linkage role:** in this role, the HR department ensures that there is communication among all the component units in the organization about updates in the labor market to meet their manpower needs and other requirements. The essence of this role is to prevent unnecessary delay where there is a need for additional hands because of expansion, irrespective of the skill required or exit of one of the employees either with notice or without notice.

In all, these roles of the HR department can be summarized as staff functions because the department supports the organization with specialized advisory and supportive functions.

Coronavirus (COVID - 19)

Coronavirus disease was first described in 1931, with the first coronavirus (HCoV-229E) isolated from humans in 1965. Until the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome in late 2002, only two human coronaviruses (HCoV) were known – HCoV-229E and HCoV-OC43. Once the SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) had been identified, two further human coronaviruses were identified. Three groups of coronaviruses exist: group 1 (HCoV-229E and HCoV-NL63), group 2 (HCoVOC43 and HCoV-HKU1), group 3 (no human CoVs as yet). SARS-CoV is an outlier to all three groups, although some place it in Group 2 (Cui, Li, & Shi, 2019).

In the views of Lai, Shih, Ko, Tang, and Hsueh, (2020) Coronavirus is a family of Coronaviridae in the Nidovi-rales order. It was asserted by Lai et al (2020) that Corona represents crown-like spikes on the outer surface of the virus, and this explains why it was named a coronavirus. Coronaviruses are minute in size (65–125 nm in diameter) and contain a single-stranded RNA as a nucleic material, with sizes ranging from 26 to 32kbs in length. Muhammad, Suliman, Abeer, Nadia, and Rabeea, (2020) opined that the

subgroups of coronaviruses family are alpha (a), beta (b), gamma (c), and delta (d) coronavirus. The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), H5N1 influenza A, H1N1 2009, and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) cause acute lung injury (ALI) and acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) which leads to pulmonary failure and result in fatality. These viruses were thought to infect only animals until the world witnessed a severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak caused by SARS-CoV, in 2002 in Guangdong, China.

However, towards the end of 2019, Wuhan an emerging business hub in China experienced an outbreak of a novel coronavirus that killed more than eighteen hundred and infected over seventy thousand individuals within the first fifty days of the epidemic (Muhammad et al, 2020). Coronaviruses are known to cause disease in humans, other mammals, and birds. They cause major economic loss, sometimes associated with high mortality, in neonates of some domestic species (e.g., chickens, pigs). In humans, they are responsible for respiratory and enteric diseases. Coronaviruses do not necessarily observe species barriers, as evident by the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus among wild animals and to man, with lethal consequences. As a group, coronaviruses are not limited to organs; target tissues include the nervous system, immune system, kidney, and reproductive tract in addition to many parts of the respiratory and enteric systems.

In the views expressed by Cui, (2019), the disease began initially with an influenza-like prodrome starting two to seven days after exposure. This was followed a further three or more days by the lower respiratory tract phase, comprising dry cough, dyspnoea, and increasing respiratory distress sometimes requiring mechanical ventilation. Just like what happened in Wuhan, China, the advent of the virus led to high mortality which cut across all age grades and witnessed rapid intercontinental spread of clinical cases. This high mortality and widespread caused significant disruption in major cities and many activities that involved travel. Thus, increasing anxiety and warnings in many parts of the world. Its global spread occurred by human-to-human transmission. Transmission appeared to occur through close contact or infectious droplets and probably aerosols in some instances. There was also substantial evidence of patient-to-patient variation in the efficiency of transmission, which in part was associated with a degree of severity of illness (Chen, Liu, Guo, 2020).

With the necessary lockdowns and travel restrictions across the nations, to contain COVID-19 from becoming a full-blown pandemic, businesses across the globe have come to an abrupt halt, clinging closer to a global recession (Lewis & Weigert, 2020). The covid-19 pandemic casts a new light on people at work and in society and the pandemic is not a great leveler because the likelihood of contracting the virus, being tested, and the treatments available are greatly affected by the economic status, role, and race of people (Matt, 2020). Therefore, the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted organizations and caused HR managers to think differently about their role as they adjust to social distancing practices and a new work environment that they may never have imagined. To curtail the spread, most of the countries in the world locked down their countries which paralyzed all economic activities to a greater extent and to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in business organizations, organizations have switched to a remote work model at a rate and scale they have never experienced. As face-to-face collaboration is replaced with e-mail and videoconferencing, HR managers have to do difficult work under difficult circumstances and this heralded a new paradigm in the world of work with different strategies adopted to cope with the new work demand such as social distancing, use of face mask, working from home, online business meetings, washing of hands regularly, operating at less than 40% of the workforce and layoff (Matt, 2020). All these have changed the modus operandi of the HR department in the course of discharging its functions through various activities woven around MAN at work with significant impact on the dimension of their roles as well as leading to the emergence of a new order in the world of work.

Nigerian Experience of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Federal government of Nigeria established a center in 2011 known as Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) which is a national public health institute with three campuses. The activity of the center is being supervised by the Federal Ministry of Health. with its headquarters in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria, and the sole objective of the NCDC is to protect Nigerians from the impact of any communicable diseases through the coordination of public health preparedness, surveillance, laboratory, and response functions for all infectious diseases. However, despite the foresight of the Federal government of Nigeria to put in place such a centre in anticipation of any sudden outbreak of communicable diseases, the centre could not live up to her expectation on account that the Nigerian health care system has been plagued by numerous challenges and the center is not excluded as well. Among these were a shortage of qualified healthcare personnel, inadequate budgetary allocation to health, and dilapidated healthcare infrastructure which has compelled many to seek medical treatment abroad as well as a brain drain in the health sector (Adesanya, 2020) although the center still managed to thrive amid these challenges.

On Friday 28th of January 2020, the NCDC announced sub-Saharan Africa's first confirmed case of the coronavirus disease COVID-19, and this confirmation led to the activation of the country's National Coronavirus Emergency Operation Centre to develop various activities to ensure safety and prevent the spread beyond imaginable control drawing experience from Ebola virus disease outbreak in 2014 (Adepoju, 2020). The trends of events were monitored between January - March 2020 and events around these periods informed a decision to shut down all activity in the country in April 2020 and by May 2020 placed restrictions on the movements of people from one place to another except people on essential services who might have obtained permission from the government and some countries were also isolated with no immigration from such (Busari & Adebayo, 2020).

This development made organizations think of a way to survive while the Pandemic lasts, and this compelled business organizations to rely on technology as an option to make employees perform their duties remotely giving rise to a new business environment.

Emerging Roles of HR Manager

This Pandemic gave rise to the emergence of a new order in the world of work, thus compelling the roles of HR managers to be altered in practice but not in content to meet the demand and expectations of the new reality in the workplace. The focus of the practice in the interim now is on employee well-being and safety. For example, the move to remote working does not suit everyone even in Nigeria, where the country experienced a full lockdown. Not only will individuals respond to the demands of remote working differently, but the home context will also be important in influencing well-being and safety, especially regarding spatial arrangements and family demands. The implication is to ensure that staff has functioning technology at home as well as ensure effective communication, supervision, productivity and performance management, employee engagement and support, realigning employee benefits, and redesigning policies about remote working. The role of HR managers and their expertise has increased in significance in many organizations as they seek to make agile and effective adaptations.

The focus of the advisory role should be on two major issues. The first is on the part of the manager as superior and the second is on the part of the employee as subordinate. Managers have had problems with accepting remote working because of their perception that it negatively affects performance which is contingent upon the degree of trust expended on such employees when they become invisible. The issue of trust is central in that managers who lack trust in their subordinates while in the office will not suddenly develop it when their staff are working remotely. For workers who are on

essential services where working from home is not possible, it is up to HR departments to prioritize the health and safety of their workers. The practice should be in line with the recommendations from the Nigeria Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) to keep employees safe and well by educating them about transmission risks:

1) Offer training and development to establish hygiene regulations (hands washing with soap under water for 20 seconds, etc.).
2) Establish policies and practices for social distancing.
3) Prominently display posters illustrating respiratory etiquette (coughing, sneezing) and hand hygiene.
4) Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection.
5) Provide no-touch receptacles and hand sanitizer.

On the part of the employee as a subordinate, the HR manager should get the employee's willingness to collaborate with each other and make changes flexible and adaptable. At the same time, comply with necessary changes to safety measures and have a willingness heart to learn and up their skill quickly to effectively manage rapid change in the new order of reality in the workplace. Therefore, efforts should be on advising managers on how to effectively manage the performance of a remote workforce, and instead of laying off workers or slashing wages, organizations should embrace alternate corporate strategies such as using technology to support work from home or reviewing costs to stretch the budget.

COVID - 19 pandemic has made the air in society and the world of work to be filled with uncertainty therefore, rather than adding to this degree of uncertainty by laying off staff, the HR manager should put in place what will instill confidence and loyalty among members of staff without necessarily incurring additional cost or increase in overhead cost (wage bill). Organizations would have to offer more generous and flexible benefits packages, at the same time, build psychological contracts with their employee to create unwritten expectations in the employment relationship to show that the organization cares about the staff as an asset. To instill confidence that will herald loyalty and commitment, termination of the employment contract is not an option although some businesses may be left with only one choice: i.e., a total shutdown, rather a salary cut policy might be introduced and sustained until the organization has survived the effect of the pandemic.

The advent of COVID-19 has compelled organizations to rethink the modus operandi as earlier mentioned i.e., allowing employees to carry out their various tasks outside the workplace from remote areas and this trend might likely be around for a long period. The role of the HR manager, aside from ensuring that the technology and communications infrastructure needed for successful remote work are available to employees will now be interacting closely with Finance, IT, and other departments to develop and implement new rules to attain the predetermined objective of the organization. The basis of the interaction will be on translating existing work rules, meeting schedules, and communications strategies to the new reality, working out who will be responsible for the payment of the remote workers' connectivity and any required equipment, like printers, monitors, headset, etc. redesign job and make job description to accommodate parttime or full-time remote work. In addition, the device means to monitor and enforce attendance as well as integrate talent acquisition and development, discipline, benefits, and compensation in a remote work environment.

A strong and well-defined organizational culture is critical to long-term success (Robbins, 2005) as it sets the organization's identity, helps form its mission, and gives employees at all levels a sense of identity and purpose in their work. Culture is what binds the entire organization together and gives its employees a sense of purpose in their work. However, maintaining the organization's culture in times of crisis is a big challenge with the dispersed workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic has made culture to be vulnerable during the crisis as decisions on financial survival take priority over almost everything else. It will be hard for the HR department to put culture at the top of HR's priority list while you are quenching

or putting out fires every day. Nevertheless, the core values and beliefs of the organization should be preserved without any comprise to safeguard the goodwill and reputation but to accommodate slight changes in the area of communication, supervision, and employees engagement (outsourcing as an option in addition to the use of part-time and full time) with flexible working hours and focus of training and development (virtual) as well as motivation (physical and emotional wellbeing) knowing fully well that culture is impossible to automate.

Discussion

From the literature reviewed, it was obvious that a new order in the workplace has emerged, and it has become the norm in the world of work. the underlining force was that it is the human resource that would interact with other resources in the workplace and any form of disorder in the health of human resources would come with devastating effects on output in the workplace. CONVID - 19 Pandemic is one such and to sustain the level of production activities at an equilibrium level, an alternative was provided which was remote work. The new order has placed an enormous premium on the use of technology, data for the internet, and the development of different social media platforms for interaction. Since the Pandemic came with a severe lockdown of all economic activities, remote working as against physical presence in the business organizations' environment became a new reality in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing almost every business to immediately reposition to develop, adapt or improve to survive and still preserve business activities towards functioning to the attainment of its objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought HR department activities into a stronger perspective and under focus because the aftermath of the Coronavirus is on MAN known in the world of work as an employee (human resource). This led to the lockdown of the workforce with no end in sight and thus, results to work from home or remote work policies and procedures as options to attain the predetermined business objective. This results in the manifestation of a new order in the workplace requesting a shift from the normal and relatively predictive paradigm of modus operandi to another paradigm full of uncertainty. The emerging roles of HR managers now are to focus on the well-being, health, safety, and security of employees, technology, and communication as well as reconfiguration of workflow knowing fully well that COVID-19 has evidently shaken all organizations in Nigeria be it a business or social organization /institution and whether classified as private or public organization /institution by creating a complex and challenging environment for human resource management practitioners to operate optimally.

Recommendations

Based on different issues identified under the emerging role of the HR manager and the conclusion, the following are the suggested recommendations:

1. It is imperative for employers to know with certainty where their employees are and where they have been otherwise it might expose others to the risk of contracting the Coronavirus. An employer cannot keep its employees out of harm's way if it does not know where they are and where they have been to. As outbreaks of COVID-19 occur in various parts of the world, keep track of which of your employees could be at risk.

2. Employers should provide a safe platform where employee can express their concerns. A safe platform where they can raise concerns on all aspects relating to work, from mental health to the risk of contracting COVID-19. There may be nervousness and anxiety in the workplace, but through the platform, concerns are addressed earlier and do not balloon into bigger issues.

3. There should be an effective communication system that will enable employees and employers to communicate regularly and often. Employers should communicate openly with their employees so that they have the information needed to keep themselves educated and updated about the coronavirus. Employers should not assume that all employees will have access to reliable sources of information that will educate them on Coronavirus.

4. Employers through HR managers should see the need for remote work schedules by employees as part of the new order and should adapt to it. Therefore, support employees with the necessary apparatus to perform effectively without prejudice at the site chosen to work and compensate as deemed fit.

5. Employers through Human Resource managers should see the need to consider reconfiguring workflows, reskilling staff, or redeploying talents to meet the dictate of the new order and the starting point should be on the job analysis with emphasis on the job description and specification to reflect policies for virtual work life.

6. HR heads at business units must work closely alongside the line managers to ensure that financial inclusivity and security are mainstreamed across all ranks and files. Within local jurisdictions, working with the legal and regulatory teams is also necessary to lobby governments for policies and incentives that protect the jobs and incomes of employees.

7. The HR department should be abreast with prevailing conditions on COVID-19 by keeping accurate information to guide decisions in the flow of work from time to time. Decisions should not be based on rumors, assumptions, and "fake news" but rather on facts without an iota of doubt.

8. HR managers should avoid or be against developing a one-size-fits-all strategy to remain relevant or survive the pandemic. Working from home or remote working may not work for everyone, therefore the features and peculiarity of each job should be given the topmost priority.

REFERENCES

Adewale S.P (2000). *The Road to Business Sustenance and Recovery*, Lagos, MUSON Publisher

Adepoju P. (2020) Nigeria responds to COVID-19; the first case detected in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Nature Medicine,* 26:444-8, doi:10.1038/d41591-020-00004-2

Adesanya, O. A. (2020). "Government preparedness and response towards COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria: A retrospective analysis of the last 6 months". *Journal of Global Health.* 10 (2): 020382

Akindele, R.I Oginni., ND Omoyele, S.O. (2012) Survival of Private universities in Nigeria: issues, challenges, and prospects, *International Journal of Innovative Research in Management,* 2(1), 30 - 43

Akindele, R.I, Olajide, O.T & Ajayi, M.O (2011). Strategic Human Resources Management Practices on Organization Performance of Selected food and beverages industries in Nigeria: An empirical culture positions, *Journal of Business,* 16(2),168 - 176

Akindele, R.I (2007). *Fundamental of Human Resources*, Ile - Ife, Osun state, Cedar Publishing Production,

Armstrong. M. (2009) *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practices 11th* London, Kogan Page Limited

Asa J.O. & Balogon, A.W. (2000). *Entrepreneurship Development Programme, A Study Guide*, Oshodi - Lagos, Top hill Associates Ltd

Busari S, Adebayo B. (2020). Nigeria bans entry for travelers from 13 countries as it announces five new cases. CNN. 2020 Mar 18; Available: https ://edition. cnn.com/2020/03/18/ africa/nigeria-coronavirus-travel-restrictions-intl/index.html Accessed:12 August 2020

Chen Yu, Liu Qianyun & Guo Deyin (2020). Emerging Coronaviruses: Genome Structure, Replication, and Pathogenesis, *Journal of Medical Virology,* April. 92(4), 418 - 423

Cui J, Li F & Shi Z-L. (2019). Origin and Evolution of Pathogenic Coronaviruses, *National Review Microbiology* 17(3), 181 – 192

Fadiora, R. Gbolahan (2012). Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Organizational Performance in Nigeria: An Empirical Study of Eco bank Nigeria Plc in the last five years, *International Journal of Contemporary Business Studies, 3(10), 43*

Fajana Sola, Owoyemi Oluwakemi, Elegbede Tunde and Mariam Gabjuma - Sheriff (2011). Human Resources Management Practices in Nigeria, *Journal of Management and Strategy,* 2(2), 57 - 62

Fajana Sola (2002) *Human Resources Management: An Introduction*, Lagos, Labofin, Publisher.

Flippo, E.B. (1986): *Personnel Management,* 5th edition, London, McGraw - Hill Book Co Ltd

Lai C. C, Shih T. P, Ko W. C, Tang H. J & Hsueh P. R. (2020). Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19): The Epidemic and the Challenges. *International Journal Ant Microbiology Agents* 105924.

Lewis, J.D, & Weigert, A. (2020). 'Trust as a social Reality', *Social Forces*, 63, 967 - 985

Matt Collington (2020). The New Role for HR following the Covid-19 Pandemic, United Kingdom, *HRD Director*, April Edition, 1 -17

Muhammad Adnan Shereen, Suliman Khana, Abeer Kazmi, Nadia Bashira, Rabeea Siddique (2020) COVID-19 infection: Origin, transmission, and characteristics of human coronaviruses, *Journal of Advanced Research,* Vol. 24, 91 - 98

Mullins, J. Laurie (2002). *Management and Organizational Behaviour,* 2nd ed. Thomson South - Western.

Obisi Chris (1996). *Personnel Management,* Ojokondo Layout, Agbowo, Ibadan Jackbod Enterprises,

Oginni, B.O (2017). Human Resources Management Practices and Employees' Commitment to the Core Values of Private Universities in Southwestern Nigeria, unpublished Ph. D. degree thesis submitted to the Department of Management and Accounting. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile - Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

Oginni, B.O Ogunlusi, C.F. & Faseyiku, I.O. (2013). A Study of Employee Retention Strategies and Organizational Survival in Private Universities in the Southwest, Nigeria *International Journal of Management,* 2(1), 1 - 17

Rao, V.S.P. & Narayana (1989). *Management Concept and Thought,* Konak Publishing PVT Ltd, New Delhi

Robbins, S.P (2005). *Organizational behavior.* 11th ed. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.