

Review

Emerging nonstandard employment relations and implications for human resource management functions in Nigeria

Emeka E. Okafor

Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. E-mail: eemfor@yahoo.com.

Accepted 9 December, 2011

The issue of nonstandard employment relations has become very common in most work organizations as a result of globalization and volatile labour market situation in Nigeria. However, the implications of the prevalence of this phenomenon on core human resource management (HRM) functions in organizations are rarely investigated by the industrial sociologists. Conceptualizing nonstandard work within the context of casual, contract and outsourced work, the paper argues that this form of employment relations has been exacerbated by the growing incidence of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Anchoring the theoretical framework of nonstandard employment relations on neo-liberalism, the paper further contended that most organizations are using this mode of employment to reduce labour cost so as to increase profit in line with the rule of free market economy. The paper maintains that with this mode of employment relations, the traditional core functions of HRM such as employment activities, training and development, performance appraisal, wages and salary administration, and motivation may have been relegated to the background. Consequently, organizations may no longer produce a cohort of stable, motivated, productive, committed and efficient workforce. In conclusion, the paper submits that an attempt by organizations to reduce labour cost by engaging nonstandard workers will result in even higher cost on the long run; largely due to unstable, unproductive and non-committed workforce. Hence, all stakeholders must be united in combating this prevalent mode of employment relations.

Key words: Nonstandard work, casual and contract workers, human resource management, neo-liberalism, employment relations.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought about break down in the national boundaries thereby necessitating labour migration from one country to another. Besides, some foreign firms have also migrated to those areas of the world especially in Africa and Nigeria where cost of labour are considered cheaper in order to minimize cost and increase profit. For example, as at 2006, there were over 800 Asian firms operating in Africa that employed over 600,000 Africans producing wide range of goods and rendering various services (Umunna, 2006; Oya, 2008; Ogundare and Elijah, 2011). Most of these firms are operating without due regard to the labour standards governing the respective countries. Usually, national governments in Africa in their quest to attract more foreign direct investment (FDI) do not always strictly

enforce labour standards (Adewumi, 2008; Mokwenye, 2008; Ogundare and Elijah, 2011). This has resulted in the new kind of employment relations as exemplified in the growing number of casual, contract and outsourced workers collectively non standard employment¹ in Nigeria and in other African countries. The problem of workers in nonstandard employment has been made worse by massive unemployed youths in most African countries. Massive unemployment is gradually becoming a permanent feature of most emerging economies as a

¹ Workers in nonstandard employment as used in this paper refer primarily to casual, contract and outsourced workers. Though they are not the same, however, they all have limited privileges in their various places of work. Therefore, references will be made to the three types individually and collectively.

result of a combination of factors. This has made the Nigerian labour market volatile and precarious (Onyeonoru, 2008; Okafor, 2011).

With volatile labour market, there have been proliferations of many unscrupulous recruitment/employment agencies that take advantage of desperate unemployed persons thereby promoting nonstandard employment relations. These agencies may employ nonstandard workers and send them out to organizations to work on an hourly basis at the client's premises and direction. The agencies may recruit and screen employees, sometimes provide training, and are responsible for hiring and firing, and pay salaries and wages of the employees from the amount received from the client organizations. Though these agencies are recruitment/employment intermediaries, however, some may be involved in obnoxious practices (NCC, 2011; CIPM, 2011).

As an organisation begins to outsource services that are previously done in-house, they gain a greater appreciation of the variety of services that could be outsourced and realize that business service organizations could often supply these services more cheaply and efficiently (Abraham and Taylor, 1996). However, where they refuse to outsource and choose to employ the workers themselves on casual or on contract basis, they usually pay these workers paltry sum with very limited privileges (Idowu, 2010).

To be sure, nonstandard employment relations are not new. There have always been work arrangements that did not fit the model of full-time work. History is replete with examples of peripheral labour forces and flexible labour markets in which work is unstable and temporary (Morse, 1969; Peck, 1996; Summers, 1997; Kalleberg, 2000; Kalleberg et al., 2000). However, in the case of Nigeria, since 1999, with the re-democratization of polity and the federal government's renewed interest in the implementation neo-liberal policies, the use of nonstandard workers in various work organizations has escalated (Adenugba, 2003; Okougbo, 2004; Adewumi, 2008; Onyeonoru, 2004, 2008).

Much of the concern about the rise in nonstandard work arrangements is due to the assumption that they are associated with bad or indecent jobs (Kalleberg et al., 2000; Adewumi, 2008). Most analyses have shown that nonstandard work arrangements vary in their wages: some nonstandard jobs (such as contract work) often pay better than standard work, while other kinds of nonstandard work (especially casual work) pay relatively poorly (Ferber and Waldfogel, 1998; Kalleberg, 2000). There is substantial agreement, though, that workers in this category are vulnerable to the dynamics of labour market and with fewer benefits when compared with regular employment. Despite the relevance of this category of workers to work organizations, scholars rarely investigate the implications of the proliferation of mode of employment relations on the core human resource

management (HRM) functions in organizations.

THE NIGERIAN LABOUR MARKET SITUATION AND NONSTANDARD EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

The Nigerian labour market is not only saturated but characterized by massive youth unemployment of various forms such as seasonal, frictional, cyclical, and structural unemployment (Adebayo, 1999; Damachi, 2001; Okafor, 2011). Unemployment is measured among people in the labour force (Obadan and Odusola, 2001; National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The labour force of a country is defined by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2009) as a set of people or citizens of a country who are willing and are able to make available at any given point in time their efforts for gainful employment. The unemployed are the individuals with no work, but are looking for work at the time of any study.

Unemployment is a global trend, but it occurs mostly in developing countries of the world, with attendant social, economic, political, and psychological consequences. Thus, massive youth unemployment in any country is an indication of far more complex problems. The ILO (2007) report showed that the proportions of world unemployment are steadily increasing and that the number of those without jobs remained at all time high of more than 195 million, or 6.3 percent, in 2007. For instance, during that period (2007), the Middle East and North Africa were the regions with the highest unemployment rate in the world at 12.2%, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at nearly 10%. East Asia's unemployment rate of 3.6% remained the lowest. The report affirmed that population growth, especially in South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa, was putting a lot of pressure on job creation. The report concluded that half of all workers in the world - some 1.4 billion working poor - lived in families that survived on less than US \$ 2 a day per person. These people worked in the vast informal sector - from farms to fishing, from agriculture to urban alleyways - without benefits, social security, or healthcare. Some 550 million working poor lived on US \$ 1 or less per day. In absolute terms, it is estimated that there are about 122 million youths on the African continent (Chigunta, 2002; Echebiri, 2005). Therefore, projections of the population growth into the 21st century indicated that the proportion of youths, in relation to the overall population, will continue to grow. Todaro (1992) pointed out that the high rate of unemployment is as a result of continuous transfer of economic activities, especially the youths from rural to urban areas.

In Nigeria, accurate unemployment rates are difficult to access. However, according to Oyebade (2003), Nigeria's unemployment can be grouped into two categories: first, the older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy, or bankruptcy; and

second, the younger unemployed, most of whom have never been employed. For Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), the statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. Also, 64 million of them were unemployed, while 1.6 million were under-employed. The 1990 to 2000 data on youth unemployment showed that the largest group of the unemployed was the secondary school graduates. Also, 40% of the unemployment rate was among urban youth aged 20 to 24 and 31% of the rate is among those aged 15 to 19. Also, two-thirds of the urban unemployed were ranged from 15 to 24 years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There were relatively few secondary school graduates and the lowered job expectations of primary-school graduates. The authors, however, admitted that there was no consistent trend of unemployment rates in Nigeria. An increase in one or two years was sometimes followed by a decline in the subsequent years.

According to National Bureau of Statistics (2009: 238, 2010: 2), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2009 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008 and 19.7% in 2009. Specifically, as regards the age group, educational group and sex, data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics (2010: 3) further showed that as at March 2009 in Nigeria, for persons between ages 15 and 24 years, 41.6% were unemployed. For persons between 25 and 44 years, 17% were unemployed. Also, those with primary education, 14.8% were unemployed and for those with only secondary education, 23.8% were unemployed. Furthermore, for those with post secondary education, 21.3% were unemployed. For those who never attended school and those with below primary education, 21.0 and 22.3% were unemployed respectively. As regards sex, data showed that males constituted 17.0% while females constituted 23.3%. This precarious situation in the Nigerian labour has given rise to increase in the nonstandard employment relations in many work establishments in Nigeria as most unemployed especially the youth make desperate efforts to survive.

According to Kallerberg et al. (2000), the term "nonstandard employment" relationship implies the existence of a "standard employment" relationship even though the latter is relative. Thus to understand the concept of non standard employment relations, it will be more appropriate to understand the concept of standard employment relationship. The standard employment relationship can be defined as full-time, continuous employment where the employee works on his employer's premises or under the employer's supervision. The central aspects of this relationship include; an

employment contract of indefinite duration, standardized working hours/weeks with sufficient social benefits. Benefits like pensions, unemployment, and extensive medical coverage protected the standard employee from unacceptable practices and working conditions. Nonstandard employment relationship sometimes called precarious work on the other hand is used to describe jobs that are poorly paid, insecure, unprotected, and cannot support a household. According to Kalleberg et al. (2000), to the extent that nonstandard jobs pay poorly, lack health insurance and pension benefits, are of uncertain duration, and lack the protection that trade unions and labour laws afford, they are problematic for workers.

In recent decades, there has been a dramatic increase in nonstandard jobs due to such factors as: massive unemployment, globalization, the shift from the manufacturing sector to the service sector and the spread of information technology. These changes have created a new economy which demands flexibility in the workplace and, as a result, caused the decline of the standard employment relations and a dramatic increase in precarious work (Kalleberg, 2000; Adewumi, 2008). Nonstandard employment relationship is frequently associated with the following types of employment: part-time employment, casual work, contract work, outsourced jobs, fixed-term work, temporary work, on-call work and home workers. All of these forms of employment are related, in that they depart from the standard employment relationship (full-time, continuous work with one employer). Each form of nonstandard employment may offer its own challenges but they all share more or less the same disadvantages: low wages, few benefits, lack of collective representation by unions, and little to no job security and definite duration (Okougbo, 2004; Okafor, 2007; Mokwenye, 2008; Ogundare and Elijah, 2011).

There are four dimensions when determining if employment is nonstandard in nature. These include; the degree of certainty of continuing employment; control over the labour process, which is linked to the presence or absence of trade unions and professional associations and relates to control over working conditions, wages, and the pace of work; the degree of regulatory protection; and income level. One of the common nonstandard employment relations evident in Nigeria is the use of casual, contract and outsourced workers. Casualisation, which is a very prominent nonstandard employment, refers to the process of systematic replacement of full-time staff with staff employed on an *ad hoc* basis. In this case, regular work is not provided but a casual worker is expected to be available when required. Theoretically, this kind of employment relations can lead to the reduction of an organization's operational costs by increasing the ease with which workers can be included and excluded from the workforce (Richardson and Allen, 2001).

Nonstandard employment relationship is a world wide

phenomenon. Studies done in various countries such as in the United States (CUPE, 1999; CUPE, 2000; Kalleberg, 2000; Kalleberg et al., 2000), Canada (Tilly, 1991; Friss, 1994; Baumann and Underwood, 2002; Baumann and Blythe, 2003), South Africa (Mosoetsa, 2001; Altman, 2003; Bhorat, 2003; Bramble and Barchiesi, 2003; Barchiesi, 2007) and others, showed that nonstandard employment relationship is a world-wide phenomenon that cuts across various genders and professions.

In Nigeria, the problem of nonstandard employment is very common in many establishments whether in indigenous, transnational or multi-national firms, either public or private industry, including telecommunications, oil and gas, banking (both old and new generations) education sectors, and so on (Okougbo, 2004; Idowu, 2010). Specifically, this has been a long outstanding issue in the oil/gas industry and multinational corporations. In some companies in Nigeria, it is possible for one to get as many as over one thousand five hundred workers in an industry out of two thousand on contract appointments. In some local industries in the formal sector, it is possible to get situation whereby virtually all the employees are either casual or contract staff. This category of staff may have either profession or administrative skills (Adenugba, 2003).

Data on workers in nonstandard employment are quite alarming. According to Adenugba (2003), Onyeonoru (2004) and Okafor (2005, 2007), in oil and gas companies alone, there are over a thousand contract workers who are unionized against the wishes of management² and also being discriminated against by their respective management. Specifically, in 2001, there were an estimated 14,559 casual/contract workers as against 23,065 junior workers on permanent job positions in the oil industry. Most of the casual/contract workers have various qualifications that would warrant permanent jobs - certificates, diplomas and degrees in such areas as engineering, computer science, telecommunication and accounting. Some of the permanent jobs where casual/contract workers were being utilized in the industry include security, clerical jobs, plant operations, computer services, rig drilling operations, maintenance services, transportation, flow station operations, flow station guards, deck-hands, fork lifting operations, secretarial duties and fire services. The scope of the pervasiveness of nonstandard employment can be seen from the fact that in 1980 in the oil sector, Mobil Oil Nigeria Limited (marketing) had 195 permanent junior employees. By 1991, however, there were only 28 of them. Mobil Producing Nigeria (producing crude oil) had over 400 permanent junior employees in 1980. This figure declined to 80 by 1991 - with most of the jobs undertaken by the casual workers. In the Western

Division (that is, Warri Area) of Shell operation alone, there were 110 labour contractors in 1991 employing 1,329 casual workers. By 2002, there was no single junior staff who was a direct employee of Mobil Oil Plc (Adenugba, 2003, Okafor, 2007).

There are country differences in whether the use of nonstandard workers represents a marginalization strategy that provides employers with a source of cheap labour or an integration strategy used to retain valued workers. One source of difference among countries is related to labour law and employment regulations such as job security entitlements. In some countries (Sweden, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Spain), labour law enforces equal treatment between permanent and temporary workers (Thurman and Trah, 1990; Kalleberg, 2000), preventing the use of temporary workers as a cheap labour source. By contrast, in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan, temporary employees' hours or income generally fall below thresholds that exclude them from coverage under certain laws (Houseman, 1995; Fagan and O'Reilly, 1998). In Nigeria, labour law clearly made a distinction between permanent employee and temporary ones in terms of privileges and opportunities. However, the law stipulates that no organization or an employer can keep a worker on temporary employment for more than ninety days without making it permanent. Doing so will amount to violating the extant laws (Uvieghara, 2000; Ogundare and Elijah, 2011).

While organizations have always used nonstandard workers to help out with special projects or at busy times, this category of workers tended to be peripheral to the organization's main business. What appears to be new is that the use of nonstandard workers has become an integral feature of most firms' personnel strategy that enables them to respond to the organizational needs and makes their workforce problems more manageable and less costly (Gannon, 1974). From the foregoing, it is pertinent to note that the use nonstandard workers have always been and will continue to be an essential and accepted component of the workforce. From time to time, it may be necessary to replace permanent employees with temporary employees due to absences resulting from illness, vacation, maternity or other types of leave. Workers who may be called in to substitute for permanent employees, therefore, have a vital and continuing role to play in both the private and public work organizations. In the public sector for instance, the hiring of nonstandard workers ensures uninterrupted provision of important and even essential services to the citizens. For some individuals, casual work may be the means of entering or re-entering the workforce, a stepping-stone to more stable employment or a desired short-term employment opportunity (Baumann and Blythe, 2003).

One prominent feature of nonstandard employment relations is the presence of recruitment/employment agencies. According to Kalleberg (2000), in the mid-1980s, employment agencies were authorized (subject to some restrictions) in Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark,

² The Nigerian Labour Law does not make provision for workers who are not on permanent appointment to unionize. However, for those in permanent appointment to unionise, they must meet certain conditions.

France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Switzerland, among other countries. They were banned in Algeria, Costa Rica, Gabon, Greece, Italy, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, and Zaire (C'ordova 1986). Kalleberg (2000) further argued that these recruitment/employment agencies constitute a modern-day "reserve labour army" that helps employers to solve problems associated with understaffing as well as overstaffing positions with expensive full-time, permanent workers who may not be utilized. By using nonstandard workers, employers can staff minimally and then add temporary employees on an as-needed basis.

Organizations, especially multinational organization, also use recruitment/employment agencies to lower recruitment and screening costs, by hiring for them employees who perform well. Houseman (1997) found that 21% of the work organizations in her sample indicated this was a reason for their use of recruitment/employment agencies. This much was corroborated in the findings by Von Hippel et al. (1997). Organizations may also be able to reduce training costs through the use of employment agency workers, as was suggested by Krueger (1993), who reported the results of a survey that found that 62% of recruitment/employment agencies trained clerical nonstandard workers in the use of office software.

There are certain advantages and disadvantages associated with the use of nonstandard workers both for organizations and the workers themselves. Abraham and Taylor (1996) found that using nonstandard workers saved costs especially when used for activities done by an organization's non-core workforce. The organizations reasoned that there was little reason to pay high wages to workers who are easily monitored and replaced, or who performed work that is peripheral to an organization's main activity. Furthermore, Gramm and Schnell (1998) found that organizations that had a low-cost producer strategy and whose core employees had a high relative wage (measured by the ratio of core employees' wages to average wages of production employees in the industry) were more likely to use nonstandard workers in core occupations.

Rees and Fielder (1992) studied the process of subcontracting in two service industries in the United Kingdom - contract cleaning and catering - and found that organizations in these industries reorganized their work differently. In cleaning, improved service quality was sought through a labour intensification strategy involving more intense supervision and changes in organization of recruitment. People were selected from the external labour market based solely on their social characteristics. In catering, service quality improvements were sought through developing and retaining a high-quality staff by means of training and development within internal labour markets.

For Matusik and Hill (1998), nonstandard work may

benefit organizations by helping to import valuable knowledge into the firm, such as public knowledge about industry best practices. It can also act as a catalyst to generate new private knowledge. And on the negative side, the authors argued that it could also help to leak private knowledge into the public domain. Firms in dynamic environments characterized by extreme competition are most likely to benefit from using nonstandard workers, while organizations in environments that are stable and characterized by mild competitive pressures are least apt to benefit from nonstandard workers.

Despite these findings, some scholars are of the view that using nonstandard workers is not always beneficial for organizations (Delsen, 1995; Kalleberg, 2000). Geary (1992) found that the use of nonstandard workers by three US firms operating in Ireland led to considerable conflict between permanent and temporary workers as well as between management and labour. Nollen (1996) and Nollen and Axel (1996) found that nonstandard work is not always cost-effective, since the productivity of these workers may be lower than that of regular workers. The author contended that using nonstandard workers could also result in a waste of training from the organization's point of view.

Sometimes, the client firms may wrongly assume recruitment/employment agencies trained their employees. Rebitzer (1995) and Kalleberg (2000) argued that this was often a dubious assumption that resulted in more accidents involving nonstandard workers and that most of these workers lacked training, had low trust and low commitment. Also, there may be tensions between direct-hire and nonstandard workers, and between management and labour, as unions charged that casual/contract workers were used to reduce unions' presence in firms and to provide cheaper (at least in the short term) and less trained workers (Kochan et al., 1994).

Also, engaging nonstandard workers may affect the mobility of permanent workers, as was suggested by Barnett and Miner's (1992) analysis of career interdependence between core and nonstandard workers in a large US utility company. They found that the presence of nonstandard employees slowed mobility among permanent workers in lower ranks and increased it among advanced workers. Also, for Nollen (1996) and Segal and Sullivan (1997), nonstandard workers earn, on average, lower wages than regular workers, roughly one third less overall in the United States in 1994. However, there was considerable heterogeneity in the wages that nonstandard workers received (Williams, 1989), as well as in the characteristics of nonstandard work more generally (Feldman et al., 1995; Gallie et al., 1998). Salaries of nonstandard workers may vary considerably by occupation and are sometimes higher than those of regular employees (Gannon, 1974). Thus, nonstandard clerical workers are generally employed at lower wage

rates than their permanent counterparts, and also nonstandard industrial workers often received much lower pay. For instance, qualified engineers and technicians employed on contract basis in oil and gas company are likely to earn better than clerical officers on regular jobs in the same company. However, most often, nonstandard workers usually receive fewer fringe benefits than do regular workers (Gannon, 1974; Segal and Sullivan, 1997; Kalleberg et al., 2000). Nonstandard workers' fringe benefits are very limited, if given at all, even in occupations where they earned more than regular workers (Carey and Hazelbaker, 1986).

At the individual level, nonstandard working arrangements may be beneficial for workers if such employment enhances their skills and enables them to adapt to the rapid changes occurring in labour markets. As a matter of fact, one reason why workers in nonstandard employment may obtain permanent jobs, either directly with a client or indirectly, is because they acquire skills (for example, computer training) and experience with a variety of potential employers. Indeed, what may be the primary motivation of nonstandard employment is sometimes the opportunity for these workers to acquire skills and experience (Carey and Hazelbaker, 1986; von Hippel et al., 1997). Despite this, Dale and Bamford (1988) and Nollen (1996) argued that most nonstandard workers are employed in jobs that are low-skill and without career potential and that nonstandard employment is adverse to human capital development by either the staffing company or client. In any event, having temporary work is often better than not having a job at all (Lenz, 1996; Segal and Sullivan, 1997). Belous (1989) and Polivka and Nardone (1989) also argued that workers also benefit insofar as nonstandard jobs let them control their schedules, sample a variety of jobs, and have more time for other activities; however, the extent to which nonstandard workers are able to obtain permanent jobs in their working organisation is an unresolved issue (Kalleberg et al., 2000).

On the disadvantage side, nonstandard work may affect workers' psychological experiences. Beard and Edwards' (1995) findings suggested that nonstandard workers are more likely to experience job insecurity and unpredictability, to have low control over their work and transactional psychological contracts, and to perceive themselves as disadvantaged relative to standard workers. Other studies have found few differences between nonstandard and standard workers in their organizational commitment (Pearce, 1998). Van Dyne and Ang (1998) speculated that this may have reflected the employment nature of nonstandard workers in the United States, where nonstandard workers may display positive work attitudes in the hopes of obtaining regular jobs. Accordingly, their comparison of work attitudes between nonstandard and regular employees in Singapore found that nonstandard workers engaged in

fewer organizational citizenship behaviours such as helping co-workers.

Also, nonstandard workers may suffer other disadvantages when compared to full-time and even part time employees. Casuals often work on an on-call basis rather than having fixed hours of work and periods of employment. For some, this may mean working for only a few hours each week, making it impossible to earn a decent living. Similarly, nonstandard workers in the firms may be called in for periods as short as several weeks, or up to three month periods (in case of Nigeria), so that they too may not attain employee status. Casual/contract workers perform the same duties as regular employees, yet they are paid less and do not have access to the benefits, such as pension plans and sick leave, enjoyed by other workers. For most nonstandard workers, limited earnings and lack of benefits mean a generally lower quality of life, financial insecurity, an inability to plan for the future and often severe emotional and psychological stress. Moreover, they do not have the right to bargain collectively or to join a union and are denied any protection under the Labour Act. Deprived of the basic rights long fought for by labour unions, nonstandard workers find themselves at the mercy of their employers. These workers cannot negotiate the terms and conditions of employment collectively. Moreover, they may be fired or disciplined without following due process. They could be mistreated but cannot file a grievance or otherwise defend themselves (CUPE, 1999; 2000; Okougbo, 2004; Okafor, 2007).

Theoretical context of nonstandard employment relations

In this study, the emerging nonstandard employment relations are anchored on the neo-liberal theory. Conceptually, neo-liberalism refers to the desire to intensify and expand the market, by increasing the number, frequency, repeatability, and formalization of transactions. The ultimate (unreachable) goal of neo-liberalism is a universe where every action of every being is a market transaction, conducted in competition with every other being and influencing every other transaction. Neo-liberalism seeks to transfer part of the control of the economy from public to the private sector under the belief that it will produce a more efficient government and improve the economic indicators of the nation. The neo-liberal theory sees the nation primarily as a business firm. In this context, a firm is selling itself as an investment location, rather than simply selling export goods. A neo-liberal organisation pursues policies designed to make it reduce cost and maximize benefits in the competitive socio-economic environment. These policies are generally pro-business.

The main features of neo-liberalism at the national include: the rule of the market; cutting public expenditure

for social services; deregulation; privatization; eliminating the concept of "the public good" or "community". Neo-liberalism assumes that higher economic freedom has a strong correlation with higher living standards; higher economic freedom leads to increased investment, technology transfer, innovation and responsiveness to consumer demand (Martinez and García, 2000). At the organizational or individual level, neo-liberalism believes staunchly on the freedom of individual contract. Freedom of contract is the right to choose a person's contracting parties and to trade or work with them on any terms and conditions the person sees fit. Contracts permit organisation and prospective workers to create their own enforceable legal rules and adapt to their unique situations. Parties decide whether contracts are profitable or fair, but once a contract is made they are obliged to fulfill its terms, even if they are going to sustain losses by doing so. Through making binding promises individuals are free to pursue their own interests. For neo-liberalism, it is a moral duty of every individual, to arrange his or her lives to maximize the advantages in the labour market.

According to Harvey (2005), organizations operating in a typical neo-liberal economic environment may prefer nonstandard employment which in effect grants them the flexibility to review the terms of engagement depending on the dynamism of labour market and competitive nature of socio-economic environment. This kind of flexibilization reduces cost of production, boosts profit but at the same time minimizes or cheapens workers quality of working lives (Buchler et al., 2009). In essence, globalization and the spread of information technology have created new kind of rational organizations that emphasize flexibility in the labour market and in employment relationships. In most countries, these influences have resulted in the prevalence of nonstandard employment relations and by extension rise in precarious work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE FUNCTIONS

Human resource management (HRM) is the function within an organization that focuses on recruitment of, management of, and providing direction for the people who work in the organization. Human resource management can also be performed by line managers. Hence, human resource management is the organizational function that deals with issues related to people such as compensation, hiring, performance management, organization development, safety, wellness, benefits, employee motivation, communication, administration, and training. Human resource management is also a strategic and comprehensive approach to managing people and the workplace culture and environment. Effective human resource management therefore, enables employees to contribute effectively and productively to the overall company direction and the

accomplishment of the organization's goals and objectives (Lyton and Pareek, 1967; Armstrong, 1999).

According to Okoh (1998), human resource management encompasses activities that include recruitment selection, human resource planning, employee training, organization development, wage and salaries administration, health and safety administration, benefits and services administration, union-management relations and many others. There is no doubt that a good management of people at work is very strategic to the success of any organization.

In the recent time, human resource management appears to be moving away from traditional personnel, administration, and transactional roles, which are increasingly outsourced. Human resource management is expected to add value to the strategic utilization of employees and that employee programs impact the workplace in measurable ways. However, whether human resource management will meet this requirement in the environment of nonstandard employment relations is a matter of concern. Further discussion focuses on the five core functions of human resource management.

Employment activities

This core function of human resource management entails recruitment, selection, induction and placement. Usually, in every organization, human resource department can initiate the filling of a vacancy. Thus, the department focuses on whether the appropriate number of employee has been employed or not. It keeps adequate inventory statistics of all departments in the organisation. In addition, the human resource department develops and maintains adequate source of labour, set up and operate employee selection, which includes arrangement for interviews, selection test, medical examination, reference checks and induction programme. During the interview, the line manager whom the new employee would work with is expected to be among the panelist and allowed to make his choice of candidate. And when employed, the manager or supervisor also has the responsibility to orient him to the new work environment (Legge, 1995; Okoh, 1998). In the new employment relations involving nonstandard employees, this function may be compromised. In most organizations hardly does any formal interview conducted for casual workers other than random selection of people that presented themselves for work. Also, when employed reference checks or health status of workers are not properly done or ascertained, it may cost organization more in future if theft is committed or accident occur in the course of job performance. As regards the contract staff, most often, employment agency attempts to take the burden off some organizations for a fee. Sometimes, the client-organization that absorb these workers may not have any other way of knowing how qualified these

workers are other than through job performance. In the society like Nigeria with saturated labour market, corrupt practices have crept into recruitment exercises (CIPM, 2011; NCC, 2011). By relying on this arrangement to employ and place both core and non-core employees, human resource management is abdicating its traditional roles with varying consequences for productivity, commitment and efficiency.

Training and development

In every organization, training and development of employees is important and is indeed a core function of human resources management in a dynamic environment like Nigeria. Thus, the human resource department is expected to, in close association with other line managers, work out a planned systematic training for each category of staff. Once these have been worked out, the human resource officer in charge of training is expected to work out a roster of training to ensure that no serious disruption occurs during training programme. The establishment of the Industrial Training Fund by the Federal government of Nigeria was informed by the need for systematic training of employees. It is important to note that in most work organizations in Nigeria, only permanent employees are entitled to training and development. The implication is that most workers who are in nonstandard employment do not benefit from training and development programme of the organizations of where they work. This hardly ensures human capital development (Dale and Bamford, 1988; Nollen, 1996; Delahaye, 2005). The management of these organizations, considering the cost of training and development, always assumed that it is not their responsibilities to train and development this category of staff. Even for their permanent employees, the commitment of the organization to train and develop them on regular basis is not always there because most cannot guarantee that they would stay behind to serve the organization upon the completion of training and development programme considering the volatility of labour market in Nigeria and the quest to survive. This no doubt reduces the core functions of human resource management in Nigeria.

Performance appraisal

In organizations, this function is performed in close collaboration with line managers and supervisors. Towards the end of the year, the human resource department is expected to distribute annual appraisal forms to all sectional head for distribution to all members of staff in the sections. The forms are completed as required and returned to the human resource department. The department thereafter, processes the forms by

presenting those recommended for promotion to the appropriate commitment for consideration. Those qualified for annual increment are also processed and sent to the account department for necessary action (Martin and Jackson, 1997). Suffice to say, this core function of HRM is only limited to permanent staff since in most cases it is a prelude to annual increment or promotion. Nonstandard employees are excluded from. For example, the outsourced worker who works in a particular bank either as a security or a bulk cash handler, has no business with the client organization as regards performance appraisal. The employment agency is responsible to him or her. All complaints relating to annual appraisal or increment are routed through the employment agency which in most cases may not yield any positive result as such agency will be replace any workers who might complaint considering the nature of labour market. Hence, most organizations end up employing nonstandard workers who may remain stagnant and whose level of commitment, productivity and efficiency is doubtful because of the nature of their employment situation. This scenario diminishes one of the core functions of HRM.

Wages and salary administration

This function in some work organizations is called compensation administration. Through job evaluation and cost of living indices, wages and salaries are fixed for particular jobs. Usually, the regular work of job analysis and evaluation is the work of human resource department. The department also ensures that wages paid in the organization are comparable with salaries in similar organizations in the same industry. It also ensures that minimum wages paid, meet the physiological needs of employees. It follows the movement of cost-of-living indices with a view to advising management on salary and wages adjustments. The department conducts periodic wage and salary surveys of the labour market to enable it advise top management appropriately. The implication of this function in relation to the workers in nonstandard employment is that in most work organizations, casual, contract and outsourced workers are paid fixed wages with no benefit. Their wages are hardly reviewed from time to time. When jobs are outsourced, for example, the burden of payment of salaries and wages of this category of staff is placed squarely on the outsourced agency. When workers are paid in this manner, it can hardly inspire them for higher commitment, productivity and efficiency.

Motivation

It has been observed that periodic motivation of workers is pertinent to get the best results from them. The

success of any organization depends largely on effective mobilization of all human effort in the organization. Many industrial sociology findings have shown that employees can only give their best if their needs are fairly satisfied and are well motivated. These needs include physiological needs of hunger, thirst and so on, to recognition and self-actualization. To get results, employees must be motivated. One core function of HRM is to ensure that the conditions of employment of employees are such that provide motivation to all categories of employees. In addition to this, opportunity for participation in decision making that affect their work is one of the ways of motivating employees. In a work organization, HRM ensures that adequate welfare programme, training and development of workers are put in place to motivate workers. Also, salaries and wages are to be paid as and when due and performance appraisal objectively completed and employees deficiencies pointed out to them during appraisal interviews. In addition, HRM ensures that systematic staff development programme are put in place to enable staff acquire additional skill and earn promotion to higher positions in the organisation (Pomeroy, 2004). The implication of this in relation to nonstandard employment relations is that it is limited to only permanent employees as casual, contract or outsourced workers are excluded from this mode of motivation. A worker who receives fixed wages, whether productivity rises or not, can hardly be motivated. Such a worker may suffer from alienation and exploitation.

CONCLUSION

From all indications, HRM functions are very indispensable in every organization. However, the engagement of nonstandard workers in order to cut labour cost in line with the neo-liberal rule of free market enterprise is basically an attempt to assemble a cohort of unstable workforce which may not have a stake in the organization and by extension to exhibit low commitment to the values and ideals of the organization because of high level of exclusion they may be suffering in relation to HRM core functions. The pervasiveness of engagement of nonstandard workers will definitely cost the organizations more than they intended to save. Therefore, all stakeholders in the Nigerian industrial relations project must rise against the kind of emerging and dehumanizing employment relations in order to restore the withering core functions of HRM for more productive and efficient workforce.

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