



IPDM

2016 Training/
Induction
LECTURE
THE CIVIL SERVICE
AUDI., UYO AKWA IBOM
Sat, August 20, 2016

Theme: _____

**BUILDING A STRONGER
PUBLIC SERVICE OPERATION
USING DIPLOMACY
AS A TOOL FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE**

TOPICS

- * Raising the Standard of Governance In Public Service Operation Through DIPLOMATIC Practices In Management
- * Administrative Strategies In The Management of Human Resources And Conflict Resolution

ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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INTRODUCTION

Man naturally is a selfish being, who in the course of acquiring his daily needs, exercise his selfishness, in opposition with others who are also exhibiting their selfishness. The outcome of these clashes of self-interest is often conflict. Conflict is part of human nature. Everywhere he goes, he does so with this characteristic conflict potential. Every human society, organises itself in a coordinate manner into a form of group, in order to pursue and generate goods and services required for its well-being. This is because it is not possible for man to provide all of his requirements all by himself. In primitive cultures, they arranged themselves into several forms of bands, *hunters, farmers etc to*; create a cooperative spirit to obtain greater output, to satisfy individual and societal need. It becomes imperative to mitigate the conflict inherent in man in the band or organization to be able to attain the cooperate goals. How is conflict mitigated in the group?

In modern societies, men have learned to be grouped into the factory system since the great Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, all for the attainment of both individual, co-operate and societal goals. This made the urgency of administrative strategies more urgent, in order to mitigate the conflict in man for group goals.

Whether it is a primitive or modern society, the motivation of man's action is the primacy of economic need for material wellbeing that drives men to cooperate with others in a social relationship. This is because:

Economic need is man's most fundamental need unless man is able to meet this need, he cannot exist in the first place. Man must eat before he can do anything else- before he can worship, pursue culture or become an economist. When an individual achieves a level of economic well-being such that he can take the basic economic necessities, particularly his daily food, for granted, the urgency of economic need loses its edge (Ake, 1981: 1).

The primacy of meeting economic and societal needs of man orderly rest in setting up social organizations and getting it to function effectively. This is categorical imperative for Administrative strategies to control conflict inherent in human nature.

Organization and Human Nature

Man is motivated into action by self-interest. He then seeks social organization for the fulfilment of this self-interest in an orderly manner. It is only the present of the rules of engagement, orderly conduct, the present of a sovereign in the like of the organizational boss, which tame his self-interest and direct it towards the organizational goal. In meeting the organizational goal, his interest is invariably met by the reward system (wages or salary). Anyone who is ready to meet his economic and social needs through the mechanism of the organization must be ready to abide by its rules and code of conduct because as Rousseau (1712-1778), stated more succinctly '*man is born free and is everywhere in chains*'. This is how organizational chains or administrative strategies regulate the raw human desires. What really is organization?

Organization

An organization could be formal or informal, public or private. We shall be concerned with public organizations. An organization according to March and Simeon (1958) and Blau and Scott (1962) described it as one which have been deliberately established for a *purpose* and have *structure* and *procedures* to some point consciously prescribed. Formal organizations have the following elements;

- Manageability
- Relatively fixed/explicit goals
- Rules and regulations
- Hierarchy
- Division of labor

Blau and Scott then classified organizations further into their prime beneficiary;

- Business concern - Owners/managers
- Mutual benefit association Its members
- Service organizations - clients
- Commonwealth (Public) organizations the public at large

Public or Commonwealth Organizations- These are the type of organizations which is the subject of concern in the discourse here. They include the government Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) in which the beneficiary is the public at large. The issue is thus; how do we configure the administrative strategies, to enable one manage human resources, and resolve conflict within the public organizations, in order to serve the public at large through continuous service delivery?

The Problem of the Discourse

The problem is all about 'the process of interconnecting people (human resources) in a way that would create less disagreement among them, and resolve it when it arises, with the view of realising the organizational goals continuously. Put differently, what administrative strategies are required in the management of human resources and in the resolution of the conflict that would arise when men with divergent interests are brought together in an organization?

When men and women pursuing divergent interests are brought together in an organization, one thing that is obvious to arise is conflict (pursuit of divergent goals and views). When there is no mechanisms for the settling the conflict as at when due, it would invariably affects the output of the organization and its beneficiary would suffer lack.

The principal issues of the problem are that;

- i) There should be mechanisms within every organization for the resolution of industrial conflict when they arise;
- ii) The human resources should be selected, recruited on the basis of merit;
- iii) The organization by law has the duty to obtain competent staff
- iv) There should be legislation to enforce collective agreements

Administrative Processes in Private Organizations

The applicable strategies in private organizations where profit is the major motive, is not very different from that of the public organizations. While the structures remain the same, there are slight differences in the processes and reward system.

Whereas in private organizations, the observation of merit consideration in recruitment is significantly related to the profit level unlike in the commonwealth or MDAs where it is often compromised for political reasons. While the output of public organization is measured qualitatively, while that of private organization is quantitatively established. In private organizations, the wage and motivation components are more dynamic while there is a robust pension plan in order to attract staffers that are more competent. It human resource strategies more elaborate, covering the work and out-of-work situation. Its respond to emerging trend of globalization in structuring the organization, in order to stay in profit, which is the main purpose for being in business.

The management or administrative strategies of the private organizations often follow often two (2) forms of Rensis *Likert's 4 System management style*, while the public corporation often rely on one, which consists of;

i). **Exploitative-authoritative**: The first system of Rensis Likert theory is characterized by decision-making in the upper echelons of the organization, with no teamwork and little communication other than threats to punish the workers for non compliance to the instructions.

ii). **Benevolent-authoritative**: This Likert system is based on a master-servant relationship between management and employees, where rewards are the sole motivators and both teamwork and communication are minimal. Here the employers present the carrot to inspire the employers to increase the productivity to obtain the designated benefits. In the process, the profit of the employer is increased.

iii). **Consultative**: In this style, managers partly trust subordinates, use both rewards and involvement to inspire motivation, foster a higher level of responsibility for meeting goals, and inspire a moderate amount of teamwork and some communication. This is the case of do as I do or leadership by example. The involvement of the leadership in the processes, induce passion, followership, and sustainable actions.

iv). **Participative-management**: This system is based on managerial trust and confidence in employees; collectively determined, goal-based rewards; a collective sense of responsibility for meeting company objectives; collaborative teamwork and open communication (Likert 1983). This approach jointly set the work to be perform and the accompanying reward system. It inspires self-discipline towards the attainment of the organisational goals because the yardsticks of performance were jointly fixed.

The two dominant systems within the private organizations, are the 'consultative and the participatory group' while the 'exploitative and benevolent-authoritative' systems apply to the public organizations.

Section II

Conflict in Organizations

It would be recalled that in the introductory section of this discourse, we had averred that 'man is essentially a selfish person'. He brings this selfishness to the work place, which is hierarchically structured by superior-subordinate power relationship. Organizations as discussed, is not about conflict generation but for different purposes depending on what the furnishes the objectives of its beneficiaries. However, because its bring several people on board, conflict is imminent.

Sources of Conflict in organizations

In organizations whether Public Commonwealth or Private, the sources of 'gripes-grievances' or conflict

The ~~Contract~~ of employment (this could contain terms misunderstood and interpreted differently by both

v) The state/unions should abide by the content of all collective agreements

The processes of doing this (administrative strategies) should be that which would create the condition in which they cooperate, in an interdependent manner, to produce the goods and services of joint usage, which would benefit the public.

The Framework of Analysis: Weberian Paradigm

It is instructive to note that in enunciating the appropriate 'administrative strategies' for the management of personnel, the human problem of management, the Max Weber bureaucratic model built upon Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management postulate was considered the most appropriate explicatory paradigm. It averred that any organization or conglomerate of human resources relating together to achieve set goals should be structured as follows;

i) the organization should abide by the principles of *office hierarchy* and *graded authority* or an ordered system of super and subordinate, arrangement, by which one office (holder) supervise the ones under it. This principle of hierarchy transformed and bring forth cooperative instincts and essential goodness (Mukherjee, 2007:225), in man. Also where might is right, the greatest might succeed to it right and obtain obedience to its authority. This entailed as Orion White Jr. (2003) opined, defined roles and strict administrative supervision. This is the way to control individuals desires brought on board the organization by different individuals in the pursuit of goals which would create what the Utilitarian school of political theory termed '*the greatest happiness of the greatest number*' as the objective of all governments.

ii) The management of the various bureau or offices within the organization should be conducted on the basis of written documentation (meticulous record keeping/ files), which must be preserve in their original or draft forms. This is to ensure continuity of the original goal of the decision-reached. It is also important to avoid ambiguity in the execution of the order hence written records are required. The civil society is a going concern its management structure does not seize to be. Actors come and go (retirement), but the process and record remain steady.

iii) General Rules of engagement (clearly defined job rules) of organizations are more or less permanent or stable. This guides the officials in the conduct of the business of generating the greatest happiness for the greatest number. The General Order (GO) guided the organizations that are commonwealth, geared towards the creation of public good, in the immediate post-colonial days. It is known today as the Civil Service /Financial Rules (CSR). In organizations, which are not commonwealth in nature, it is known as '*Employee Handbook*' where the 'dos and don'ts' of the organization are spelt out with relevant penalties for its violation.

iv) Employment of Experts (Hiring employees only if they meet specific qualifications for the job), only persons who have the generally specified qualifications to serve are employed, through objective process of Selection, Recruitment and Placement. Their operations are marked by impersonality towards the clientele. This is to enable everyone to receive the impact of the Government through the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), equally. One of the primary duties of a business employer is the 'provision of a competent staff of men.' The law requires that in doing so, the employer must act reasonably by ensuring that the worker employed is not only proficient but is given adequate instructions as may be necessary to off-set the servant's lack of experience or deficiency of maturity (Emiola, 1982:117).

v) The officials performing the duties are to receive regular pecuniary benefits (salary/wages) and old age security provided by pension (in order to meet their needs). This is to ensure that they do not misuse the fiscal resources entrusted to them for the execution of their officials' duties. These constitute the administrative strategies for the management of the Human resources in commonwealth organizations where the public is the prime beneficiary.

vi) There must be standardized procedures for carrying out the work in the bureaucracy. Every official communication must be through written format. which must be preserved in files in their original format. No action is required until directed by a superior officer who is vicariously liable for the act of its agent or servant or subordinate.

the management and the staff unions thereby generating conflict of unprecedented consequences).

ii) District Rules and Policies (Where a federated unit of a state enact legislation and that of the Organization operating within its jurisdiction run counter to district rules, this could ignite industrial conflict, e.g. non recognition of minimum wage operating in the district).

iii) Demand for wage rise in an inflationary economy in which the take home pay cannot take the employees home. In this case, the management rejects such demand on the basis that the organization is not making more profit to warrant that or in the case of Nigeria where the States are unable to pay salaries in spite of "bailout funds from the federal government.

iv) Misapplication of disciplinary procedures (dismissal, termination, suspension and interdictions) by the Human Resource (HR) department of the organizations. Where the rule specified steps and these steps are voided in any one case, conflict is called for. The staff union would request the management to abide with the terms of collective agreement, thereby igniting conflict in the organization where they fail to reverse the adverse actions already taken.

v) Condition of work (treatment of staff at work, provision of protective clothing or tools of work and Safety, Health and Environmental (SHE) issues.

vi) Organizational change which necessitate change in the policies and work practices as result of changes in global business culture.

v) Past practices where administrative precedent had been set while the current practice differ considerably. This creates suspicion of victimization or racial hatred or gender discrimination.

These are the major sources of grievances in organization whether public or private, which injure employee relations practices in global perspective.

Section III

Workplace: Conflict Resolution

It is an organizational fact that employee relations occasionally do go sour. In its extreme form it manifest as strike, lock out, picketing or its threats. What is however of importance is that there should be available mechanism to address the grievances/conflict when they arise, for effective human relations and organizational productivity. However, the major sources of grievances in organization whether public or private, which injure employee relations practices in global perspective.

a) Private Organizations

i) In the first place, every employee is given an 'Employee Handbook' which in most cases do have an addendum or refer to subsequent collective agreements added thereto. This document often contains updated disciplinary procedures, the 'dos and don'ts' of the organization. It is expected that all staff would be guided by it in exhibiting self discipline and avoiding throwing up conflict in the workplace.

ii) The processes of laying and reporting grievances to the supervisor, line manager and through the workers representative union to the management are often spelt out clearly and they are expected to be followed.

iii) Guidelines for writing Grievances could be a printed form to be completed to write it, often include;

- The situation analysis (who, what when and where the complain or incident took place.
 - The contention (who is grievable?)
 - The Remedy (what is required as the solution to the situation).

iv) Arbitration (binding and recommendary)

v) The civil court (with its lengthy litigation processes)

vi) Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism (ADR)

b) Public Organizations (MDAs)

It is a noticeable fact that hardly a week passes without strike action or a threat of it in one form or another. In the public sector Grievances which arises from the sources earlier discussed are numerous. These grievances transform from mere gripes to trade disputes. What are the legal openings for its redress?

According to the Trade Dispute Act (1976), when grievances have matured into a trade dispute the following steps become necessary;

- i) A conciliator/Arbitrator (parties to the dispute meet under a mediator, failing the minister appoints a conciliator (who inquire into the causes of the dispute)
- ii) A **Board of Inquiry** is set up by the minister through the Industrial Arbitration Panel
- iii) The matter is referred to National Industrial Court (NIC) (which makes awards for the purpose of settling trade disputes. It ascertains mistaken interpretations of the collective agreements).
- iv) When award from the NIC is confirmed by the minister, either party could enforce compliance through the regular court since NIC has no power of enforcing its own award.

In Nigeria the minister is empowered to make an order of enforcing collective agreement, the obvious problem is that where such is against the government in which he is a part, it become reluctant to do so.

Challenges to Conflict Resolution

- i) Collective agreement is not enforceable in law in Nigeria except where the minister confirms it.
- ii) National Industrial Court (NIC) is not listed among the superior courts of records in section 6(3) of the constitution, but the qualifications and status of the president of the court are equivalent to those of a high court judge (Emiola, 1982:226). When a disagreement arises from the award of Board of Inquiry on conciliation/arbitration, to which court does it go on appeal?
- iii) It is obvious that directors of organizations are often closer to the government, hence it become difficult for the government to decide cases of trade dispute against their interest or friends.
- iv) In most of the private organizations the state officials are the directors. This clash of interests is a challenge of fidelity to collective agreements.

Conclusion

It is now clear that in order to manage human beings and resolve the conflict, which they generate, administrative strategies as spelt out herein becomes imperative. The organization remains the main structure to meet the utilitarian posture of the state. Human needs are met within it, its structures control individual desires by graded authority and schedule of duties. It is a management fact that administrative strategies remain the only way to control human resources and resolve rising conflict thereof, to meet the beneficiary goals. This must be done in consultative manner. This is the "**iron law of oligarchy**"

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