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## GOVERNANCE AND E-PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: THE PROSPECT AND NEXUS

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### ABSTRACT

*Governance and personnel management all over the world is not an easy task. In recent times, this is made easier by new technologies such as e-governance and e-personnel management. Accountability, credibility, effectiveness and efficiency have been much more enhanced. The dominance of favouritism, nepotism, ethnic chauvinism and religious bigotry in personnel management in many developing countries can be reduced in governance whenever e-governance and e-personnel are adopted. There will be reduction in human interference and merit order will be installed. The question this paper answers is how can e-governance (e-personnel) through the new technologies effectively improve the administrative process in the public sector? This paper appraises the essence of e-governance in the public sector of the developing countries (Nigeria) through the adoption of e-personnel management. The Ability, Motivation and Opportunity theory (AMO Theory) is used to appraise the need for effective improvement in the personnel management for better output in service delivery. The paper also assessed and addressed the four factors that affect e-governance and e-personnel in many countries of the world.*

**Keywords:** AMO Theory, Development, E-Governance, E-Personnel, Service Delivery and New Technologies,

### 1.0. Introduction

Government all over the world cannot operate in isolation or in a vacuum. It requires politics and administrative techniques to organise its territory and human resources so as to monitor the governance and administrative processes. Personnel management has been undergoing considerable change over the past few decades. A significant one is governments and decision makers recognising the potential of technology to improve personnel management and information. At the same time, there has been a desire in many public agencies around the world to increase efficiency, reduce costs, save space, improve service delivery and enhance transparency and accountability. This in the recent times had

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been achieved especially in developed democracies and other advanced states of the world. The developing countries are yet to fully achieve this fitness test in human resource management (HRM).

The expectation has been that computerisation and e-personnel management will not only improve human resource (HR) processes but will also provide more accurate, consistent and usable information. The basic function of a computerised Human Resource Information System (HRIS) is to hold data about employees. This information will transcend the existing staff to the new staffs and it will include their personal details as well as data about recruitment, salary, position, entitlements, attendance, leave, skills, training, performance, discipline and grievances. When integrated with payroll management, e-personnel will be able to calculate salaries and provide a range of supporting functions such as preparing pay slips and payroll reports.

E-personnel management is important and one of the life wires of any organisation, government and the entire country. If it is well organised, it will give a maximum output of good governance and effective administration. If it is poorly or shadily organised it will result into failure of governance machinery. All public and private offices, including businesses and government, generate personnel records. E-personnel resource management involves the transformation of many business processes that traditionally depended purely on the movement of paper to become partially or wholly computerised (Blaga and Gabor 2016). The adoption of technology has allowed human resource managers not only to focus on purely administrative activities relating to individual employees, but also to develop well-researched strategies and plans, enabling human resource planning to be aligned directly with overall business objectives.

The benefits of technology are not limited to strategic planning. Increasingly, organisations such as most private tertiary institutions, hospitals, large corporations among others and some selected government owned establishments are providing their staffs with direct access to human resource information through an intranet or web portal facility. As a result, the nexus between governance and the governed becomes simpler; organisations can communicate changes in personnel policies and procedures more easily. Managers can access staff records without having to keep multiple copies or wait for the delivery of a centrally held paper file; individual employees can access personal information about their work status and entitlements. Self-service facilities are as well provided so that staff members can manage their own personal data.

Electronic records may be replacing paper but most government organisations in developing countries will need to maintain a mix of manual and electronic record-keeping systems for the foreseeable future. Even in the most highly computerised offices, paper copies of forms and correspondence will still be printed from the electronic record. The challenge of managing records in this hybrid environment is to integrate paper and electronic systems so that all records about the same employee can be brought together be it

paper or digital media which are managed and used effectively. Griffin and Hoyle (2009) noted that manual filing systems are likely to play a continuing role in human resource management for some time. Therefore, paper records in governance must be maintained in good order so that the information contained in them can serve as authentic and reliable evidence.

E-personnel administration has a global inkling and adoption which has made the management of human resources to be cost effective, faster and accurate. Many developed economies of the world have a large percentage of their human resources managed electronically. The local adoption in developing countries especially in Nigeria is still fallible due to the extent of investment in information and telecommunication in the public sector. The objective of this study is to appraise the need, nexus and prospect for e-personnel adoption in Public sector Nigeria. The AMO theoretical framework (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity theory) is adapted to explain the impact of electronic devices in developing human resources. The organization of this study includes the review and analyse of the concept of e-personnel management, AMO (ability, motivation and opportunity) theoretical framework, the assessment of e-personnel management in Nigeria and the recurrent issues in e-personnel resource management in Nigeria as a yardstick for the developing countries.

## **2.0. E-Personnel Management Conceptual Clarification**

Personnel or human resource management refers to the management of both individually and collectively, of an organisation's most valuable resource, the people it employs. The goal of human resource management is to attract and retain a workforce that will enable the organisation to achieve its purpose and objectives. Personnel management also involves the training and development, health, welfare and performance improvement of each employee. In addition, it supports the organisation's capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate its own performance.

Nigro (1963) defined personnel administration as "the art of selecting new employees and making use of old ones in such manner that the maximum quality and quantity of output and service are obtained from the working force". In the words of Adamolekun (1986), personnel management is "the management role that is concerned with people at work and their relationship within the organisation. Personnel management on the other hand is the process of attracting, holding and motivating people (Agbaro 1990; Ajayi and Joshua 2016 and Schmidt 2017). This implies that personnel management can be defined as a process of obtaining and obtaining satisfied manpower capable of full utilisation at work with adequate retirement and separation plans. The process should not only be geared to individual and local government development but the nation at large.

Ndiomu (1992) observed that the personnel of an organization comprises of men and women, young and old who engage in the production of goods and services and who are the

greatest assets to the organization. The ability of any organization to achieve its goals depends, to a large extent, on the calibre, organizational electronic compliance and motivation of its personnel. Harry (2009) averred that personnel management is basically a form of Human Resource management. This area of management is concerned with everything about the staff and workers of the organization. It is fundamentally responsible for the hiring, training and staffing of employee in an organization. It also suggests the job description as well as the skills required for a particular job.

Nigro (1963) Guo, Xu and Wu (2016), Oladipo and Oladejo (2017) examines critically the following as the core functions of e-personnel management in any organisation, be it public or private to be the use of electronic to work in hiring, determination of job, motivation, remuneration, training, development, discipline and retirement process for the progress of the organization. In contemporary time, emphasis on e-personnel management include industrial relations which centred on work place relationship between employees interacting in the course of performing job tasks, employees-employers relations, regulated by the state or its agencies.

Cole (2002) posited that e-personnel management refers primary to the activities of specialists' staff responsible for implementing the key objectives of the organization in respect of its use of people (employees) the electronic medium. According to Pigors and Myers (1983), Vander Molen, and Zinzer (2016)e-personnel management is a set of staff function but also a managerial responsibility that often network electronically. Northcott (in croft 1996) stipulated that e-personnel management is an extension of general management prompting and stimulating every employee to make his fullest contribution to the purpose of the business via electronic connectivity. It is an advisory service and a staff activity with no obvious authority except that which arises from its terms of reference and the knowledge and skill of the adviser. The common factor relating e-personnel in governance is the use of technology in the process of the work instead of the paper works or manual operations.

### **3.0. Theoretical Frame work**

#### **3.1. AMO Theory (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity)**

Personnel are motivated at work by the opportunities they have and their ability to utilise it. The AMO (Ability, Motivation and Opportunity) framework was proposed by Bailey (1993), who suggested that ensuring the employee's discretionary effort needed three components: employees had to have the necessary skills, they needed appropriate motivation and employers had to offer them the opportunity to participate. The model was later developed by Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg and Kalleberg (Appelbaum et al., 2000), and its acronym stands for the three elements that enhance together employee performance: individual ability (A), motivation (M), and the opportunity to participate (O).

Boselie, (2010), Claudia (2015), Juan and Juan (2016) opined that work performance depends on the ability, motivation and opportunity for employees in order to make their contribution and maintain their well-being. If just one of the factors is zero, then the total equation is zero. The three factors cannot be left alone when it comes to employees 'actual job performance. If you recruit and work with employees with high A, M and O, however, working for his or her own gain and not cooperating, it will impact the well-being and overall work performance. Therefore, well-being is a further element in the equation, which will be called  $A \times M \times O$  well-being. If one of the factors is zero, then the total accounts is the overall performance of zero.

To increase A, M and O you can use the three factors as a structure of appraisal interviews by comparing your employee responses to your own perception of what they can, desire and have the opportunity for in order to gain a mutual understanding. Ability: What does your employees' experience being capable of? The most efficient ability is the use of technologies for the work success. Motivation: What motivates your employees, and which tasks specifically do they find meaning in? Opportunity: Which opportunities do your employees experience having? An employee developmental plan should be based on the specific role and responsibilities of each employee. A topmost opportunity in for e-personnel is the exposure to the use of technology to facilitate his outputs.

Training is a critical part of motivation for e-personnel and the increase or improvement in the ability of the employee to achieve the objectives of the organization in a rapid form. The AMO specific high performance work system demonstrates that mere recruitment and training of human resources is not sufficient to create a high performance organization. You need to go to another level, especially in these poor economic times, when companies cannot afford to lose valuable people. Therefore, special emphasis must be placed on motivating and training of the employees on how to operate on intranet or internet networking through the public to the organisation instead of manual operations.

#### **4.0. Assessment Of E-Personnel Management In Nigeria's Public Sector**

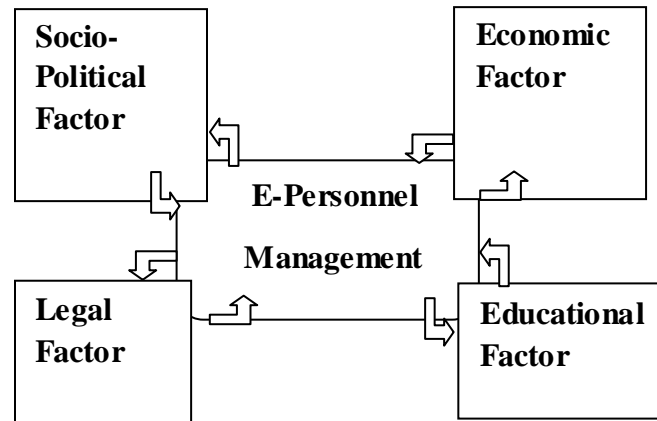
There has been a long expectation that technology will solve information management difficulties and that it will remove the need for paper records. Computerisation of the payroll and personnel information has often been regarded as a solution to the problem of poor data handling, poor information quality and bureaucratic exegesis particularly when existing paper systems have failed to meet information and business needs. The primary task of human resource management (HRM) in governance is to ensure that the official or non-official personnel are utilized and managed effectively. HR practitioners in public and private sector governance are saddled with the responsibility of designing and implementing policies and programmes that will enhance human abilities and improve the organisation's overall effectiveness.

Empirical studies have shown that poor human relations at work, neglect of staff welfare programmes and decline in motivation work conditions are often the factors that cause industrial strife and declining productivity in the work setting. Anyim, Ikemefuna and Mbah (2011) noted that in Nigeria like all other developing countries, the e-personnel and modern day entrepreneurs recognize that the electronic networking are vital element in the developing efficiency and effectiveness in managing both public and private resources. In order to achieve this, the e-personnel manager and HR practitioners perform some critical roles: the creating and implement policies, which should be in electronic writing and communicated to all employees through circulars or the employees' handbook. Offer advice and counsel the employees on matters bordering on productivity, safety at work, career path or management, morale, honesty, integrity and human relations among others.

E-personnel managers in in governance of both the public and the private sectors in Nigeria like other developing countries are saddled to ensure the provision of services electronically such as recruitment, selection and placement, compensation management, training and development, staff welfare programmes, industrial and labour relations, research and planning that assist personnel in performing their jobs or serve the organizational units efficiently. E-personnel manager also controls HR programmes and laid down procedures such as mentoring, e-monitoring of personnel and ensure that governance policies and guidelines are implemented religiously and to the letters e.g. grievance handling and disciplinary procedures, Federal Character principles or Quota system, fairness of appraisal exercise, granting of loans are effectively monitored and implemented or performed through e-monitoring system.

No doubt, e-personnel resource managerial functions are complex flow of activities and it is an integral part of the overall corporate plans of the enterprise. It follows therefore that, e-personnel function is a joint responsibility for all managers within the enterprise. However, some environmental factors may constitute a problem and affect the rate of adaptation from international to local environment for the under listed reasons:

- i. Socio-Political factors (power, ideologies, government policies, community ethno-religious traditions and regulations)
- ii. Economic factors (economy system; capitalism; mixed economy, Marxist and level of economic development; Developed, Developing and underdeveloped)
- iii. Legal factors (laws, regulations and administration of justice)
- iv. Educational factor (levels of enlightenment and language variation from one country to the other)

**Figure I: Typology of Factors Affecting E-Personnel Management in Nigeria**

Source: Author 2018

The social-political factor militating against e-personnel management in developing countries centres on power tussles within most of the public institution, unclear and uncertain government ideologies on work load, excessive administrative bottle neck, weak government policies to convert solely manual management of personnel to electronic services and unhealthy community ethno-religious traditions against new technology at work place. This anti-technology behaviour is due to the fact that human interference will be reduced in public institution by the innovation of technologies. Merit, free and fair order without nepotism or favouritism will be the order of the day. This is the symbolic meaning of the reverse arrow flow from e-personnel to socio-political factor and vice versa.

Economic factors militating against e-personnel management in developing countries centre on the economy system in practice. Nigeria has a mixed economy which combines the capitalist and socialist which are almost evenly mixed (Aluko 2015; Aluko 2017). This makes the free flow of new technology to have restricted penetration in the public institutions as it is in the private sectors. The level of economic development as well is a factor preventing the free assess of e-personnel and new technologies in the public sector of the economy. Nigeria is still in a developing zone of the level of economic development (Aremu, Isiaq and Aluko 2016). Therefore, a restructuring of the economy system to accommodate e-personnel in public sector is imperative to achieve rapid development.

The legal factors belittling and militating against e-personnel management in Nigeria centres on weak or no laws to establishing and regulating the use of new technologies in public establishment. Each sectors uses technology at its discretion and as suitable to their purposes. The educational factor is another huddle which the public personnel management in developing countries has to cross. The levels of enlightenment of some of the public



personnel administrators are not too strong to accommodate the new trend of e-personnel resources management in vogue in other developed climes of the world. The long age paper and manual rigmarole of entering of personnel data has become a tradition which is hard to overturn in quick times.

### **5.0. Recurrent Prospect In E-Personnel And Governance In Developing Countries**

Traditionally, the government is responsible to create conducive environment for the optimum performance of the both public and private sectors in providing essential services. In modern times, the use of new technologies and e-personnel have created some shakeups in the way and manner recruitment, selection, orientation, training, job analysis and evaluation, labour relations, appraisal exercise among others had been done in the past. This might be a form of Challenges in the personnel management in the public sector in Nigeria and other developing countries (Anyim, Ikemefuna and Mbah 2011).

There is a gradual change in the demands of the employers of labour in the personnel resource management of both public and private sectors. This is due to competitive pressure from the business, socio-political and economic environment. The organization must embark on changes in its internal environment as well as technological innovations. The foregoing factors no doubt have serious effect or repercussion for e-personnel management and planning in the organization as manpower inflow and outflow becomes imperative. This problem is coupled with the changing role of government in industrial relations. In the developing countries, the government policies have not been stable in the governance of industrial relations practice. This is evidenced by its frequent interventionist policy in industrial relations in order to tame the labour force from taken the government at ransom in a form of “dictatorship of the proletariats” (Oyedele, Omede, and Aluko, 2018). Therefore, “Guided Democracy” styles in Labour matters are adopted instead of full e-personnel management measures. Government enacts legislations from time to time as industrial situations may warrant and implements labour standards approved by international labour organization (ILO). Thus, for the prospect of e-personnel practitioner to be sacrosanct in the developing countries, there is the need to keep abreast of global labour legislations and best practices on continuous basis.

The issue of labour dissatisfaction at work is a growing problem in the public and private sectors in developing countries. This has to do with issues such as growing rate of unionisation of employees, brain drain, poor work habits or attitudes, low morale and alienation from work. Others include labour turnover, industrial conflicts and strikes which are inevitable phenomena in the poor or unimproved workplace environment and conditions. This no doubt translates into poor Productivity outputs. Poor productivity is a precursor to unemployment and inflation, decline in standard of living of the masses, hence e-personnel management can be adopted so as to improve productivity and thus strengthen the economy for the betterment of all parties in employment relations. Modern day HR

practice such as the adoption of e-personnel resource management has led to greater output and improved quality of products in the developed countries and thus the trend has encouraged HR practitioners in taking active roles on matter impinging on productivity improvement (Aluko and Aderinola, 2019).

Another vital issue is the quality of work life (QWL). This term refers to the extent to which personnel personal needs are met through their work. For instance one's QWL improves as one's work meets more of one's personal needs. Therefore, it is expected that improvements in QWL will affect the performance of the organisation favourably. The governance prospect on e-personnel must be HR professional so as to be able to take keen interest on issues that relates to job. Similar to this is the health and safety at work. The focus of e-personnel is on creating of a work environment which minimises the likelihood of work place injury. Job stress is a kind of work place psychological injury which e-personnel takes records on. The modern managers who are e-personnel complaints have recognised the dangers of potential personal and organisational job stress and have taken interest on ways to reduce the problem through routine medical attention and reduction in work load by the use of digital or electronic devices to ease stress.

There is a need to update public service reform by the government in developing countries; the main thrust of public service reform is to show that government business can be carried out openly, economically and transparently devoid of favouritism and corruptible tendencies. The reform aim at transforming government institution, implementing social charter, value re-orientation, moral rectitude, respect and due process to guarantee effective and transparent system of economic and financial management of government resources. These can sparsely be achieved unless the government adopts e-personnel resource managerial skills (Oyedele and Aluko, 2018).

The issues of the pauperisation of the workforce and the 'casualization' of labour need to be sternly address by e-personnel stakeholders. This is a nonstandard work arrangements caused by the effects of globalization and trade liberalization. The shift from standard to nonstandard work arrangements is as a result of employers' orientation to avoid costs associated with the application of the provisions of the labour laws which are designed to protect permanent employees in standard and pensionable employment and also for the purpose of flexibility. The practice gives employers the freedom to 'hire' and 'fire' casual employees at will. The practice has been a source of constant conflict between unions and employers. No legislation in Nigeria is supportive of this practice.

The government in most cases gives a limit to the number of professional staffs to be recruited and the geographical space where which they will come from. This is very common in public organisation where employment in government establishments is expected to reflect the Federal character principle. The HR practitioners have herculean task in ensuring that employment is carried out in line with the right principles without

compromising merits and standards. In this process, the available few through appropriate technologies are employed so as to fill up the quota system.

The issue of declining core values of employees to work and work ethics is a dent on the prospect of governance through inadequate personnel resources management. Work ethics in terms of punctuality, honesty, diligence was tenaciously followed in the early 1990s but in the modern day, there is growing evidence of serious decline in work ethics. The syndrome is such that some of the enterprises do not provide the basic guidelines for living in written and in electronic copies in case the paper copy gets missing or is destroyed, rather the individuals are responsible for exploring and determining for themselves what they want to do on the work and become in life. This trend led to subversion of values as bribery, corruption, lack of transparency, indiscipline, wasteful spending among others. E-personnel management adoptions will create a digitalized monitoring system for the public sector and e-governance will become easier.

The advent of economic recession in Nigeria is a clear indication that it is time for an outright shift from time wasting and excessive money consuming manual personnel management to e-governance and e-personnel management. Economic recession is caused by decline in economic activities that brought about dramatic changes in fiscal returns, decline in industrial production and output coupled with corresponding rise in the rate of unemployment (Aluko and Aderinola, 2019). This trend affects governance and its various institutions. It constitutes the main environmental factor affecting collective bargaining process. It also creates room for spate of industrial actions due to manpower contraction caused by capacity under-utilization in public and private sectors. Governance process must modify their responses by aligning with the trend of e-personnel to face these challenges realistically.

## **6.0. Conclusion**

All over the world, governance processes are simplified through e-personnel management development in a constant and conspicuous approach. It has received considerable attention through a steady stream of events at the national and international levels. The use of electronic in governance and management of personnel can consistently improve the quality of life for citizens and can create a sharp reduction of costs and time. It can increase speed and enhance productivity.

E-governance and e-personnel management if effectively utilize will eventually transform the processes and structures of government and create a public administrative system that is less hierarchical, empowering civil servants to serve citizens better and to be more responsive to their needs. E-governance and e-personnel must be given serious consideration by government at all levels in the developing countries not only for its potential for stronger institutional capacity building, but also for better service delivery to citizens and business which will increase local social and economic development. It will

reduce corruption by increasing transparency and social control. It will also show the way to enhancing amore civilized society and business community.

For many nations, Nigeria inclusive, the digitizing service deliveries like filing personal income taxes online or paying VATs electronically represents a marked departure from the traditional paper-based way of doing business. For some countries, especially in the developed ones, such departures have culminated in success. For others especially in the developing countries, the challenge is formidable, but not insurmountable. Therefore, it is imperative for Nigeria and all other developing countries of the world to incline to the new technologies in the governance and administration processes so as to create a formidable rapid development, reduction in human interference at public work space, reduce inducement and corrupt practices in personnel management and an increase in work efficiency and effectiveness.

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