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STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCE IN PUBLIC ENTERPRISES IN NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined strategies for developing administrative competence in public enterprises in Nigeria. According to Loew (2016), competences are abilities, behaviors, knowledge, and skills that impact the success of employees and organizations. However, public enterprises in Nigeria lack thecompetent abilities, behaviors, knowledge, and skills that impact the success of employees and the organizations. The lack of these has grossly affected the performance and contribution of public enterprises in the national development of the country. In order to cast more light on this, this paper adopted a descriptive research design; relied heavily on secondary data; and theoretically analyzed the collected data. The findings of the study include among others thatpublic sector organizations in Nigeria lack the six administrative core support competencies (organization, communication, service delivery, technicality, adaptability, and interpersonal skills) with specific behaviors and skills that are generally relevant to all administrative support positions irrespective of the department, division, branch, work function or position. Based on this, the study recommended among othersthe following strategies or ways to improve administrative competencies in public enterprises in Nigeria to boost efficiency and effectiveness in the sector: coaching, voluntary training, job shadowing, team building, and adding an extra element of challenge. In conclusion,it is up to public sector organizations in Nigeria to cultivate their marketability. Thoughtfully evaluate any weaknesses in their employees' set of administrative skills and commit to making improvements.

Keywords: Administration, Competence, Administrative Competence, Public Enterprise.

Introduction

The business world is fast-paced and always forward bound. For public enterprises in developing countries especially in Nigeria to keep up with industrial growth and personal advancement of their employees, it's essential to practice good organizational skills that promote administrative competencies. Being disorganized can hinder public sector organizations' ability to get where they want to be professionally, decrease their productivity, cost their employers time and money, and can even be bad for their physical and mental health.

Public enterprises in Nigeria are bedeviled with poor administrative competencies. This has invariable resulted to making the people (administrators) less efficient and less effective, and in the business world those are two qualities that do not bode well with employers (Sheahan, 2017). Corruption, low productivity, poor performance of assigned responsibility, lack of professionalism, presence of laxity, lack of prerequisite skills needed for the assigned tasks among others remain prominently pronounced in the country's public enterprises due to the absence of administrative competences.

Administrative competency is the sum total of skills, knowledge and attitudes, manifested in the employee's behavior in public organizations. It is the "means" to achieve the "ends." Therefore, the development of administrative competencies in public sector organizations in Nigeria is vital if they want better performance in their employees. The questions beckoning for answers are – How can administrative competences be developed in public enterprises in Nigeria? What practical strategies can be used to develop administrative competences in the public enterprises in the country? The answers to these questions are the core subject matter of this paper.

Conceptual Expositions

Concept of Administration

Administration is a universal concept and is also of universal importance. According to Simon (1950), it is said to commence immediately two people agree to co-operate to undertake a task, for instance, to move a stone which none of them can move alone. Also Nwosu (1985:3), noted that Administration is inevitable in any given situation where a piece of work has to be done, and this piece of work requires the effort of more than one person to accomplish it. We are involved in administrative behavior when we co-operate with other people to accomplish such objectives as erecting a community town hall, constructing and managing schools, churches, hospitals, vehicles, assembly plants.

Administration, as defined in the Collins Dictionary, is the range of activities connected with organizing and supervising the way that an organization or institution functions. The definition of administration refers to the group of individuals who are in charge of creating and enforcing rules and regulations, or those in leadership positions who complete important tasks (Your Dictionary).

Thus, Onuoha (1999) explains further that administration exists whenever people cooperate to achieve the goals of their groups, and such achievements require planning, organization,

command, cooperation and control. It involves the mobilization, deployment and direction of human and material resources to attain the specified objectives. When viewed from this perspective, certainly administration is rightly considered a very old and global phenomenon, which exists, even in the most basic human group. We may therefore define administration as a capacity to coordinate and execute many and often conflicting social demands in a single organism so perfectly that they should all operate as a unit (Fayol, 1949).

Administration refers to the process of running an organization, office or business. This includes creating rules & regulations, making decisions, management of operations, creating organization of staff/employees/people to direct activities towards achieving a common goal or objective.

The duty of an administrator depends on the organization that the administrator works for. The main job responsibility of an administrator is to ensure the efficient performance of all departments in an organization. They act as a connecting link between the senior management and the employees. They provide motivation to the work force and make them realize the goals of the organization. Sometimes, it is thought that the role of an administrator is not important in the company and neglects their presence. But without presence of an administrator an organization can never work in a sound way. All the tasks & all the departments are relates to the administration.

It is very difficult to run an organization without a good administration faculty. According to Mishra (2014), an effective administrator is an asset to an organization. It is administrator, who makes the rules & regulations and applies these rules in an organization. He or she is the link between an organization's various departments and ensures the smooth flow of information from one part to the other. Thus without an effective administration, an organization would not run professionally and smoothly.

Therefore, an effective administrator should have the ability:

a) To understand general concepts of Administration;
b) To enhance the office staff's ability to manage and organize office effectively and professionally;
c) File in the proper way and filing standard;
d) Develop an appropriate office management strategy;
e) Develop an appropriate assets management strategy;
f) Able to develop administrative procedures;
g) Able to plan and control administrative budget among others (Mishra, 2014)

Concept of Competence

The concept of competency as a factor in recruitment, selection, hiring and employee performance evaluation has become very popular not only among HR practitioners but to the management echelons as well. Yet, in the more than three decades since it became a buzzword, still many are really unfamiliar with the details of the concept; more so with its appropriate application and utility.

Lotich (2019) defined competency as **"***the quality of being competent; adequacy; possession of required skill, knowledge, qualification, or capacity***."**Competency is still equated or defined as skills, ability to perform, capacity, and knowledge. As such, the term has been used loosely. While it does not really matter much when used casually to mean physical and mental abilities, it does matter when used in job analysis to describe job requirements and performance standards. Competency takes more than skills and knowledge. It requires the right and appropriate attitude that eventually translates to behaviour.

Laci (2016) sees competencies as involving abilities, behaviors, knowledge, and skills that impact the success of employees and organizations. Some common competencies are analytical thinking, communication, flexibility, integrity, and teamwork. Competency is the sum total of skills, knowledge and attitudes, manifested in the employee's behaviour. It is the "means" to achieve the "ends." A golfer for example, may have the skills to drive 300 yards, the knowledge why the golf ball fades or draws, yet he is not competent if he does not practice or if he gets easily affected by his opponent's better shots. A computer service customer representative may be very skilful and knowledgeable in repairing computers, but if he does not arrive on an appointed time to the client, is similarly incompetent.

For managers, competencies are vital if they want better performance in their employees. Whether during recruitment and selection phases or while already on board, competencies should be identified and studied. It should always be borne in mind that the competencies required of each job position differ from one another. In the job analysis and writing of job descriptions, quick guides can make the task easier.

Concept of Administrative Competence

Administrative competence is defined as the skill, knowledge, qualification, capacity or authority to manage or direct the affairs of a public or private office, business or organization (Unabridged Dictionary, 2015). Administrative competence refers to skills that are required for success in administration, such as communicating, computing, organizing, planning, scheduling, or staffing (Business Dictionary).The power of an administrative organ to exercise control over a certain field (English Dictionary)

Types of Administrative Competences

Administrative Competencies which involves "management of the job" and this includes more specifically:

- Management of Time and Priority Setting
- Goals and Standards Setting
- Work Planning and Scheduling

Communication Competencies that comprise of:

- Listening and Organizing
- Clarity of Communication
- Getting Objective Information

Supervisory or Building Teams Competencies that encompasses:

- Training, Mentoring and Delegating
- Evaluating Employees and Performance
- Advising and Disciplining

Cognitive Competencies which involve:

- Problem Identification and Solution
- Assessing Risks and Decision-Making
- Thinking Clearly and Analytically

These competencies were found to be the most important or vital for administration effectiveness. However, the following factors should be considered in determining the appropriate competencies to apply in public sector organizations:

a) Level of Decision-Making, Responsibilities and Authorities
b) Level of Internal Personnel Inter-Action
c) Level of Customer Contact and Inter-Action
d) Level of Physical and Aptitudinal Skills and Knowledge

Concept of Public Enterprise

Public enterprise is a business organization wholly or partly owned by the state and controlled through a public authority. Some public enterprises are placed under public ownership because, for social reasons, it is thought the service or product should be provided by a state monopoly. Utilities (gas, electricity, etc.), broadcasting, telecommunications, and certain forms of transport are examples of this kind of public enterprise(Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016).Agarwal (2018) defined Public enterprises as autonomous or semi-autonomous corporations and companies established, owned and controlled by the state and engaged in industrial and commercial activities.

Public enterprises are by definition intended to be operated in the public interest. This gives rise to a number of organizational and commercial issues. One problem is how to reconcile the need for close political control with the need for sufficient management autonomy. The public

corporation form, used extensively in Great Britain and widely copied in other parts of the world, is created by a special act of Parliament that defines its powers, management structure, and relationship with government bodies. As a corporation it has legal entity. Its capital requirements are met by the treasury, but it is supposed to meet its current expenses from its normal commercial operations. Its employees are not civil servants, and the top management is often appointed by the minister in charge. Another administrative form that is popular in parts of the world is the state company, which is simply an ordinary joint-stock company whose shares are owned wholly or partly by the state.

Public enterprises are usually intended to pay their way in the longer term, and yet they may be subject to political constraints in their pricing policy that could be in conflict with that objective. Conversely, for social reasons they may receive hidden subsidies or enjoy additional protection not available to competitors. Such factors tend to distort the normal commercial operations of the corporation or the company and often lead to managerial disorientation. Partly because of these noncommercial considerations, public enterprises may appear to be highly inefficient and, in times of difficult trading conditions, may be a drain on public resources. However, the measurement of the efficiency of a public enterprise is no easy matter. When it produces a marketable product, such as coal or steel that competes with other products the normal commercial criterion of profit may be adopted to assess its performance. In the case of a utility enjoying monopoly power, economists have developed concepts like cost-benefit analysis as a performance measurement tool. In recent years many state enterprises in the developed world have been given financial targets that take into account both social and commercial responsibilities.

Characteristics of Public Enterprises:

1. **Financed by Government:** Public enterprises are financed by the government. They are either owned by the government or majority shares are held by the government. In some undertakings private investments are also allowed but the dominant role is played by the government only.
2. **Government Management:** Public enterprises are managed by the government. In some cases government has started enterprises under its own departments. In other cases, government nominates persons to manage the undertakings. Even autonomous bodies are directly and indirectly controlled by the government departments.
3. **Financial Independence:** Though investments in government undertakings are done by the government, they become financially independent. They are not dependent on the government for their day- to-day needs. These enterprises arrange and manage their own finances. An element of profitability is also considered while pricing their products. It has helped the enterprises to finance their growth themselves.
4. **Public Services:** The primary aim of state enterprises is to provide service to the society. These enterprises are started with a service motive. A private entrepreneur will start a concern only if possibilities of earning profits exist but this is not the purpose of public enterprises.

5. **Useful for Various Sectors:** State enterprises do not serve a particular section of the society but they are useful for everybody. They serve all sectors of the economy.
6. **Direct Channels for Using Foreign Money:** Most of the government to government aid is utilized through public enterprises. Financial and technical assistance received from industrially advanced countries is used in public enterprises.
7. **Helpful in Implementing Government Plans:** Economic policies and plans of the government are implemented through public enterprises
8. **Autonomous or Semi-autonomous Bodies:** These enterprises are autonomous or semi-autonomous bodies. In some cases they work under the control of government departments and in other cases they are established under statutes and under Companies Act.

Functions of Public Enterprises

a) Generation of revenue for the government.
b) Economic growth and development.
c) Production and provision of essential services to the citizens.
d) Provision of employment and job opportunities.
e) Prevention of exploitation

Overview of Public Enterprise In Nigeria

The establishment of public enterprise by governments of developing economies the world over has been identified as a strategic approach to accelerated economic and national development. The main prop was the fostering and harnessing of economic potentials, balancing and control of strategic and social interest of the country, full employment as well as generation of revenue for the development of infrastructure.

With the exception of some episodic successes recorded at inception, structural legacy of public enterprises and their corresponding impact on the Nigerian economy have been ---- burdensome. However, with few exceptions, the story of public enterprises is anything but largely an illusion. Their operational performance has largely been inefficient and far below the social and economic objectives for which they were established. At inception, one could see in public enterprises an interesting skeleton; but following years of operation, there is not yet much meat on it.

According to Akpan (2002), "the direct involvement of government in enterprise ownership and management to foster economic development only result in a fiasco. The non accomplishment of developmental objectives has been viewed as a common generic scenario in all developing countries". In some countries, public enterprises have become an unsustainable burden on the budget and the banking system, absorbing scarce public resources. Investments in public enterprises have hardly produced cost covering streams of income. For example, the financial performance of nine key outfits (Telecommunications, Postal Services, Airlines, Railways, Transport, Power, Cement, Iron and Steel, and Textiles) in five West African economies such as

Ghana, Guinea, Benin Republic, Nigeria and Senegal has been persistently poor, with annual government transfer and overdrafts to these sectors ranging from 18-14 percent of GDP. Kikeri et al (1994).

Overextended and poorly performed public enterprises have also slowed the growth of private sector in many mixed economies as government would always block the entry of private firms which attempt to compete with government owned enterprises by granting them statutory monopolies. Government credits directed to capital intensive public enterprise often crowds private firms out of the money market. Even where government eliminated express guarantees from credit taken by public enterprises, creditors tended to assume that there was an implicit government guarantee, a perception that influenced their lending to the disadvantage of private sector. Similarly, inefficient provision of critical inputs and badly managed public utilities have increased the cost of business to private sector and the potential for expansion of the economy. Public enterprises compete for the lean economic resources available thereby creating diseconomies and reduction in productive capacity.

The dominance of public enterprises in the Nigerian economy; as in other developing economies, have over the years constituted a significant drag on the, overall growth rate. Inefficient public enterprises littered the country like the carcasses of an aborted industrial dawn; and their performance dismal resulting in huge financial losses, poor customer service delivery and their inability to meet demands, while at the same time overstretching thenation's economic resources and other social infrastructures. William Walls noted that "there are still around 1500state-run enterprises in Nigeria... of these, over 500 are under the control of the Federal Government while the rest are in the hands of the 36 state governments". He noted further that "These enterprises have consumed nearly half of the $300bn Nigeria has earned from its oil industry since 1973. They continue to soak up annual subsidies, import waivers and direct payments worth up to $2bn from the cash-strapped state coffers'".

According to Prof, Akinyemi, (see BBC Focus on African, p. 23) by the mid-70s it has become evident that government ownership of the commanding heights of the economy was not yielding the desired results. Government had become bloated and inefficient. Decisions in industrial and banking circles which needed urgent attention were victims to the slow and ponderous processes of the civil service. (See Daily Sun 14 September, 2004) p. 22.

One typical example of public enterprise inefficiency is the Nigeria's state run power company. NEPA Produces between 2400 and 4000 megawatts of electricity for a population of 120 million while Eskom an independent power plant PHCN in South Africa, produces around 45000 megawatts for a population a third of the size of Nigeria. Similarly, under Nitel's monopoly, only 400,000 people had access to telephone while under the GSM liberalization the potentials; according to market research, are that 7 million or more Nigerians would have access to a mobile phone within four years of liberalization.

The above highlights provided the framework under which the Nigerian government commissioned various study groups including Onosode (1982) and AI-Hakin (1984), to examine the performances of public enterprises, and advise government on ways of rationalizing and improving the public enterprises and making them less dependent on government for survival. The various study groups identified the following as the bane of public enterprise growth:

- Defective capital structure
- Ill-advised investment that resulted in costly and inefficient utilization of public resources.
- Inept management, financial indiscipline, corruption and nepotism.
- Bureaucratic redtapism
- Constant political interference in decision making by government
- Misuse of monopoly power at the expense of the public.
- Rigidity and low quality of service.

Administrative Core Support Competencies Needed in Public Enterprise in Nigeria

The assessment tools provide public enterprise with an opportunity to assess their employees' personal strengths and areas for improvement in their administrative roles in the enterprise and the larger society. The tool includes six competency clusters and several behaviour descriptors for each cluster. These competencies are the key behavioural competencies for administrative support employees identifiable in public enterprises.

The six competencies are specific behaviors and skills that are generally relevant to all administrative support positions in public enterprise irrespective of department, division, branch, work function or position. They include:

1. **Organization** – Effective management, organization, and prioritization of office functions as well as the workday/week/month for people, management and other stake-holders.
2. **Communication** – Clearly conveying and receiving messages to meet the needs of all. This involves listening, interpreting and delivering verbal, non-verbal, written and electronic messages.
3. **Service Delivery** – Understanding and meeting the needs of clients. Clients are individuals or groups who use the department's services.
4. **Technical** – Ability to accurately and thoroughly utilize office technology and to demonstrate practical knowledge of information management, e-mail management and privacy protection issues.
5. **Adaptability** – Personal willingness and ability to work in, and adapt to change.
6. **Interpersonal** – Working cooperatively and productively with others to achieve results.

Organization

- Develops and uses systems to organize and keep track of information or work progress.
- Prioritizes tasks in a fast paced, changing environment through frequent interruptions and changing deadlines.
- Organizes information or materials for others.
- Carefully prepares for meetings, travel, and conferences for others.
- Accurately tracks, monitors and purchases office equipment and inventory to ensure office functionality.
- Demonstrates expert knowledge of office policies and procedures.
- Carefully reviews and checks the accuracy of information in work reports provided by management, management information systems or other individuals.
- Identifies what needs to be done and takes action before being asked or required to.

Communications

- Listens attentively to people's ideas and concerns.
- Speaks clearly and can be easily understood.
- Demonstrates ability to provide explanation and/or options to resolve difficult or confrontational situations.
- Expresses ideas clearly and concisely in writing.
- Uses appropriate business style writing.
- Able to clearly and accurately explain issues, policies, procedures and other pertinent information to clients and co-workers.
- Clearly and concisely, composes/proofreads/edits documents such as letters, memos and e-mail.
- Demonstrates correct use of grammar, spelling and punctuation in all produced documents.
- Able to relay/redirect complete and accurate messages to appropriate persons/departments.
- Keeps his/her manager informed about progress and problems; avoids surprises.

Service Delivery

- Responds with courtesy, clarity and accuracy to inquiries from clients and other departments and agencies.
- Have a strong sense of urgency about solving problems and getting work done.
- Asks clear concise questions in order to obtain information from clients.
- Behaves courteously to calmly acknowledge the concerns of clients who may be hostile, rude, confused and/or frustrated.
- Effectively diffuses/de-escalates difficult or confrontational situations. 24. Applies due diligence and sound judgment when responding to requests and dealing with confidential information.
- Demonstrates an understanding of regulations, policies and guidelines to assist clients.
- Quickly and effectively solves client's problems.

Technical

- Effectively applies technical knowledge to solve a range of problems with office equipment and computerized business machines.
- Able to establish and maintain electronic and paper filing systems so that information can be readily retrieved
- Demonstrates ability to use office software to create, format and edit forms and presentations
- Efficiently retrieves, inputs, edits, formats, transmits and links electronic file data.
- Accurately creates, generates and maintains diverse reports & documents utilizing databases, spreadsheets and communications.
- Demonstrates knowledge of Information Management policies with regard to office level processes, procedures, and practices.
- Uses electronic mail in a manner consistent with Government e-mail management policy and guidelines.
- Accurately and consistently applies Government policies and guidelines to the use of electronic records management, physical records management and disposal, as well as faxing information.
- Understands and adheres to the policies, procedures and guidelines of the Government Purchasing Agency.

Adaptability

- Understands and accepts other points of view and recognizes the value of different approaches.
- Switches to a different strategy when an initially selected one is unsuccessful.
- Demonstrates openness to new organizational structures, procedures and technology.
- Accepts change even when there is ambiguity.
- Steps into co-workers tasks when needed or required. Willingly takes on new tasks.
- Works creatively within standard procedures to fit a specific situation.
- Applies special techniques to manage situations involving stress or change.

Interpersonal

- Respects and welcomes diversity of clients and co-workers.
- Respects the confidentiality of information or concerns shared by others.
- Values contributing to teamwork in order to achieve common goals.
- Listens and responds constructively to other team members ideas.
- Expresses disagreement constructively (e.g. by emphasizing points of agreement, suggesting alternatives that may be acceptable to the group.)
- Promotes co-operation with other government departments and agencies.

Benefits of Administrative Competencies in Public Enterprises in Nigeria

Effective administrative competencies create a real-time and predictive inventory of the capability of any administrator. By defining job roles and associated competency proficiency, administrators can readily identify their strengths and skill gaps. Administrative competency then informs targeted skills development learning solutions, improving individual and organizational performance, leading to better business results. Loew (2016) asserts that high-performance organizations enjoy the following benefits of effective administrative competencies:

a) ***Enriched Understanding of Expected Behaviors and Performance:*** Of course, the quickest path to improving performance starts by knowing the target performance. Organizations that take the time to define the short list of competencies and expected proficiency level for each competency, by job role, essential for the achievement of organizational goals, have taken the first step toward giving employees and leaders the best shot at performance excellence.
b) ***Improved Talent Planning:*** Competency assessment results inform organizations about current and future talent capability. To be assessed as competent, the administrator must demonstrate the ability and experience to perform a job's specific tasks. Data and analytics about employees' skills and knowledge are essential for performance risk mitigation that organization management would otherwise be blind to.
c) ***Optimized Development and Mobility Strategy:*** High-performance organizations realize that organizational success depends on how capable their people are. They also recognize that formal training does not necessarily equip employees with the appropriate skills to thrive in the organization. This is where administrative competency and competency-based development comes in. Competency-based development is created around the competency standards that have been identified for a specific role in an organization.
d) ***Enhanced Talent Pipeline:*** Administrative competency enables on-demand information about administrator's competency mastery and readiness to move into next-level or other critical roles. In this fashion, organizations are better prepared with development planning and, as a result, yield healthier talent pipelines regardless of business cycle or economic conditions.
e) ***Improved Operational Efficiencies****:* Administrative competency automation facilitates organization-driven learning and development, eliminates non-value-add training, highlights strengths to be further developed, flags critical skill gaps for mitigation, and generates higher levels of administrators' satisfaction with their overall experience with the organization.
f) ***Integrated Talent Processes:*** Serving as the standard for expected performance by job role, administrative competency becomes the standard by which the highest-performing organizations talk about and manage all phases of the administrator's lifecycle: from talent acquisition to development, to retention and reward.

Effect of Poor Administrative Competences in Public Enterprises in Nigeria

Administrative competencies are vital in public sector organizations in Nigeria if they want better performance in their employees. Whether during recruitment and selection phases or while

already on board, administrative competencies should be identified, studied, promoted and sustained. Sheahan (2017) asserts that Public sector organizations with poor administrative competencies encounter or experience the following problematic issues which adversely affect their productivity, performance, growth and efficiency:

- *Stunting Professional Growth:* Many people wish to advance their careers and climb those corporate ladders, but they won't get far unless they are organized. Poor administrative competences make administrators less efficient and less effective, and in the public sector organizations those are two qualities that do not bode well with employers. Poor administrative competences can cause administrators to confuse dates, mix up assignments, miss deadlines and, in turn, this makes them unreliable and undependable.
- *Decreasing Productivity:* Poor administrative competences are a hindrance to administrative productivity. Instead of being able to get work done, poor administrative competences will leave administrators rummaging through documents and attempting to carve out a clutter-free area on your desk. Spending all of this time being non-productive causes administrative efficiency to suffer, which will not look good to the organization. According to Productivity 501 - *a website dedicated to offering productivity tips* -good administrative competences a bet productivity and efficiency. Working in an office environment that is neat and tidy will reduce the amount of time administrators spend hunting files down, and increase their ability to get things done.

- *Poor Time Management Skills:* The old adage "time is money" rings true in the business world, where time is a valuable resource that can be costly to an organization when it is wasted. Poor administrative competences influence administrator's ability to manage his or her time well. This has a tendency to result in a failure to prioritize assignments, complete projects on time and prepare the day-to-day activities. In turn, an administrator's poor organizational and time management habits may come with an expensive price tag to the organization. It's important for administrators in public sector organizations to get firm handle on their administrative competences so that they can develop ways to manage their time.

- *Effects on Health:* There is a distinct link between administrative competences and one's mental and physical health (MayoClinic.com). When people are disorganized it causes them to feel more anxiety and stress. Consequently, this type of mental exhaustion can take a toll on the body. Stress-induced headaches and backaches are common physical symptoms that may be more prevalent in people with poor administrative competences.

Challenges of Administrative Competencies

Many of today's organizations can be characterized as distributed, matrix, and global, with functions that often operate autonomously in the absence of governance. These factors make efficient and effective identification, utilization, and implementation of competencies difficult. In fact, 69 percent of organizations surveyed said their administrators' competencies were only somewhat, or not at all, effective. According to Brandon Hall Group (2016, the ineffectiveness of

the competencies of administrators can be attributed to the following challenges of administrative competencies prevalent in many organizations.

✓ **Competency management is treated as an HR process, rather than a business imperative.**
On average, 88 percent of organizations identified better leader and employee performance as important or critical to the business. When asked about the single most important call to action to improve performance, interviewees said, "Tell employees what is expected of them to excel." Performance excellence, then, means clear communication of the competencies for which an employee is accountable. But in our *2015 State of Leadership Development Study*, 31 percent of organizations said they had not defined their critical leader competencies, much less any of the others (core, functional, or career). Until competency management is revered as the business imperative it is, performance will continue to languish.

✓ **Identification of critical competencies is difficult.**
Without an assessment strategy (15 percent) and the ability to predict the skills needed by the business going forward, organizations are left clueless as to what skills exist and are needed. Some 74 percent of organizations say that definition of essential competencies by talent segment and job role is critical, or important, to the business. Yet, a stark .7 percent of organizations have the means to predict the essential skills required.

✓ **Alignment of competency development with business goals is weak.**
Some 61 percent of organizations have only somewhat effectively, or not at all, identified critical talent segments and key job roles. Hence, it goes without saying that most have yet to define critical job responsibilities and success criteria. In the absence of these competency procedures, it is no surprise that 72 percent of organizations indicate that employee and leader skill building is only somewhat, or not at all, focused on developing competencies requisite for achieving business goals.

✓ **Investment in competency management is de-prioritized.**
For the first time ever, an organization's people strategy supersedes the organization's business strategy, in regard to its importance in meeting business goals.

Strategies for Developing Administrative Competence in Public Enterprises
According to Saez (2019), a knowledgeable, skilled and well-trained workforce is critical to a company's success. Improving competencies allows an organization to remain adaptable and competitive, ultimately contributing to increased productivity and greater revenue. This can easily be achieved with little to no expense, other than extra time and attention. Considering the benefits far outweigh the costs, developing administrative competencies is an opportunity every employer should embrace. He pin pointed the following strategies or ways to improve administrative competencies in organizations which if put in place or adopted in public sector organizations in Nigeria would boost efficiency and effectiveness in the sector:

a) *Coaching:* A simple and inexpensive way to develop administrative competencies is through regular coaching sessions. While coaching does not necessarily teach new skills, it provides constructive feedback and assistance to improve current ones. This allows

administrators to perform to the best of their ability, opening the door for more learning opportunities once they have a solid foundation.

b) *Voluntary Training:* In order to develop competencies, administrators need resources and motivation. Resources can come in any number of forms, such as learning seminars, e-learning programs, manuals, books or articles -- to name a few; however, there need to be tangible benefits involved. For example, make it clear that administrators who take advantage of competency training have a greater chance of advancing through promotions or raises. Performance-based bonuses are also an effective way to encourage workers to build upon their skills.
c) *Job Shadowing:* While job shadowing is a common practice for new hires, it can be just as effective for veteran administrators who wish to advance. The key here is to identify the top performers and have other administrators observe them whenever possible. At the same time, those being shadowed gain an opportunity to train others -- a new competency in itself. Administrators can also shadow colleagues who occupy a higher level in the organization, showing their trainees what they do and how to eventually advance to a similar position.
d) Team Building: Administrators need to be able to build strong teams that have a shared goal and to rally around the mission and vision of the organization. This necessitates administrators to develop basic team leader skills that help them develop teams, minimize team conflict and manage team dynamics.
e) Adding an Extra Element of Challenge: Increased responsibility is both effective for morale and improving competencies. Adding an extra element of challenge will give administrators something new to do, forcing them to sharpen their current skills while simultaneously building new ones. This can be done in many ways, but some examples include special projects, leading teams, conducting seminars and training or coaching new hires.

Measures to Boost Administrative Competences in Public Enterprises in Nigeria

Half (2018) identified 6 measures an administrator can employ to boost his or her administrative competencies. They include:

1) ***Pursue Training and Development:*** An administrator should investigate his or her organizational internal training offerings, if it has any. Ask if the organization would provide tuition reimbursement for an outside development course, conference or seminar. The administrator should consider the skills he or she wants to develop and whether he or she can demonstrate how a particular training program will improve his or her administrative skills, on-the-job performance or contributions to the organization.

2) ***Join Industry Associations:*** Become active in organizations like the International Association of Administrative Professionals. Participate in committees, attend seminars and other educational events, and talk with your fellow administrative professionals at

meetings. Networking tips can prove valuable to help administrators get out there and connect.

3) ***Choose a Mentor:*** An administrator should find a mentor with strengths in the area he or she wishes to improve and ask if the mentor will assist him or her. If the organization does not have an in-house mentoring program, the administrator should look for a mentor inside or outside the organization whose administrative skills he or she admires.

4) *Take on New Challenges:* If an administrator feels stagnant in his or her current role, the administrator should ask the organization management about ways he or she can assume more challenging assignments. Most supervisors will welcome initiative from staff; clearly, it will add value to the team. Showing motivation and ambition also may help an administrator stand out as a candidate for promotion.

5) ***Help a Nonprofit*****:** If an administrator cannot do more at his or her organization, consider possibilities outside the office, such as through charitable organizations. These groups may be receptive to the administrator's interest in supporting them, and the administrator might find mentors who can help him or her expand his or her abilities and knowledge. By volunteering on committees or for leadership roles, the administrator can develop administrative skills that not only benefit the organization but also are applicable to his or her paid job.

6) ***Participate in Diverse Projects****:* Listen up during meetings for colleagues requesting assistance with special initiatives. This may be an administrator's opportunity to expand his or her skill set by getting involved in other areas of the department or organization. Also offer to help if the organization or colleagues seem overloaded with projects.

Conclusion

It is up to public sector organizations in Nigeria to cultivate their marketability. Thoughtfully evaluate any weaknesses in their employees' set of administrative skills and commit to making improvements. Public sector organizations in the country need to stay on top of trends by reading industry researches that discusses developments in the administrative field. This would also help to ensure that they stay ahead of the curve rather than scrambling to keep up.

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