

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE CLEANING SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This research is conducted with view to analyse the Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Private Cleaning Service Outsourcing Organisations in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research is based on the survey carried out in Lagos State between August 2011 to June 2012. A comparative investigation was carried out among the selected cleaning companies. The specific focus of the study is on the Human Resources Management as it is utilised to boost in the business. A total number of twenty (20) cleaning service were randomly selected. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were sourced for, within the companies. The overall findings of this research indicate that there are significant differences in HRM practices from one company to the other in the industry and unprofessional Human Resource (HR) practices are prevalent when compared to other non-cleaning service organizations in the State.

Key words:Cleaning service, Human Resource Management, Organization & Outsourcing.

Introduction

Human resource outsourcing is not new in the contemporary business world. It is fast spreading and one feels that there is a need for some caution. However, a lot of large corporations appreciate the spontaneous growth in the industry, owing to the relief they enjoy from this service; which afford them the opportunity of concentrating on strategic issues. The services evolving under HR outsourcing include, recruitment, training, security and cleaning. Recently, there has been increase in the numbers of cleaning service organizations within Lagos state. This is as a result of the increase in the rate of unemployment, coupled with the seemingly low capital and legal requirements for its establishment. On the other hand, Cleaning is now one of the most commonly outsourced services, because of the need to promote standardization and consistency in the service.

With the study carried out between August, 2011 and June, 2012, it was discovered that a lot of unregistered and unorganized cleaning companies exist in Lagos State. It was also discovered that most of them engage in unethical HRM practices because there is neither HR department nor designated persons in charge of HR in those establishments. In a situation where there is a designated person, the person is neither qualified for the job nor allowed to function professionally. It was further revealed that variety of services rendered by some of these cleaning service organizations are ranging from Janitorial service, fumigation, Laundry, Industrial cleaning, maid service to pre and post construction cleaning.

Janitorial service was observed as the most rendered service with hundreds of members of staff. This paper thus examined these findings and identified the peculiarities of HRM practices in private cleaning service outsourcing organizations in Lagos State and put forward recommendations to reposition the industry through effective HRM practices.

Definition of Terms

- **Human Resource Management (HRM):** A process of attracting, developing and maintaining a talented and energetic workforce to support organizational mission, objectives and strategies.
- **Outsourcing:** Transfer of work, responsibility and decision rights to an external subject matter expert entity.
- **Practice:** The act or process of doing something; performance or action. A habitual or customary action
- **Janitorial Service:** This entails cleaning the interior or exterior of buildings, structures or dwellings, including industrial, commercial, income-producing real property, and the contents thereof. It could be regular course of duty, and may be rendered alone or in conjunction with other services, either on a scheduled, periodic basis or only on a single occasion. Such services include cleaning of the floor, wall, ceiling, woodwork, carpet and upholstery cleaning; disinfecting and cleaning of restrooms; waxing and polishing of furniture; dusting and vacuuming; and emptying wastebaskets. It is often considered to be rendered at the location of the real property affected.
- **Fumigation:** It is a method of pest control that completely fills an area with gaseous pesticides. It is utilized for control of pests in buildings (structural fumigation), soil, grain, and produce.
- **Laundry:** Cleaning which involves washing of clothes and window blinds among other clothing.
- **Maid:** This involves typical domestic chores such as washing, ironing, cleaning and tending to the household children.
- **Industrial Cleaning:** This differs from domestic cleaning or maid service. It entails cleaning service activities in a work setting like manufacturing outfit.
- **Pre-construction Cleaning:** Cleaning exercise carried out before the commencement of major reconstruction or renovation.
- **Post-construction Cleaning:** This is a cleaning exercise carried out after the completion of a building construction or when renovation is done.

Human Resource Management

Organizations are usually created by human beings with the aim of production exercise. Khatri (1999) opines that people are one of the most important factors providing flexibility and adaptability to organizations. Therefore, human resources are composed of individuals working for an organization. These individuals are employed on a variety of contracts. Some are employed as "core" long-term staff, temporary staff; and in some cases as contract staff. Collectively however, they all make up the most important factors in an organizations resources, (Cowlin, 1998).

HRM is one of the management functions which specialize in the management of people in the place of work. The functions range from engagement, retention to disengagement of workers. Cole (1990) opines that, it is that specialist function of management which has prime responsibility for the following: formulating, proposing and gaining acceptance for the human resource management policies and strategies of the organization, providing adequate human resource management services for the organization to enable it to recruit, motivate, and develop sufficient and sustainable employees at all levels.

To have effective management of human resources, there must be a sound Human Resource Management system; and in order to develop a sound HRM system, the organization must have effective Human Resource Management practices (Pankaj & Karunesh, 2012). In the words of Schuler & Jackson (1987); Schuler and MacMillan (1984) and Wright and Snell (1991), HRM practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resources and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals. This buttresses the fact that human resource practices cannot be universal, a number of human resources policy that have been successfully practiced in certain industry or country, may not be successful when applied in another

industry or country. A number of human resource practices have specific characteristic related to specific industry or country. Thus, HRM practices may differ from one organization to another, industry to another industry and from one country to another.

Pankaj and Karunesh (2012) describe these practices with references to different views of authorities in the field of human resource management "best practices" or "high-performance", (Huselid, 1995), "formal" (Aldrich & Langton, 1997), (de Kok & Uhlaner, 2001) and (Heneman and Berkley, 1999), "sophisticated" (Golhar & Deshpande, 1997), (Hornsby & Kuratko, 1990), (Goss, Adam-Smith & Gilbert 1994), (Wagner, 1998) or as "professional" (Gnan & Songini, 2003), (Matlay, 1999), (Pfeffer 1994; 1998) - "Best HRM Practices".

Pfeffer (1994) identifies seven of such practices which denote best practice. They are: 1. Employment security. 2. Selective hiring. 3. Self-managed teams/team working. 4. High compensation contingent on organizational performance. 5. Extensive training. 6. Reduction in status difference. 7. Sharing information. Redman and Matthews (1998) identify an "HRM bundle" of key practices which support service organizations quality strategies like outsourcing. The HRM bundle was: 1. Careful recruitment and selection. 2. Extensive remuneration systems. 3. Team working and flexible job design. 4. Training and learning. 5. Employee involvement. 6. Performance appraisals with links to contingent reward systems.

Features of Private Cleaning Service Outsourcing Organizations in Lagos State

Ownership Structure:

The present outlook of the cleaning service organizations in Lagos is mostly family owned business/individual organization and none is discovered to be a quoted company. Most of them are small enterprises with rented apartments as their operational offices. Staff Strength: Depending on the capital base and size, this varies to a large extent. From our survey it ranges from 5 to 500 personnel. Most of the highly staffed cleaning companies are the ones offering janitorial services while the laundry ones recorded the least staff strength. Compensation Structure: The compensation pattern differs from one company to another. There is no specific industry prevailing rate. However, feedbacks from their employees who from a part of our respondents revealed that they are relatively satisfied with what they earn, as a result of the pitiable state of the economy and their levels of education, etc. Unstructured HR System:

The smaller cleaning organizations do not have HR section it is usually a one man show while in the more organized ones, the manual process is in place with inappropriate practices and too much workload on the designated HR persons. Round the Clock Service:

Their services are rendered for the 24 hours of the day, 7 days of the week and 365/366 days of the year inclusive of public holiday. This is owing to the nature of the service and client. The clients for the business exist in every aspect of the economy, i.e. churches, hospitals, eateries, banks, etc. Young Personnel Profile:

Most of the staff of the cleaning companies are young secondary school dropouts/ leavers from age of 18 and above. Semi-Literate Workforce:

Most of the employees are half baked literate who can hardly read and write. High Risk: The cleaning organization carries vicarious liability of their personnel especially in maid services and banks.

S/N	Company Name	Contact Address	Web Address
1	Cleanace Drycleaning Solutions Ltd.	5 Ikorodu Road, Maryland, Lagos	www.cleanace.com.net
2	De-movers Logistics Nigeria Limited	Plot 345, Odusanmi Street, Off Wempco Road, Ikeja, Lagos.	www.de-moverslogistics.com
3	Draiklinas Limited	5A, Eunice College Close, Gbagada Phase 2, Lagos.	
4	FaoQueens Global Services	Block B, Suite 13, Bola Ahmed Shopping Complex, Oyetayo Street, Bolade Oshodi, Lagos	www.faoqueenservices.com
5	Julian Cleaning Nigeria Limited	3 Igbasan Street, Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos	www.juliancleaning.net
6	Kchemical & Fumigation Ventures	865 Durosinmi Abokunwa Street, Omole Estate 2, Ikeja, Lagos	www.kkchemicalven.com
7	Klinxparts Limited	32 Asa-Afariogun Street, Ajao-Estate, Oshodi Isolo, Lagos.	
8	Opel Cleaning Service Limited	270 Ikorodu Road, Obanikoro, Lagos.	www.opel-cleaning.com
9	Teknokleen Limited	Plot 2, Oriwu Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos	www.teknokleen.comm
10	Ola Clean	54, Balarabe Musa Crescent, VI, Lagos	www.olaclean.com

Table 1: List of some Registered Private Cleaning Service Companies in Lagos

Methodology

The metropolitan areas that make up of Lagos state was the former capital of Nigeria but at the moment the nerve commercial centre of the country with virtually all the headquarters of all companies in Nigeria. The State was created on the 27th May, 1967. As at 2013 its population has risen close to 10Million people; with thousands of corporate bodies. The choice of Lagos for this research work is informed by the heavy presence of the private cleaning outsourcing organizations in the state.

Twenty (20) private outsourcing cleaning companies based in Lagos comprised the sample of this study. They have all being in existence for over a decade as at June, 2012. Their services range from Janitorial to Post construction cleaning. Based on this research work, six (6) personnel constitute the respondents from each of the selected company, making One hundred and twenty (120) that is N=120. The data gathered from the respondents were analysed through simple frequency table and percentages.

Services	Filters	No. Of Companies	Percentages
Janitorial	16	20	80%
Laundry	4	20	20%
Maid	5	20	25%
Industrial Cleaning	12	20	60%
Fumigation	14	20	70%
Pre-construction Cleaning	12	20	60%
Post-construction Cleaning	12	20	60%

Table 2: A Survey of the Range of Services Provided in the Industry between August 2011 and June 2012

Variables	Filters	Frequenc y	Percentage
Age	18 years – 22 years	48	40%
	22 years – 27 years	31	25.8%
	28 years – 32 years	22	18.3%
	33 years – 37 years	10	8.3%
	38 years – 42 years	9	7.5%
Education	Primary School	15	12.5%
	Secondary School Drop out	35	29.2%
	Secondary School	52	43.3%
	Part time Student	18	15%
Type of Home	Monogamy	52	43.3%
	Polygamy	68	56.7%
Status of Parents	Jobless	26	21.7%
	Trader	32	26.7%
	Low Income	32	26.7%
	Bereaved	22	18.3%
	Separated	8	6.7%
Reasons for seeking Job Engagement	Earn a living	25	20.8%
	Needed to engage self	32	26.7%
	Supplement Parents income	30	25%
	Fund for schooling	28	23.3%
	Others	5	4.2%

Table 3: A Socio-Demographic Distribution of the respondents

Results and Discussions

From the findings of the survey as depicted in Table 2, Most of the sampled organizations render Janitorial services as 80% of the companies claimed to be offering the service, 20% are into laundry, 25% are into Maid services, 60% provide industrial cleaning services, 70% fumigate while 60% are into both pre and post construction cleaning. The above represent a wider coverage of true representative of the study which will produce a consistent result of what HRM practices are in the private cleaning outsourcing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.

"Table 3" shows the selected socio-demographic variables and inferences were drawn on them in relations to the composition of workforce in the industry. Age is significantly related to demand for cleaning services. Due to their youthfulness, agility and smartness, young people who are single are always preferred in the industry, except on special request where maid of aged person is required. Thus, the younger ones demand for cleaning job is very high as the analysis of responses showed that 65.8% of the workers in these companies are between the ages of 18 to 27 years. The levels of education of the employees show that majority of the workers are either primary or secondary school leavers. This to some extent accounts for the reasons why crops of the personnel are semi literate. This variable can also be said to have bearing with the status of their parents and reasons why they sought employment. For instance, the reason a drop out person engages in the job could be due to loss of parents and need to earn the living.

S/N	Filters	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	HR department exists in this organization	2 1.7%	50 41.7%	45 37.5%	21 17.5%	2 1.7%
2	Upon employment, I was given letter of appointment	5 4.2%	28 23.3%	13 10.8%	32 26.7%	42 35%
3	I am satisfied with this organization employment process	4 3.3%	15 12.5%	20 16.7%	50 41.7%	31 25.8%
4	I am familiar with the head of our HR department	-	36 30%	50 41.7%	34 28.3%	-
5	Were you inducted at point of employment?	3 2.5%	65 54.2%	50 41.7%	2 1.7%	-
6	I have my record with the organization	30 25%	56 46.7%	28 23.3%	5 4.2%	1 0.83%
7	Have you ever been bullied?	20 16.7%	49 46.7%	15 12.5%	31 25.8%	5 4.2%
8	Do you have anybody you complain to when aggrieved?	55 45.8%	40 33.3%	20 16.7%	2 4.2%	3 2.5%
9	I was adequately trained before deployment	10 8.3%	15 12.5%	25 20.8%	49 40.8%	21 17.5%
10	I have a copy of the company employees hand book	5 4.2%	12 10%	28 23.3%	55 45.8%	20 16.7%

11	I am satisfied with my pay	10 8.3%	30 25%	11 9.2%	56 46.7%	13 10.8%
12	My job is highly secured here	2 1.7%	5 4.2%	35 29.2%	45 37.5%	33 27.5%
13	Employees appraisal is always carried out in my organization before promotion	6 5%	12 10%	40 33.3%	52 43.3%	10 8.3%
14	Is your communication process effective?	15 12.5%	68 56.7%	20 16.7%	12 10%	5 4.2%
15	Do you feel motivated by the work environment?	15 12.5%	39 32.5%	30 25%	36 30%	-
16	I am satisfied with my present location/site because I was consulted before deployment	20 16.7%	45 37.5%	20 16.7%	22 18.3%	23 19.2%

Table4: The respondents Assessment of HRM practices in the Industry within August 2011 - June 2012

It was also deduced that some HRM functions are shared with company representative (Head cleaner/supervisor/operation executive) in each of the locations with feedback to the Head Office while scheduled or unscheduled visitation at interval are often made to forestall any possible deviations from the ethical conduct of personnel.

The following traditional functions are found to remain with HR department of the cleaning companies:

1. Preparation of offer letters
2. Collation of personnel on payroll
3. Collation of Personnel Records & maintenance
4. Maintenance of Staff Discipline
5. Confirmation and Promotion
6. Salary review
7. Redeployment and Transfer
8. Termination

The following functions are performed in collaboration with site/location representative

1. Recruitment
2. Training
3. Performance monitoring
4. Staff counselling
5. Manpower planning

Challenges of HRM in the Industry

Manual Processing of Staff Record:

Maintaining manual staff record of a workforce of hundred plus with high level of personnel flow can be very challenging and frustrating. Most of these outsourcing companies still run manual staff record which make the whole system cumbersome and tiring. High Cost of Training with Low Retention Chances:

The hours and money that go into training of personnel constitute very a high cost. A good number of trained employees may stop coming for work immediately after receiving training. This can be

frustrating and effort geared towards retaining them may prove abortive.

Generating Pool of Workforce Based on Location:

Another frequent challenge is discovered in the area of mobilising personnel for some areas like Lekki, Ajah, etc owing to the classes of people that reside in the area. Hardly will you see applicants from the area. In meeting clients request for that area, extra costs are often incurred on the transportation allowances of personnel that are posted to work in such areas. Resumption Time:

This is as a result of the inherent time structure for resuming to work and closing. The nature of the contracts requires the cleaning of the Clients location to be concluded before the resumption of the Clients staff/personnel. Average resumption time of most organizations in Nigeria is 8.00am. As a result, the Janitors are expected to resume work as early as 6.30am in order to meet up before the staff resume. In order to meet up with the resumption time most of the personnel are forced to set off as early as 5.00am to get to their place of work before 6.30am. This exposes them to men of the underworld who use the opportunity to rob, rape and molest these personnel on their way to work.

Insincere Report from Sites/Locations:

Most of the clients representatives and even the company Field Operations Executives give insincere report of situations at sites perhaps to favour someone or because of their inability to visit the site.

High Rates of Complaints/Grievances by the Staff:

The indirect relationship with employer also paved way for chances of complaints and grievances by the staff. A lot claimed they are often asked to do things outside their scope of work. Again at the refusal of any advancement from male client staff, victimization, excuses and accusation is often the outcome.

High Turnover Rate:

Because of the calibre of the employee and their profile, many often intend to continue their education and when they secure admission, they would not hesitate to leave. This singular factor has been a serious challenge in the industry.

Unrealistic Salary Structure:

This is largely altered by the employer, who in most cases arbitrarily awards salary or increases pay with little or no consultation from the HR department.

Delay in Salary Payment:

Most of the companies often depend on the payment for service delivery by client before paying their personnel at the site. Even when the fund is there, they choose not to pay. This usually aggravates the cry of workers on the site; and as a result, the clients are prompted to pay. This is the strategy most of the companies adopt to speed up payment of clients who ordinarily often requires such push to make their payment in a timely manner.

Poor Disengagement Attitude:

It is a common practice for these personnel to abscond when they are fed up with the job without proper disengagement; especially when the salary has been paid. This often gives serious headache to the HR system as effort to replace them can be challenging.

Inability to Maintain Stable Workforce:

Most of the cleaning companies are characterized with delay of salary payment, which contributes largely to the high turnover rate. Other factors that are responsible for the unstable workforce include the lack of health management scheme, which in most cases is provided for only a few of the key representatives on site only.

Inherent Health Hazard:

Very few of the cleaning firms do consider the risk involved in the nature of the job. They do not provide adequate protective tools to curb diseases, infections or other inherent health issues. These pose a serious challenge in the industry. Decision Making:

Majority of the cleaning companies are yet to embrace or recognize the presence of the HR department. Decisions are mainly taken unilaterally by the employer as the HR recommendation or advice in handling some HR related issues are often not followed. Promotion, Disciplinary cases, disengagement are often times not properly handled in line with the stipulated labour laws and best practices. Career Path:

This is prevalently difficult to establish for majority of the personnel in the cleaning industry except

for those in the administrative cadre. It is difficult to set the career path for the heads on site, the Supervisors and Operations Executives or the Operations Managers. This is largely due to the fact that most of the companies do not have effective organization structure and individual career plan. (i.e. no Individual Career plan system - "ICP" in place). Collective Bargaining:

What is predominant in the cleaning industry is individual bargaining. Unionism is gravely avoided; hence employers often use or adopt the system of Paternalism i.e. parent-son relationship. From our findings, it was shown that the HR person though in most cases states it the way it is, his actions cannot be at variance with the decision of the management.

Conclusion

This study concludes that, for the efficiency on the job, the firms engaging in cleaning services must adopt coping strategies which include a well-structured HR System and process, engaging of professional HR person in the companies, making sure that the objectives of recruitment and selection are adhered to, all the times, irrespective of the pressure. Such objective should be tailored towards the recruitment and placement process that will ensure the hiring of the right persons. It is also our conclusion that the following factors should be considered:

Proximity

- hat is, nearness to the place of work must be considered. This will ensure that transport expenses have little or no strain on the take home pay.
- Unforeseen risk inherent in setting off to work so early in the morning hours due to distance involved and expected time of resumption of the janitor must be considered. As such, more organised transportation system should be made available.
- The nature of business of the clients should be a determiner of the gender of the janitor.
- The values of the potential janitor in terms of experience and age should be considered before employment.

The paper also concluded that there is a need for the HR department to seek, build and obtain the confidence of the employees. This can be achieved by limiting the excessive interference of the employers in HR related matters. It was also a conclusion of this paper that improving the welfare package of the janitors is germane to the survival of business.

Recommendation

As a result, the following are recommended:

- Salaries of the Janitors should at least meet up with the minimum wage.
- Introduction of relevant incentives aimed at retaining and enhancing stability of the janitors. Such incentives that will be performance based e.g. salary increase, promotion, recognition by way of award, training, etc. Should be introduced.
- The Janitors should be motivated/encouraged by ensuring salaries are promptly paid.
- Provision for the relevant protective tools and materials is sacrosanct. Adequate protective cleaning aids and materials for safety of the janitors should be provided. Training and retraining courses on the usage of the materials should also be provided.
- Training and retraining of the key persons on site is vital to enhancing the management of the janitors, e.g. the Head Janitors, Supervisors, Operations Executives/Site Managers on effective leadership and management style. The management style as noted across the cleaning industry is relatively harsh and unfriendly. This is fundamental; so that they can be kept abreast with emerging global issues i.e. outside training (off the job) should be embraced as on the job training.
- Adoption of best practices that are in tandem with existing labour laws and statutory regulations in the handling of disciplinary cases/issues. From our findings, most decisions of the firms violate the right of the workers. The mostly affected are the janitors who as a result of their levels of awareness and education are oblivion of their fundamental rights.
- Wage structure should be in tandem with industrial wide standard to ensure low labour

turnover (LTO) and save the organization time and money for recruitment.

- The stake-holders should be educated about roles of HR. This is strategic to organizational goals and objectives. Lip service should no longer be paid to HR. In this wise, the HR department should be given a free hand to work with limited interference. However, HR practitioners should not expect recognition given on platter of gold; they should earn it by getting the company confidence through the quality of their service delivery.

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