MANAGEMENT/UNION ROLES IN BUILDING INDUSTRIAL HARMONY IN HOSPITALITY, CATERING, TOURISM AND SURVEILLANCE INDUSTRY

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A PAPER PRESENTED AT 3 DAY WORKSHOP FOR MEMBERS OF NUHPSW ON 22ND – 24TH OCTOBER, 2019 AT KIMBIS INTL HOTEL, MAKURDI, BENUE STATE.

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PROTOCOL:

I feel privileged for this opportunity to address members of this our great Union, NUHPSW. I do in all sincerity; wish to thank the**National President**, the**General Sectretary** and his capable team for this wonderful honour.

I also want to congratulate the leadership of **NUHPW** and members for organizing this workshop in Makurdi, Benue state.

You are all welcome to the Food Basket of the Nation.

**INTRODUCTION:** To successfully discuss Management/Union Roles in Building Industrial Harmony in Hospitality, Catering, Tourism and Surveillance Industry, let us first take an in-depth look at ***Management and Union Relations.***

Measurement of Management/Union Relations is a complex phenomenon since it involves the human element. Management/Union relationships are the interacting relationship between management (employers) and Union (employees). “Management and Union” is the English term used to refer to organizations representing workers and employers. This equivalent term used in other language versions is “social partners”.

Relationship between employers and employees and their dealings with each other, in most industries, wages and conditions are determined by free collective bargaining between employers and the trade unions.

The aim of harmonious industrial relations is to achieve a motivated capable workforce that sees its work as creative and fulfilling. A break down in industrial relations can lead to an industrial dispute where one party takes industrial action. Labour laws are designed to protect employers, employees and the general public. It governs union activities and provides an arbitration (mediation, settlement, negotiation) mechanism for strikes and causes national emergencies.

**HISTORY:**Industrial relations, Onsanya (1999) define Industrial relations as concerning “the relationship between Trade Union and the employers in the industry, and the intervention of the government in that relationship”. Industrial relations has its roots in the industrial revolution which created the modern employment relationship by spawning free labour markets and large scale industrial organizations with thousands of wages workers. As society wrestled with these massive economic and social changes, labour problems arose, low wages, long working hours, monotonous and dangerous work, and abusive supervisory practices led to high employee turnover, violent strikes and the threat of social instability. Intellectually, industrial relations was formed at the end of the 19th century as a middle ground between classical economics and maxism, with Sidney Webb’s and Beatrice Webb’s industrial democracy (1897)being the key to intellectual work.

Harmonious Industrial relationship practice is a dynamic process. It is practically adjusted to suit the economic, social and political environment of a given entity. In order to consolidate the gains of political independence, Nigeria tried to put in place the rules which the practice would grow. The colonial situation was not well developed to address the emerging industrial workforce after the independence. However, the years of military adventurism in the governance of the country punctured the articulation of the process. The globalization of the economy has now complicated the practice of industrial relationships where more workers have lost their jobs and the unions have very little resistance.

**THE NEED TO BUILD SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT/UNION RELATIONSHIP FOR INDUSTRIAL HARMONY:** Many organizations in Nigeria (including Hospitality industry where we belong) are bedeviled by a myriad of problems and ailments caused by inefficient and ineffective management style or strained relationship between management and the union. There are other ailments that emanate from influence of external forces such as fiscal policy, wrong government policies, environmental factors, etc. Management-Union disagreement remains crucial because it is firm-specific and therefore can be addressed by harmonious industrial relations.

Harmonious Industrial Relations refers to an industrial environment where workers along with their union and management understand and accept each other as partners in progress; that cooperative attitude is mutually beneficial in terms of output, performance and reward. It does not assume that conflicts do not exist but that collective and proactive agreements and grievance procedure exist that can prevent the conflict from transforming into a crisis. Thus internalizing harmonious industrial relations will eliminate poor management as it relates to human resources management.

As stated earlier, the cake which each party tends to maximize the outcome of the sharing must be baked first. This cake cannot be baked well under conflict or dispute. The need for the relationship between management and union to be built under mutual understanding is imperative.

**Harmonious Industrial Relations**refers to an **industrial** environment where workers along with their union and management understand and accept each other as partners in progress; that a cooperative attitude is mutually beneficial in terms of output, performance and rewards.

**What is industrial peace?**

Industrialpeace is a state in industrial relations in which both employer and employees abstain from industrial action, such as strikes and lockouts.

The employer who has the responsibility of making major organizational policies to achieve corporateobjectivesmust play a dominantrole in ensuring industrial harmony. This paper exposes some of the factors that undermineindustrial harmony and productivity in Hospitality Industry to include leadership behaviour, lack of effective communication, poor work environment, and non-recognition of trade union as a bargaining party. It further explicatesthatproductivity and growth are not fully enhancedbecause of management practice of exclusionism, poor labour-management policies, and dehumanization ofwork environment.

The management of Hospitality Industryin Nigeria should fashion out a framework of joint committee/expanded collective bargaining, create work culture that is based on collaboration and team work, initiate participatory management and develop and restructure an effective communication process. Instituting these measures will help to close conflictual loopholes that hinder industrial harmony and productivity in this our Industry.

**The Roles of Employers in Building Industrial Harmony:**

The roles of employersin enhancing industrial harmony in Hospitality Industry have received wide attention in the literature of industrial relations. This is because many organizations in Nigeria are bedeviled witha myriad of industrial challenges caused by inefficient and ineffective management style or strained relationship between management and union (Osamwonyi and Ugiagbe,2013).Consequently, productivity in most organizations hascomparatively been hampered due to frequent industrial conflict.

The roles can be seen in responsibilities, employment policy, collective bargaining, and communication (Ladan, 2012). Akpoyovwaire (2013: 264) stated that industrial harmony requires that:

All management personnel understand their responsibilities and whatis required of them, and have the training and authority necessary to discharge such duties and responsibilities efficiently;

Duties and responsibilities for each group of employees are stated with clarity and simplicity in organizational structure;

Industrial employees or work-groups know their objectives and are regularly kept informed of progress made towards achieving them;

There is an effective link in the interchange of information and views between senior management and members of the work-group;

Supervisors are briefed about innovation and changes before they occur so they can explain management’s policies and intentions to the work-group;

Employers cooperate with trade unions in establishing effective procedures for the negotiation of terms and conditions of employment and for the settlement of disputes;

Employers encourage theestablishment of effective procedures among member organizations for the settlement of grievances and disputes at the level of the establishment or undertaking;

Employers take all reasonable steps to ensure the organization observes agreements and agreed upon procedures; and

The organization maintains a communication system which secures the interchange of information and views between different levels in the organization and ensuresthat employees are systematically and regularly appraised.

In Industrial relations, the essence of the actors involved in the running of an organization includes an understanding of the purpose of each other and the ability to effectively communicate with one another and interact freely so that the set objectivesof the organization can be achieved (Jinyemiema, 2008).

**The hiring process**

Harmony within the workplace begins with the staff, and so the first place that most employers start creating that harmonious environment is at the interview. A good hire is the most important step in creating an environment focused on teamwork and building good interpersonal skills.

**Open door policy**

The open door policy is probably the most tried and true method of maintaining workplace harmony, not only in the hospitality industry. This approach simply means that managers and employers make sure their staff knows that they are welcome to come to them with any potential challenges at any time, and that they will seek to overcome those challenges together.

When the open door policy is used as both a listening device and a method for finding solutions, the process is looked upon favorably by employees.

**Empathizing programs – hands on policy:**

**In hands on policy, managers are posted to carry out the job of junior staff for duration. This will enable the manager to have a firsthand experience of what the staff passes through. By this, it makes it easy to take decision from an inform perspective hence bridging bond between the workers and the management.**

**Reasons for conflict in workplace:**

As stated earlier, the cake which each party tends to maximize the outcome of the sharing must be baked first. This cake cannot be baked well under conflict or dispute. The need for the relationship between management and union to be built under mutual understanding is imperative.

These are few reasons why crisis erupt in an organization:

1. Making decision with little knowledge of the implication on the system or the people who have to implement it.

2. Failure to communicate decisions effectively to those charged with implementation.

3. Working as an individual rather than as team.

4. Many times, the management does not act as they talk. Some managers are known to believe in the “do what I say and not what I do”.

5. The lack of management to carry along the union leaders on major issue that affect workers.

6. Poor communication channels.

7. Planting of moles within the workers by the management thereby causing divide and rule.

8. Inadequate training of both parties on need to forester harmonious relationship.

9. Selfish interest on the part of the employers.

10. Harmful and unhealthy practices by the employers to undermine the power of the Union.

11. Management starving the Unions their statutory funds to weaken the power of the Union.

12. Breach of collective agreement by the employers.

13. Lack/absence of effective industrial relations department in workplace and machineries for negotiation.

14. Inadequate attention to workers’ welfare by the employers.

15. Unlawful downsizing of workers by the employers without due procedures.

16. Low wage.

17. Underemployment syndrome, casualization and contract/outsourcing employment policies.

18. Undue interference and meddling into the affairs of Union by the management.

19. Insecurity/lack of protection in the work environment, etc.

Clearly, management needs to find ways of working and thinking for all-inclusiveness. The old principle of command, control, compliance, “of they and we” must be constructively challenged and abandoned. Modern business is too complex to profitably separate the thinkers and the doers. Our society and social revolution also is attacking the principles of compliance, without which control and command cannot work. Therefore new ones based on teamwork, consensus and creativity to allow intelligent and ambition workers must replace old traditional principles.

Having identified some of the major causes of trade union dispute in an organization as highlighted in the above, we can conveniently say, as corollary to them, that management/union have major roles in building industrial harmony in Hospitality industry by making concerted efforts to positively address all or most of the concerns raised therein.

The following suggestions may, however, serve as a guide to building industrial harmony by management/ union.

1. Evolving workable ways and means of forging unity among members.

2. Better consultation between leadership and the members.

3. Intensive and consistent trade union education of members.

4. Ensuring better working conditions for the members.

5. Defending members’ legitimate rights with every sense of commitment.

6. Union leaders must sink their personal interests and differences in order to be able to work ceaselessly for the common goal of the organization.

7. Develop the capacity to resist the influence of management.

8. Building the capacity of leaders and members through seminars, workshops (such as this workshop) and researches for effective leadership and good followership.

9. Developing the capacity for dealing with aggrieved members.

10. Respecting and observance of the Union structure and hierarchy.

11. Encouraging holding of regular meetings.

12. Prompt implementation of decisions taken at statutory meetings.

13. Ensuring justice and legitimacy.

14. Constant evaluation and review of decisions against set rules and ethical standards.

15. Adopting transformational leadership style in Union administration.

17. Consistency and fair application of Union rules.

18. Modification of leaders’ lifestyle and leading by example, etc.

**CONCLUSION:**

From the above illustrations, Management/Union roles in building industrial harmony is Hospitality industry and its subsidiaries is a bridge to forester understating within the industry and increase the quality of services being rendered, since ours, is a service oriented one (People dealing with people).

The management on one hand will have to go the extra mile in embracing the Union when taking critical decisions that will affect the members of the Union. They should avoid divide and rule in the system. Also respecting the dignity of labour, is crucial. Avoiding unfavourable work ethics and respecting the collective bargaining power of the Union, will go a long way to provide industrial harmony. The management should motivate the employee, improve workplace and provides job security. There should be an open door policy on the part of the management and while avoiding vindictive practices.

While Union on her part, should strive to embrace all inclusive leadership style. This will go a long way to give the members a sense of belonging. The Union should try to avoid confrontational approach (when possible) in placing members demand before the management. Training and retraining of Union leaders such as this forum should be from time to time. The Union should view their roles as a complementary one to that of the management.

In overall, one cannot eliminate the role of adequate communication from both sides. There should be regular meetings between the management and the Union. Both parties should strive to be open minded when dialoguing and tabling their positions when need arises. Like the saying goes that no one can have a clean hand except both hands wash each other.

THANK YOU.

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