
THE RELEVANCE OF INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY TO
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

Olowookere, Elizabeth. I

Department of Psychology, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria
bettyyii@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

National development may be described as the continuous economic, political, and technological improvement of a nation-state, culminating in improved standard of living of its citizens. Nigeria is a nation well-endowed with enormous natural and human resources yet, Trading Economics (2012) reported that more than 50% her population live in poverty with corruption and poor infrastructure as the main obstacles for future sustainable development. From the academic platform, various ideas and contributions on ways to achieve Nigeria's national development goals have been brought to the fore by different disciplines in the sciences, arts and the social sciences; however, this paper emphasizes the relevance of Industrial/Organizational psychology to national development in Nigeria. Specifically, some the roles and functions of industrial and organizational psychologists in relation to national development were discussed. It was concluded that the source of Nigeria's development problem is not the non-availability of natural, financial or technological resources but rather gross manpower incompetence, misconduct and scarcity. This paper recommended that the principles and practice of Industrial and Organizational psychology be employed in the proper selection of the right people into positions of authority, equitable and operative compensation systems and effective people management in order to foster national development in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Industrial and Organizational Psychology, National Development

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a nation well-endowed with enormous natural and human resources. However, more than 50% her population lives in poverty with corruption and poor infrastructure as the main obstacles for future sustainable development (Trading Economics, 2012). A number of development plans have been put together in Nigeria to eradicate or reduce the social, political, and economic decay in the country such as the post- independence national development plans. However, Nigeria's underdevelopment status questions the efficacy of the various development plans formulated over the years. Apart from the Millennium Development Goals, Marcellus (2009), stated that Nigeria's development planning experience can be divided into four broad eras which include the colonial era, the era of fixed term planning (1962-1985), the era of rolling plans (1990-1998) and the new democratic dispensation (1999- till date).

Ezirim, Okeke and Ebiriga (2010), asserted that several economic reforms and strategic plans have been put in place in Nigeria to diversify the revenue sources of the economy towards achieving the nation's vision 2020; and that many of these reforms and plans have lasted without substantial assurance of the country's targets. They also reported a number of declarations made by the 14th Nigeria Economic Summary Group (NESG 14) 2008, on the challenges toward realizing the vision 2020, one of which points to the problems of governance and institutional capacity. According to Ezirim, Okeke and Ebiriga (2010), the Group concluded that these deficiencies are major obstacles in the race to become one of the 20 leading economies in the world. Alao (2010), posited that investigations and explorations by scholars have been showing that higher productivity is a sure means of boosting eco-growth and raising standards of living in any country. Formulating and implementing effective productivity schemes have helped to pull many economies out of global recession and set them on the course of growth (Alao, 2010).

From the academic platform, various ideas and contributions on ways to achieve Nigeria's national development goals have been brought to the fore by different disciplines in the sciences, arts and the social sciences. Every discipline has a role to play in the quest for national development, and these roles cannot be overestimated. The

main objective of this paper is to accentuate the relevance of industrial and organizational psychology to Nigeria's national development. Consequently, this paper presented a general overview of national development in Nigeria, explained the concept of psychology and the relevance of industrial and organizational psychology to Nigeria's national development.

National Development in Nigeria

National Development is the process of growth and improvement in the nation-state (Obasanjo, 2006). National development may be described as the continuous economic, political, and technological improvement of a nation-state, culminating in improved standard of living of its citizens. Marcellus (2009), observed that development is a word that is difficult to define because of the multifarious contextual usage of the concept. But in its simplest reductionism, the term means improvement or to become more advanced, more mature, more complete, more organized, more transformed etc. Development in any nation is not a sudden occurrence or event but a product of careful and strategic planning. Marcellus (2009) posited that development planning comprehensively involves predetermining a nation's visions, missions, policies and programmes in all facets of life such as social, human, political, environmental, technological factors etc. and the means of achieving them. Development planning in Nigeria can be traced to the colonial administration. It started when the colonial government under the colonial development and welfare fund introduced the "Ten Year Plan of Development and Welfare for Nigeria" in 1946. As observed by Ayo (1988), the plan focused on building a transport and communication system, while little provision was made for industrial development. In his opinion, the first development plan was selective in its focus on agriculture, as attention was concentrated on a limited range of cash crops which included cocoa, palm products, cotton, groundnut and timber. It can therefore be inferred that the colonial development plan favoured the colonial masters at the detriment of the colony. However the plan was prematurely terminated as a result of the rapid structural changes and the introduction of the federal system of government in 1954.

The Era of Fixed Medium-Term Plans witnessed the launching of four comprehensive development plans, and these are: First National Development Plan (1962-1968), The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974), the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980) and the Fourth National Development Plan (1981-1985). These development plans were characterized by clearly defined and focused objectives directed towards national profit. The first National Development Plan was initiated in 1962 to lapse in 1968 (a period of six years). The military intervention of 1966 and the civil war that took place between 1966 and 1970 hindered the progress of this development plan. Nevertheless, several important achievements were recorded by this plan, some of which are: the establishment of the first generation Universities and the execution of such projects as oil refinery in Port Harcourt, the Niger Dam and the Niger Bridge, among others

The Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) was initiated by the regime General Yakubu Gowon shortly after the civil war, with its focus on rebuilding the nation, fostering socio-economic development and national unity in Nigeria. Some of the major achievements of this national development plan include the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps Scheme (NYSC), federal scholarship and loan schemes for Nigerian students and construction of federal roads. The Third National Development Plan (1975-1980) was also initiated by General Gowon's administration. It represented a turning point in development planning in Nigeria, involving huge capital investment and extensive consultations with the private sector of the economy. This plan set out to reduce the level of unemployment; increase per capital income; diversify the economy; ensure more equitable distribution of income and the indigenization of economic activities. The sudden change in government in 1975 inhibited the implementation of the Third National Development Plan.

The Fourth National Development Plan (1981-85) was initiated by government of President Shehu Shagari in 1981. This plan can be tagged as the first democratically formulated development plan under the presidential system of government. As reported by Ogunjimi (1997), the plan was intended to further the process of establishing a solid base for the long-term economic and social development of Nigeria. Political instability and abrupt change in government frustrated the implementation of this plan, resulting in economic decline. At the end of the four plan periods, the foundation for sustainable growth and development was yet to be laid. The productive base of the economy and sources of government revenue were yet to be diversified. The economy did not have its own driving force and was therefore highly susceptible to external shocks (Okojie, 2002).

Consequent upon the setbacks experienced in the implementation of the first four National Development Plans, Nigeria incurred huge economic deficits and needed desperate measures to salvage the situation. This led to the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the Babangida administration in 1986. The Babangida administration introduced a three-year rolling plan, a 12 to 20 year perspective plan and the normal operational annual budgets, which are to run simultaneously. However, in 1996 General Sani Abacha replaced the rolling plans with Vision 2010. The new democratic dispensation in development planning began in 1999 as a result of a switch over from military rule to democratically elected government.

The Obasanjo administration initiated the National Economic Direction (1999-2003) and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), a four-year medium term plan for the period 2003 to 2007. It was a concerted effort involving the three tiers of government, organized private sector (OPS), the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the general public. The State Governments equivalent plan is the State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), while the Local Governments equivalent plan is the Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (LEEDS). The Seven Point Agenda (2007-2011) of the Yar Adua/Jonathan Administration was an improvement on the NEEDS. Vision 2020 was also initiated in 2009 by Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, which was the brainchild of late General Sani Abacha.

Nigeria's current levels of poverty, poor human development ranking and macro-economic instability are indicators of the poor performance of these development goals. Some of the causes of the failure of the development plan include shortage of competent manpower, poor coordination of development plans, overdependence on petroleum resources, poorly defined goals and objectives etc. Central to all of these issues is human resource management; the human resource coordinates all other resources, and plays a major role in the achievement of the national development plans.

Psychology as a Discipline

Psychology could be defined as the scientific study of human and animal behaviour and mental processes, with the aim of understanding, organizing, directing, predicting and modifying behaviour. American Psychological Association (APA, 2012) defined psychology as a diverse discipline, grounded in science, but with nearly boundless applications in everyday life. Some psychologists do basic research, developing theories and testing them through carefully honed research methods involving observation, experimentation and analysis. Other psychologists apply the discipline's scientific knowledge to help people, organizations and communities function better. Behaviour in this respect includes anything a person or animal does that can be observed in some ways. From what is done or said, psychologists can and do make inferences about the feelings, attitudes, thoughts, and other mental processes of individuals, which may be behind the behaviour of such individuals (Shenge and Icheke 1999). The different specialties in psychology are Clinical psychology, Developmental psychology, Counselling psychology, Educational psychology, Cognitive psychology, Industrial/Organizational psychology, Physiological psychology, Social psychology, and Experimental psychology among others. The focus of this study is Industrial/Organizational psychology which is the subfield of psychology that studies all aspects of behaviour in an organization or work setting. Wikipedia encyclopedia (2012), defined industrial and organizational psychology is the scientific study of employees, workplaces, and organizations. It is related to the concepts of organizational behaviour and human capital. Industrial and organizational psychologists contribute to an organization's success by improving the performance and well-being of its people.

The Relevance of Industrial/Organizational Psychology to National Development

The issue of development has been of great concern to all Nigerians, Africans, and the world at large. The development of Africa is even of more serious concern to all and sundry. Accordingly, many disciplines have been trying to look at development issues and how they could contribute their quota towards its achievement (Adeyanju, 2008). Development and progress depends on multi-disciplinary collaboration and multi-sectoral coordination. There is so much for everyone to do, but each discipline can bring to bear on the overall effort, its body of knowledge and methods. Psychologists have to identify their niche within each programme, make others aware of the importance of what psychology offers, and convince them on the relevance of psychology's potential contribution to the task at hand; and strive hard to make a positive impact if and when co-opted to work with others (Obasanjo, 2006).

In the opinion of Obasanjo (2006), “What many consider the permanent element of development is economic growth. It is assumed that once the necessary physical infrastructure is provided, economic development would follow automatically. Experience has shown that the human factor is as important to national development as economic inputs, if not more important”. Social values, individuation, work ethics, educational attainment and motivation are among several factors which affect productivity and the success or failure of development (Obasanjo, 2006).

As noted by U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (2012), Industrial and organizational psychologists apply psychological principles to human resources, administration, management, sales, and marketing problems. They assist management in organizing the work context for improved employee productivity, and also help organizations’ transition during periods of change and development. A nation can be likened to an organization, therefore organizational principles and theories are suitable applications for any nation-state. At the core of nation-building is the management of human resources, which is a vital aspect of industrial/organizational psychology. Some of the areas in which industrial/organizational psychology is relevant to national development include: recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation management, employee management and motivation.

Recruitment and Selection

Wikipedia encyclopedia (2012) stated that industrial/organizational psychologists typically work with Human Resource specialists in organizations to design recruitment processes and personnel selection systems. Recruitment is the process of acquiring applicants who are available and qualified to fill positions in the organization (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield, 2006). Wikipedia encyclopedia (2012), described personnel selection as the systematic process of hiring and promoting personnel, involving the employment of evidence-based practices to determine the most qualified candidates. Common selection tools include ability tests (e.g., cognitive, physical, or psychomotor), knowledge tests, personality tests, structured interviews, the systematic collection of biographical data, and work samples (Wikipedia encyclopedia, 2012).

Compensation Management

Compensation includes wages or salary, bonuses, pension/retirement contributions, and perquisites that can be converted to cash or replace living expenses (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2012). Industrial/Organizational psychology is also concerned with the design and implementation of compensation and benefit systems for all employees in the organization. Industrial psychologists conduct job evaluation to assign remunerative values to each job according to the skills and qualification required. Jobs requiring similar skills and qualifications are allocated rewards within the same range. As a matter of principle, Industrial psychologists ensure fairness and consistency in the reward system. For civil servants within the nation, it is important to establish fair and workable compensation strategies in order to curb incessant strikes and union actions within the different sectors of the economy. A systematic reality in many developing countries is that public service incentives are weak. There is the monetary side: wages are too low and pay scales that at best are barely sufficient to live off of, are not competitive with the private sector or do not compensate for postings to remote location (UNDP Conference Paper, 2006).

Employee Training and Development

Empowering the people with relevant job skills would enhance their productivity and ultimately foster national development because the progress of any society lies on the quality of its education, institutions and infrastructure, and workers’ productivity (Lewis, 2004). Industrial-organizational psychologists design and implement effective training programs for employees within organizations. They conduct needs analysis at the organizational, person and task levels to identify employee training needs and design a high-quality training programs. The summative evaluation of a training program helps industrial-organizational psychologists to ensure that trainees have met the training objectives and have acquired the requisite skills to perform their duties efficiently. Dike (2009) argued that Nigeria is brimming with untapped talents. It is therefore the responsibility of every government to provide the citizens with critical skills and resources to realize their full potentials. To develop as it should, Nigeria must invest in human capacity development very seriously, as no nation can compete effectively in the emerging computerized global market place with poorly educated workplace and poorly made goods and services.

Employee Management and Motivation

Onaiyekan (2006) posited that persons are the valuable resources of any nation and there is proven evidence that Nigerians are resourceful, highly motivated and can show themselves as brilliant as any group of people can be. People are Nigeria's greatest wealth. Nigeria will never be truly great until the people are well managed to perform at their optimal standard through good direction, mentoring and governance. Management is the art of getting people together to accomplish desired goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively. It is one word that adequately describes the field of Industrial/Organizational psychology, involving planning, organizing, staffing, leading/directing, controlling, monitoring and motivation of employees. Eyre (1989), defined management as the art or skill of directing human activities and physical resources in the attainment of predetermined goals.

Motivation is another basic function of management, because the efficiency of employees is dependent on it. Motivation engenders job satisfaction and improved productivity. It is critical to capacity building, problem solving, goal setting and achievement. Maslow (1970) postulated that human needs are in hierarchy and that the lowest which is physiological needs followed by safety, and belongingness must be satisfied in that order before higher level needs like esteem and self-actualization. The prevalent need at a particular time serves as the motivator, and this follows a satisfaction-progression order. The Civil servants and many Nigerians even in the private sector are at the physiological and safety needs level. Consequently, they are motivated by pay, job security, health and safety. The civil service is characterized by a feeling of inequity in terms of the compensation system, which explains the gross misconduct within the system. According to Adams (1965), people value fair treatment which causes them to be motivated to keep the fairness maintained within their relationships with co-workers and the organization. Perhaps, the most pervasive structural motivators and incentives are located at the societal level, such as security, rule of law, investment climate, civil service pay or legislation conducive to civic engagement (UNDP Conference paper, 2006).

Nwoke (2011) opined with great conviction, that the most important wealth of any nation is the people. In the observation of Onaiyekan (2006), there are some countries that had little or no natural resources, but have achieved reputation and recognition in the world through good and honest governance, formidable government and leaders who have both human and national development at heart. For instance, countries like Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, their leaders, through good governance and respect for human right trained and developed human resources who later turned and developed their nations. These countries are in the frontline of the world's economy, they have no crude oil, hardly any minerals, and little or no land to farm and all they have are people who are educated and prepared to work, and who are put in the position to work and produce.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The source of Nigeria's development problem is not the non-availability of resources whether natural, financial or technological but rather gross manpower incompetence, misconduct and scarcity. Koontz, Donnel and Weinrich (2002), noted that "the importance of good leadership is nowhere better dramatized than in the case of many underdeveloped countries where provision of capital or technology does not ensure development. The limiting factor in almost every case has been the lack of quality and vigour on the part of managers." This statement is particularly true for Nigerian leaders whose major concern is not only on how to amass wealth for themselves but also for their unborn generation (Uwaifo and Uddin, 2009). The solution to development issues in Nigeria starts with having round pegs occupy round holes, which is a selection and placement issue. Comprehensive psychological and employment testing should be infused into the electoral process in Nigeria. Detailed screening and aptitude tests should precede elections, in order to screen out the unqualified and leaving the best of the best to be elected into key positions in government. There is the need to emphasize human resource development in national development plans; this is characterized by equitable compensation systems, adequate and effective employee motivation, training and development etc. It is therefore imperative to adopt the principles of Industrial/Organizational psychology in people management, in order to foster national development.

REFERENCES

- Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity in Social Exchange. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 62:335-343.
- Adeyanju, A. M. (2008). Evaluation of development theories and their relevance to the achievement of development communication goals in Nigeria: *Zaria Journal of Social Sciences* Vol.1 No1.

- Alo, R. O. (2010). Productivity in the Nigerian Manufacturing Sub-Sector: An Error Correction Model (ECM). *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*
- Ayo, E. J. (1988). *Development Planning in Nigeria*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- American Psychological Association (APA, 2012). Definition of Psychology (APA's Index Page). Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/index.aspx>
- Dike, V. E. (2009). "Technical and Vocational Education: Key to Nigeria's Development (II)," *Daily Triumph*, March, 30.
- Eyre, E.C. (1989). *Master Basic Management*. Macmillan Master Series.
- Ezirim, A. C., Okeke, C. T. & Ebriga, O. T. (2010). Achieving Vision 2020 in Nigeria: A Review of the Economic and Market-Oriented Business Reforms. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 12, 4
- Grobler, P., Warnich, S., Carrell, M. R., Elbert, N. F., & Hatfield, R. D. (2006). *Human Resource Management in South Africa (3rd ed.)*. Thompson Learning, London.
- Koontz, H., Donnel, C., & Weinrich, H. (2002). *Management of Education*. Singapore: Mc-Graw Hill Book Company.
- Lewis, W. W. (2004). *The Power of Productivity: Wealth, Poverty, and the Threat to Global Stability*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marcellus, I. O. (2009), Development Planning in Nigeria: Reflections on National Economic empowerment and Development strategies (NEEDS) 2003-2007. *Journal of Social Science*. Vol. 20 (3). Pp 197 – 210.
- Maslow, A. A. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York. Harper and Row.
- Nwoke, M. B. (2011). Understanding Human Resource Diversity Among Nigerian Youths: *Mentoring: A Key Issue in Human Resource Management*. Pp. 145-145.
- Obasanjo. A.O. (2006). "Psychology and National Development". ThisDay Newspaper (October 5, 2006).
- Ogunjimi, S.O. (1997). *Public Finance for Polytechnics and ICAN Students*. Niger. Leken Production
- Okojie, C. E. (2002). Development Planning in Nigeria since Independence. In: MA Iyoha, CO Itsede (Eds.): *Nigerian Economy: Structure, Growth and Development*. Benin City: Mindex Publishing.
- Onaiyekan, J. O. (2006). *Making Oil and Gas Wealth Serve Common Good. Ethical Issues*. Catholic Bishops Conference JDPC, DRACC Enugu 2nd & 3rd November, 2006.
- Shenge, N. A. & Icheke, S. H. (1999). Psychology: A Historical Perspective. *Psychology Perspectives in Human Behaviour*. Pp 288-312.
- Trading Economics (2012). *Nigeria GDP Growth Rate*. Retrieved from <http://www.tradingeconomics.com>
- UNDP Conference Paper (November, 2006). Incentive Systems: Incentives, Motivation, and Development Performance.
- U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (2012). *Occupational Employment Statistics*. Retrieved from www.bls.gov/OES
- Uwaifo, V. O. and Uddin, P. S. O. (2009). Technology and Development in Nigeria: The Missing Link. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 28(2): 107-111.

Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2012). *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.wikipediaencyclopeadia>

Received for Publication: 08/06 /2012

Accepted for Publication: 15/08 /2012
