

The Challenges of Human Resource Development in Sudanese Civil Service

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Abstract: *This study aimed at shedding some light on the challenges affecting human resource development in civil service organizations in Sudan, especially in respecting training and working environment. The study targets the middle and senior professionals and non-professionals employees. A questionnaire with items on the satisfaction of different aspects of training and the working environment was distributed to 1110 employees from ten Federal Ministries and six States. Satisfaction is derived from the aggregated responses on the different aspects of the training and work environment. The Findings of the study showed that there are many challenges facing the civil service organizations in Sudan. Majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with the training situation in their organizations due to bias in distributing training opportunities; inadequacy of allowance and rewards; lack of identifying training needs; lack of monitoring of the employees performance, and etc. Dissatisfaction differs between the respondents according to gender; age; educational level, work sector, job category, and state of work. The finding also revealed that there is a relationship between nepotism, favoritism, the wrong employment and understanding the job responsibilities, which in turn lead to job satisfaction. Such employees stay like a deadwood in the organization, as they do not contribute much towards achieving organizational objectives. The contribution of this study adds recruitment; as other factors that must be kept into consideration when talking about job satisfaction.*

Keywords: *Human Resource Development, Nepotism, Favoritism, Dissatisfaction, Sudan*

I. INTRODUCTION

Since independence, Sudan has never experienced political stability under both the civilian or the military governments (Amadiume & An-Na'im, 2000; Abdalla et al., 2013). Before the splitting of the Republic of Southern Sudan and Sudan, the country had disproportionately affected by perhaps the longest civil war in Africa, which extended for over four decades. The armed conflicts and the political instability have led to the relative underdevelopment of the civil service in Sudan and has led to the government's failure to plan and pursue a long-term national economic agenda. As a result, The country has therefore, seriously suffered and still, suffering, from many governance-related problems. These problems are complicated, whenever policies adopted by an outgoing regime are almost substituted with new ones by the incoming governments, without slight consideration for the target beneficiaries of the past regimes' policies and programs, as well as their importance to the national development.

The civil service in Sudan - which inherited from the colonial States - was characterized by high level of discipline and one of the best civil service systems in Africa and the Arab world. The civil service has been playing vital roles in the country's economy through its highly productive employees. However, the situation deteriorated dramatically within three decades, the civil service becomes characterized by low morale, poor productivity, inefficiency and weak service delivery capability. Public organizations have not privileged to witness smooth and steady operational activities. In addition, public organizations went through various forms of merging, splitting or downsizing by every emerging political regime. As a result, civil service sector has not only militated against a provision of adequate development of its workforce, but also accounted lack of project upgrading and abandonment of commissioned ongoing work on infrastructural facilities halfway to their completion. Many downsized organizations suffered from lower organizational performance, reduction in quality of products or services, as well as weak employees' satisfaction, when compared to the organizations that were not downsized (Bassi and Van Buren, 1997).

Most civil service organizations in the country are facing number of challenges that hindered them from facilitating national economic development. Some of these challenges are, lack of national human resource development (NHRD) policy; inadequate salaries and increments; delayed promotion system; bureaucratic bottlenecks and high degree of centralization in the states' governments; poor and ineffective information system; duplication of responsibilities; absence of proper coordination in training affairs; weak monitoring for organizational performance; lack of transparency; inappropriate employee recruitment strategies, and poor working environment. Grabowski et al. (2009) observed that irregular performance and risky events are the results or a root causes of such negative tendencies as inadequate operator's knowledge, skills or abilities, or the

lack of a management system in an organization. Due to all the factors mentioned above and other related impediments are usually expressed as feelings of dissatisfaction with their organizations.

The above mentioned problems, among others, have hindered both employees' development progresses, as well as organizations' performance. This research dealt with HRD in Sudan by focusing on the challenges in the civil service. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it is the first comprehensive study that aims towards advancing the understanding of the effects of training status and work satisfaction on organizational-level outcomes. The combination of research streams showed how training and job satisfaction interact to influence employee's psychological well-being, while providing an up-to-date understanding of their likely influence on employees' performance, and their organizations productivity.

This paper is organized as follows. The first section gives a brief outline of the challenges that facing civil service in Sudan. The second section reviews the extant literature on the issues of human resource development. In the third section the methodology used in this paper is described. Section four presents the results and the discussion of the paper. Our conclusions are drawn in the final section.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditionally, economists have identified four factors of production: land, capital, organization, and labour. Despite the increasing emphasis on workers with special skills, financial capital remained the central factor in the mass-production economy (Torraco and Swanson, 1995). However, the shift from manufacturing to service and information-based economy together with the progressive technological innovations have increased the role of labour as a factor of production. Boyne and Chen (2007) referred human resource development (HRD) to the optimum utilization of the existing human capabilities (HCs). Werner and DeSimone (2009, p.4) defined HRD as "a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future demands."

In the same vein, Swanson (2008, p.764) explained HRD as "efforts in organizations typically take place under the banners of training and development, organization development, performance improvement, organizational learning, career development, management and leadership development." Swanson and Holton, (2001, 2009) and Alghurabli (2017) considered training as the organization's activity or operation aimed at developing and unleashing human expertise for improving organization, work process, group and individual performance. Yang et al. (2009) confirmed the views of Swanson and Holton (2009) and added that training reflects organization's recognition of the value of human capital investment. In relation to this, Paprock (2006) emphasized on a country that invested in the development of its individuals, automatically laid the foundation for advancing and increasing its economic productivity and consequently, the nation's wealth. For instance, the success of Japan today is due to the development of its HR within the industrial environment. Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea have made significant progress and are at different stages of industrialization, which was facilitated by their various HRD plans. Education and training are becoming indispensable requirement for the progress of all countries (Zolfaghari et al., 2009).

In civil service, employees appreciate the investment of their organizations in their careers development, which in turn motivates them to work hard and increase their sense of belonging in the activities and success of the organization. Similarly, this will increase their feeling of pride of being members of the organization. Kauffeld et al. (2010) and Pineda (2011) supported this view as they found employees have shown great commitment in organizations that invest considerable sums of money in HRD and employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes, whereas the organizations that ignore training witnessed great amount of complaints from their employees. Pineda (2011) added that only a few organizations engaged in-depth evaluation of its employees' training needs, due to the difficulty in accessing data with which to analyze, interpret and discuss the impact of the investments on employees' training and changes in their productivity levels. Most definitions include at least, the need for organizational efforts, which seek HRD outcomes that enhance the organization's effectiveness (Tseng & McLean, 2008). Hence, HRD is critical to the quality of service delivery and cost effectiveness (Timothy & Pauline, 2007) because performance improvement results from knowledge, skill real ability enhancement and job satisfaction (McCarthy & Garavan, 2006). In relation to this, job satisfaction has been linked to organizational commitment (OC), turnover intentions and absenteeism (Artz, 2010; Nielson & Smyth, 2008). These variables are costly to organizations, as they sometimes lead to poor performances and high turnovers. In their study, Sveinsdo'ttir et al. (2006) have found that inadequate working conditions such as low wages, working hours, lack of resources, limited career opportunities and limited educational opportunities are the important driving forces behind Nurses' occupational stress, decreases job satisfaction, increases turnover rate, and reduces nursing quality. Likewise, Hytter (2007) demonstrated that workplace factors, such as rewards, leadership style, career opportunities, training and development of skills, physical working conditions and work-life balance, have an indirect influence on retention of employees. Thus, investment in HRD by organizations is necessary for their growth and is the essential issue for organizational success and development (Hareli & Tzafrir, 2006; Hassan, Hashim, and Hj Ismail, 2006; Kim, 2004).

III. THE METHODOLOGY

This study targeted the “professionals and technical occupations” and “non-professionals” employees of the civil service in Sudan. A self-administered questionnaire consisting of 50 items and divided into three parts was designed to collect data on the perceptions of individual employees with regard to the training situations and working environments of their organizations. The questionnaire was developed from the review of the commonly used items by other researchers, such as Hong et al. (2007), Ristig (2009), and Haque (2008), to examine employees’ satisfaction. Other studies, such as Haque (2008), Tracey and Tews (2005), and Hansson (2007) were being useful for measuring employees’ attitudes towards the training environment in their organizations. All the items adapted for the present survey were modified to match the design of the study.

In the current study, 1,600 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents and 1218 copies were filled out and returned back. Out of this, only 1110 copies (representing 91.1 percent) were valid. In this study, the internal consistency and stability were determined by coefficient value of Cronbach’s alpha, because it can be interpreted as a correlation coefficient, which shows how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another (Sekaran, 2009). The differences of means were tested by one way ANOVA. Where the assumptions of ANOVA were not met, Kurskal-Wallis test was used as a one way analysis of variance by ranks. The T-test, Chi-square, and Cross-tabulation were used to measure relationship or association of categorical variables. The entire items in the second and third part of the questionnaire were checked by factor analysis that is, data reduction technique which is normally used to reduce a large number of variables to smaller set, in anticipation of summarizing the essential information contained in all the variables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of the questionnaire shades light on the first closed-ended questions, which deals with job satisfaction, intention to look for another job, satisfaction with training situation in the organization getting the opportunity for training. The second part of the questionnaire included 17 items to gauge the employees’ satisfaction with training situation in their organizations. The third part included 18 items which are used to gauge the employees’ satisfaction with their organizational environment. The analysis shows the correlation of majority of the variables is positive and is reasonable. Factor analysis is done for these two sections. Reliability of the second part was high and every item has Cronbach’s Alpha over 0.82. In addition, the reliability of the third part was very high and every item has Cronbach’s Alpha over 0.90.

The findings showed that 43.9% of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs, where 56.1% were dissatisfied with their job. Only 38.7% satisfied with training situation in their organizations. The following table shows a summary of the respondent attitudes regarding satisfaction with job, satisfaction with training situation in the organization, intention to look for another job, and getting the opportunity for training.

Summary of the respondent attitudes regarding satisfaction with job, satisfaction with training situation in the organization, intention to look for another job, and getting the opportunity for training

Category	Satisfaction with job among categories	Satisfaction with Training situation in organization	Planned to look for another job during last past years	Getting the opportunity for training
Gender	Females are more dissatisfied	Females are more dissatisfied	No difference between genders	No difference between gender
Group of age	Respondents in the age group 25-34 years are more dissatisfied		Respondents in the age group 25-34 years are more intended to leave	
Education level	Respondent who hold Masters or higher Diplomas, and those who have Doctorate degrees are more dissatisfied	Respondent who hold Doctorate, and those who have Master or higher diploma degrees are more dissatisfied	Respondent who hold Masters or higher Diplomas, and those who have Doctorate degrees are more intended to leave	Respondent who have Secondary School have got more training opportunities
Sector of work	Respondents who work at the Economic sector are more dissatisfied	Respondents who work at the Economic sector are more dissatisfied	Respondents who work at the Service sector are more intended to leave	No difference between the employees in the three sectors in getting training
State of work	Respondents who work at the federal organizations are more dissatisfied	Respondents who work at the federal organizations are more dissatisfied	Respondents who work at the federal organizations are more dissatisfied	Respondents who work at the states’ organizations have got more training opportunities
Job category	Respondent who work as Administrators are more dissatisfied	Respondent who work as professionals are more dissatisfied	Respondent who work as Administrators are more intended to leave	Respondent who work as administrators have more training opportunities
Job tenure	Respondents who in the working experience group (3-12) years are more Dissatisfied	Respondents in the working experience groups (3-12) years and (33-42) years are more dissatisfied	Respondents in the working experience group (3-12) years are more intended to leave	Respondents who in the working experience group (3-12) years have less training opportunities

V. CONCLUSION

The Sudanese civil service organizations are facing a quite number of challenges, which limited their abilities to play their expected roles in national development. The whole findings revealed that there is a gap between employees' expectations and their organizations' capabilities, which largely undermined most employees' job satisfaction levels. Employees could be satisfied with their current work, but some want to apply for new jobs that offer them better facilities, while other employees prefer jobs that will expose them to new or different tasks. The issue of career ambitions, which is tied down to adopted inflexible practices in the work context and strong belief on theory of "jobs for life" has forced many employees across job categories, age, experiences, and place of residents in Sudan to become migrant workers within the country or abroad.

Finally, it would be interesting, if future studies examine the performance of civil service workforce through lens of customers to better understand employees' performance assessment. Moreover, the respondents were guaranteed confidentiality in the survey to minimize potential harms against them, however, it seems this was not absolutely eliminated in self-assessment answers.

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