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The Effect of Insecurity on Human Resource Management in North-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

The current wave of insecurity in Nigeria especially, in the Northeastern Region is accompanied by an avalanche of adverse effects on its populace. The above situation has a lot of implications on human resource performance and management. It is, therefore, in light of the above that this study examined the effect of insecurity on human resource management in northeastern Nigeria. The paper adopted a qualitative approach where an in-depth interview was used to elicit data from twelve employees and six human resource managers in the region. The findings of the study unraveled that the state of insecurity in the northeastern region is worrisome and that it has an enormous adverse effect on human resource performance and management. It was also found that the state of insecurity in the region caused incessant fear and worries among employees despite the motivation they had in their various organizations. It was, therefore, recommended among other things that there is the need for the government and human resource managers to strategies measures on how to protect the lives and property of their employees in the affected areas as that would go a long way in stabilizing their performance which at the long-run would bring about national development.

Keyword: Human Resource, Management, Northeastern Region

Introduction

The wave of violent crime and insecurity in Nigeria is becoming worrisome and alarming to every responsible citizen (Lucas et al., 2020). Security challenges cut across the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, especially in recent times when the issue of kidnapping, insurgency, and armed banditry repeatedly form the headline of most media outfits. Ndubuisi-Okolo & Anigbuogu (2019) corroborate that the quagmire in which security challenges have been placed in Nigeria as a country is unquantifiable.

The above situation has no doubt resulted in incessant fear and displacement among human resources in the affected areas especially Northern Nigeria were kidnapping, armed banditry insurgent attacks are ubiquitous. Mojisola (2019) substantiates that the state of insecurity in Nigeria especially the herdsmen-farmers has an avalanche of adverse implications on human resource management. Mojisola (2019 p84) further argued the challenges posed by insecurity on human resource management ranges from “displacement of workforce from kidnapping prone areas, a threat to the firm’s ability to attract diverse workforce in terms of gender and

race, reduction in the pools from which prospective employees can be drawn, to disabilities of human resources arising from injuries sustained from clashes”.

Statement of the Problem

It is no longer hidden that Nigeria as a country is faced with increased cases of ritual killings, armed robbery, Farmers-Herders clashes, cattle rustling, pipeline vandalism, bunkering, secessionist agitations, political assassination, kidnapping, and even insurgency and terrorism (Lucas et al., 2020). The current insecurity according to Mojisola (2019) has enormously affected “human resources management in the area of availability of people to recruit from in the crisis areas as people are not willing to work in this crisis areas despite the high rate of unemployment prevalent in the country.” However, there is a paucity of empirical studies that explore the aforementioned subject matter. Therefore, this current study seeks to fill in the gap by examining the effect of insecurity on human resource management with particular reference to the North-eastern region of Nigeria.

Research Objectives

- i. To find out whether insecurity has an effect on human resource management in North-Eastern Nigeria
- ii. To know whether insecurity in the Northeast hampers human resource productivity in the region.

Research Questions

- i. Does insecurity have an effect on human resource management in North-Eastern Nigeria?
- ii. Does the effect of insecurity in the Northeast hamper human resource productivity?

Conceptual Clarification

Insecurity: Insecurity According to Yalwa (2019), insecurity can be described as a state or condition of being unsafe or the feeling of being unsafe characterized by self-doubt, anxiety, fear, and vulnerability; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, moral panic, etc. Yalwa (2019) further argued that at the national level, insecurity could be seen as a threat to the general peace ranging from civil disorder, large-scale violence, or even an armed insurgency. Insecurity is simply the absence of security and the people affected by it are vulnerable to the threats and dangers when it occurs (Akpan, 2013).

Human Resource Management

There are quite several extant definitions of human resource management in corpora. However, there is no universally accepted definition. This segment of the paper reviewed some of these definitions and also in the end provide a definition that holistically and comprehensively describes what human resource management entails. According to Ganesan (2014), human resource management is a system that focuses on human development and effective management of people so that they will enjoy human dignity in their employment. However, Moyisola (2019, p86) sees human resource management as “a process of making efficient and effective use of human resource in an organization so that set goals are achieved.

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on the Hierarchy of Need Theory. The theory according to Kaur (2013) was propounded by Abraham Maslow. Maslow's theory argued that people have five types of needs and that these needs are in a hierarchy. In other words, human needs according to Maslow are in a hierarchy from the lowest to the highest. Some of the needs identified by Maslow are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Maslow's theory proposed that if all the aforementioned needs are met, people (employees) are likely to be motivated hence become productive in their day-to-day activities in an organization.

Therefore, it is apposite to infer that the above theory has a nexus with this current study. The ability of the human resource manager or the management of an organization to identify and address the pressing need of the human resource (employees) especially in an ambiance saturated with cases of insurgent attacks, banditry, and kidnap would help motivate the employees to discharge their duties fittingly.

Methodology

This research study adopts a qualitative approach to explore the subject matter under investigation. The researcher adopts the use of the in-depth interview to elicit responses from the population of the study. It is pertinent to note that the population of this study is comprised of human resource managers and employees from the six states that make of North-eastern Nigeria. In other words, the researcher purposefully sampled six human resource managers and twelve employees from the following states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. The rationale for choosing human resource managers and employees is due to their wealth of experience on the subject matter under experience. In précis, a total number of eighteen people were interviewed on the effect of insecurity in North-eastern Nigeria. Even though the sample size is not numerically representative of the study population, Targema (2020) argued that emphasis in qualitative studies is not on adequacy of the sample size in terms of number, but on the capacity of the sample size to supply the required data.

Results

The following sections contain details of discussions arising from the data. The discussions are categorized into themes in tandem with the research objectives. In other words, each theme addresses a research objective.

Effect of Insecurity on Human Resource Management in North-Eastern Nigeria

The above theme is aimed at investigating the consequences of insecurity on human resource development and management in North-eastern Nigeria. However, the researcher first enquires from the participants to know the current state of insecurity in the North-eastern region. Data obtained from the in-depth interview sessions revealed that the North-eastern Nigerian is faced with an avalanche of insecurity challenges that hamper the serenity of the region. One of the interview participants said

It is no longer news that in the part of the country insecurity has become an order of the day. Whenever you tune on your radio or television, all you hear is cases of kidnap, armed banditry, and insurgent attacks among others. To be honest with I don't think this environment is safe for me and my family.

Another participant corroborated thus

...if you are in this country, you don't need a prophet to tell you that the rate of insecurity in the Northeast region is alarming. I am not disputing the fact that other regions share the same ugly experience, what I'm trying to say is that our case here in the Northeast is peculiar and tragic.

Similarly, another participant stated that

The state of insecurity in the Northeast is worrisome, however, here in Gombe, especially in the State Capital; I don't think we have so many insecurity-related problems. However, there are cases of kidnap on daily basis and this situation has created a lot of fears in the heart of many of my colleagues because nobody knows who would be kidnapped tomorrow.

From the above, it is apposite to infer that the state of insecurity in northeast Nigeria terrible and unaccommodating.

Under the above theme, the participants were also asked whether the current state of insecurity in the North-eastern region has in one way or the other affected human resource management and performance. In response, the majority of the participants revealed that the state of insecurity in their various states has affected them adversely. One of the participants, who is an employee with a non-government organization in Maiduguri, Borno State said

The truth is that the state here in Borno State is disturbing even though we experience an iota of peace lately. However, as an employee, I must confess that the issue of insecurity has affected my performance. I have intentions of resigning from my current job because the area I live in is no longer safe for me and my family.

Another participant who is a Human Resource Manager said:

Honestly, our employees were and are still affected by the prevalent cases of insecurity such as kidnapping, insurgent attacks among others. Of a truth, a lot of our human resources, I mean our employees have resigned over the years. Out of a hundred percent of the staff that resigned, about eighty to ninety percent resigned on the ground of insecurity-related issues.

Another participant who is also a human resource manager corroborates that

Human resource management in conflict-affected areas is always problematic. Firstly, recruitment of potential qualified staff becomes a problem because most of the qualified people would not or may not like to apply due to fear of future attacks. Secondly, even the existing staff in the affected areas live in fear and discomfort. I said discomfort because psychologically and physically the employee is affected negatively. For instance, some of the social amenities here are destroyed during insurgent attacks. Therefore, I think this issue of insecurity is eating us up negatively and something needs to be done about it.

From the foregoing, it is apposite to infer that insecurity harms human resource management in North-eastern Nigeria.

Areas Where Insecurity Affected Human Resource Management in North-Eastern Nigeria

The above theme sought to ascertain the specific areas where insecurity affects human resource management in North-eastern Nigeria. Data retrieved from the in-depth interview with the Human Resource Managers revealed that the majority of the human resource

managers revealed that one of the major challenges they faced is motivating employees to be productive amidst fear of the unknown and uncertainties especially whenever there are attacks by either insurgent groups or any form of rancor in their ambiances. In his words, one of the participants said

The fact remains that whenever insurgent attacks become recurrent, it affects the productivity of our employees. You see, the thing is that no matter how much you give an employee as remuneration to motivate him/her if the environment is unsecured, you are just wasting resources because psychologically

In the same vein, another participant revealed that

How do you motivate someone who lives in fear. I can't boldly say that workers here are productive because we all live in fear. Fear of either getting kidnapped or attacked by insurgents. ...Therefore, I think this insurgent or insecurity of issues has greatly affected the productivity of human resources and also made human resource management difficult.

Another participant has a different perspective. According to the participants, the state of insecurity in the northeast has resulted in the dearth of qualified human resource and human resource managers in the region.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that insecurity has an enormous adverse effect on human resource management. Mojisola (2019 p84) argued the challenges posed by insecurity on human resource management ranges from "displacement of workforce from kidnapping prone areas, a threat to the firm's ability to attract diverse workforce in terms of gender and race, reduction in the pools from which prospective employees can be drawn, to disabilities of human resources arising from injuries sustained from clashes". Similarly, Dialoke (2014) human resources could not evolve under a rising incident of violence, militancy, and conflict. Therefore, Dialoke (2014) inferred that the growth of insurgency and other related security issues in Nigeria especially in the North-eastern region has left many challenges in the hands of human resource managers and the field of human resource management.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is, therefore, apt to infer that insecurity is a threat to effective human resource management and human resource performance in North-eastern Nigeria. Therefore, there is the need for a holistic approach to overhauling the security challenges in the North-eastern region and Nigeria at large. Additionally, this study also concludes that motivation of employees is always problematic in areas affected by insecurity due to incessant fear and anxiety among employees and this would definitely affect employees' productivity thereby resulting to poor outputs.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. There is the need for the Nigerian government and human resource managers to strategize measures on how to protect the lives and property of their employees in the affected areas as that would go a long way in stabilizing their performance which at the long-run would bring about national development.

2. Employers should give special remuneration to employees posted to conflict affected areas to motivate them.
3. The human resource department need to organize seminars and symposiums consistently to educate employees on safety measures during conflict situations within their work ambiance.

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