



Research Article

A Review of Soft and Hard Approaches of Human Resource Management and the Success of Real Estate Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Human resource management is so unique that it strives for the best practice approach to the management of human resources with a view to achieving developmental and organisational purposes in the built environment. Many property developers/managers in organisation in the pasts, and currently, are still utilising the “hard” approach of managing human resource, and while others utilise the “soft” approach in managing their employees. The real estate development involves several stages with different professionals collaborating for successful development of the real estate and the challenges of finding the best approach to recruit, train, commit, reward and manage these unlike professions is alarming. The purpose of this paper is to investigate and assesses through review of the “hard” and “soft” approaches of HRM and come up with the best practice approach to provide real estate development success in Nigeria. Documentary sources of data collection was used in the study which involved only a conceptual review of online and visual documents; followed by an identification of, categories, limits of and interpretative of the documents utilising four criteria of how: authentic; credible; representative; and meaning; to the phenomenon in the paper context. The findings show that the “soft” approach should be the best practice approach to utilise in managing the different human resources involved in real estate development processes for successful on-time completion. The reflection suggests that the property developers/managers, educationalist, policy/decision-makers, governments and agencies should adopt and advocate for this approach integration in their organisation strategies. This should ensure and enhance effective and efficient performance toward achieving the purpose of any development target. It therefore recommends that since the ambiguities, discrepancies, and difficulties inherent in finding a common ground for the concept of HRM persist in the literature, more research and collaborations should be encouraged and sustained until a consensus impression for HRM is achieved.

Keywords: Hard Approach, Human Resource Management (HRM), Real Estate Development, Success, Soft Approach.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM) as a distinctive profession is so popularised that in recent times, a general consensus of the definition of the concept should exist or be adopted by HRM professionals. But, this imperative perspective above is contrary, and as it is supported by adopting the opinion “a rather messy situation currently exist in HRM where the term is so used in a confusing variety of ways” (Watson, 2002). However, Bratton and Gold (2003) gave an impetus to the term by arguing for HRM as a strategic approach to managing employment relations which emphasizes that leveraging people is critical to achieving competitive advantage. This signifies that it

would be achieved through a distinctive set of integrated employment policies, programmes and practices. Similarly, Storey (1995) argued that HRM is idiosyncratic approach to service management. It seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, utilising an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques. Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) contended that HRM is a managerial standpoint that argues the need to establish an integrated series of personnel policies which supports organisational strategy.

Looking at the few contextual arguments, the onus lies on the human resource manager since people are the most costly and uncontrollable asset of the organisations. But, more often than not, the senior managers of organisations have based their competitive strategies on other factors such as product and process technologies which do not encourage people's participation. HRM is recognised as a normative concept that aims to create more efficient and competitive organisations through the utilization of employees, which it considers to be the most important single asset of the organisations (Caker et al, 2003). Therefore, HRM should be seen as a strategic approach to the acquisition, development, motivation and reward of employees and that must be linked with the strategic management style in an organisation. As well as, promoting efficiency and confidence in the managerial performance and effectiveness in organisations (Analoui, 1998). It is good to emphasise here that HRM should not be left entirely to human resources professionals, rather be integrated into the rest of the organisation goal and objectives, as well as also built into all other employees activities for the strategies to be implemented, efficiently, effectively and accordingly to plan (Analoui, 2002; Schuler, 2000).

However, in the course of the unclear distinctions and ambiguities inherent in the different interpretations about the concept of HRM, the emergence of different terms as an attempt to clarify the approaches to managing human resource (people) evolved. This clarification attempts brought the two major concepts of "Hard" and "Soft" human resource management sometime referred as the "Hard" and "Soft" variants of HRM (Guest, 1987; Storey, 1994; Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). The "Hard" variant of HRM explicate the importance of strategy where human resources are deployed to achieve organisational goals and objectives as it is similar with other resources (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). While, the "soft" variant clarify on the approaches to exploit in order to enhance commitment, quality and flexibility of employees (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). The benefits of both variant is that it requires recognition, and so, exploring this area advances a decision on which best approach to use in coordinating the different professionals involved in all the processes or steps practiced in order to develop real estate properties by property developers/managers.

The real estate development processes encompassed several activities that do not exclude the utilisation of human resources for actualisation. This inferred that right from the conceptualisation of the development to the property management stage of that real estate requires people to plan, organise, coordinate, forecast, control and communicate on the various activities in order to attain the goal and objectives of such real estate development. But, the method and style adopted by the property developers/managers in how the expected employees would be recruited, trained, committed and rewarded is imperative in all the development success of the real estate. For example, experience has shown to the researcher that the manner and approaches utilised by many property developers/manager in real estate project site had become a bane to why some skilled and unskilled workers abscond from the project site. The act cause waste of materials and financial resources to the owner and the property developer, as well as delay the real estate development completion date. It ultimately in the circumstance requires investigating into the best practice approach to manage the recruitment, training and rewarding of the skill and unskilled staff by the property developer.

Therefore, the purpose of this theoretical study seeks to assess through review the significance of "hard" and "soft" approaches of HRM and advocate for the best practice approach that should be appropriate to adopt in real estate development throughout its processes. The study has achieved this through the trace of HRM development from the classical, human relations, and open system, to the concepts of "hard" and "soft" approaches. Further, it examines this by utilising: the Michigan Model; Harvard Model; Guest Comparative Model; and Choice Model of HRM. In addition, a comparison of the various models were considered and reflected to the study context. This review investigation should provide an awareness and understanding to the practitioners in developing real estate of the best practice method that the human resource needed to accomplish the real estate investment purpose should be manage in all the development phases.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Conducting an investigation consists of phases from the theoretical reinforcement to the gathering and examinations of such data and by so doing conclusion emerge of the study circumstance. Several sources of data evidence, techniques examinations and of results interpretation to adopt for and support a study exists (such as interviews, questionnaire, documentary, content analysis tools etc),but the paper utilises the documentary method in gathering relevant narrative studies in the area and used in this study.The choice of this approach is based on the paper purpose and as supported by purposive documents sampling. The intent of all was to reinforce the consistency and soundness of the documentary evidence and the study findings. At the same time, be able to categorize, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of choice of materials and the information as it recountsof the observable fact

under examination. Different forms of documentary evidence were scrutinised including printed up-to-date electronic online, textbooks, workshop attendance, class room attendance and visual resources, utilising the criteria of how: authentic; credible; representative; and meaning; to appraise and elicit the eminence of these documents. The interpretative content examination approach was adopted in the interpretation of the findings, and at the same time, relating the findings to the study circumstance employing the four criteria measures earlier mentioned above. This method use in qualitative data analysis and interpretation is advocated for and adopted in the works of Bryman (2008), Macdonald (2006), Mogalakwe (2006) and Scott (1990). Hence, it is similarly adopted in the sections and sub-sections of the paper.

The Theoretical Development of Human Resource Management.

The development of Human Resource Management can be related to the result of external socio-economic, political etc influences pushing organisation to internal changes to the nature of dealing with the employee relations for better effectiveness and performance. Also, on the parallel growth of industrial relations which remain an opposed movement from employers to the divers system of bargaining and negotiation (Clark, 1999, McDougall et al, 1990,). The Human relations approach developed as early as the 1920s to challenge the ideas of employees been a merely an attached element to a machine that only need profits from the employees works. This is completely the era of the classical or scientific or Traditional approach to human resource management that sees organisations as a mechanistic, technical, hierarchical and bureaucratic system. This approach emphasizes on compliance to rules and regulations, control, task, status quo, survival and profit; and classified as Theory X approach to human resource management (Analoui, 1998, McGregor, 1987). This opines that human resource management strategy is not in place and everything is purely administration (personnel management). It is only based on the managers own ideas and no employee development, but where it exists, it is only task-related training (Analoui, 2002).

It is from this circumstance that the human relations approach was then developed to address the problem of the classical approach of HRM. This human relations approach focuses on the need to make the employees in the organisation to feel that they are useful and important part of the overall effort of the organisation to achieve the desired goals and objectives. It however differs from the classical approach as it seeks for the involvement and participation of employees rather than the authoritarian system used in the traditional system. But, still having the elements of: mechanistic; technical; hierarchical; and bureaucratic characteristics; and disadvantages of the classical approach. This, Analoui (1998), McGregor (1987) exploited to classify it as semi-scientific human resource management having a mixture of X and Y theory of human resource management.

However, because of the X and Y characteristics identified in the human relations approach that several researchers in human resource management opine for an open system to utilised in managing human resource emerged in the 1990s. Therefore, it opines that the open system is one that recognises the changing relationship with the environment, accepting various inputs, process these inputs and at the end delivers the outcomes. It also suggests that, it is a system that is open both internally and externally, interacting with the internal subsystems of the organisation and the outside environment (Analoui, 1998). Again, the open system sees the organisation as organic structures that are interfacing and interacting with the environment, leaner, smaller and flatter in nature and team based relationships. It emphasises on human resource management, task, people, self-regulation, business orientation, proactive, competitiveness and employees development. However, in human relations, there is a human resource manager who basis on performance and effectiveness through strategic approaches and it is purely tied to the theory Y approach of HRM (Analoui, 1998, 1999, 2002). But, the development of HRM through the classical, human relations and the open system as discovered in the literature is linked to the concepts of either the “soft” or “hard” or mixture of both depending on individual perception about HRM development. These views are all considered in relationship to the HRM models which are discussed in the next section.

The “Hard” and “Soft” Variants of Human Resource Management.

The difficulties in arriving at a concise concept of human resource management had introduced the two major concepts of hard and soft approaches to HRM. The “hard” approach has the harsher understanding and interpretation of strategies associated to cost minimization. For example, it recognises low wages, minimal training, close supervision and monitoring, appraisal and reward and with very little levels of production such as work downsizing and intensifications (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). However, in another example cited by Legge (1995) and Beardwell and Claydon (2007), they identified that, if “hard” approach of HRM is used to explain a strategic approach to human resource management, then “hard” and “soft” are not necessary in compactable. They suggested that the “hard” may contain some elements of soft approach and “soft” might as well deliver hard outputs by closed thought with organisations strategy. This would opine that an element of both “hard” and “soft” approaches exist in any particular strategy of HRM of an organisation. For example, in a research conducted by Gratton, *et. al.*, (1999) confirmed a mixture of both “hard” and “soft” variant HRM in eight organisations and that, the difference between then was not precise. However, Truss, *et. al.*, (1997) contended that, if “hard” human resource management approaches is used to explain strategy for cost minimisation techniques, then soft and hard approaches might be far vary apart. In this circumstance, the issue might be to determine if both are channelled to

achieving the outcomes or demanded on employment relationship at the detriment of the workforce/employees. However, within the context of these hard and soft variants and in efforts to conceptualise a generally acceptable perception of HRM concept, four predominant models have emerged and that includes: Michigan Models; Harvard Models; Guest Models; and Choice Models.

One of the first earlier HRM models developed was the Harvard Model or Concept. The Harvard concept or model is that originating from the Michael Beer's publication "Human resource management" emphasising on a general managers perspective delivered at Harvard Business School in 1981. The underlying to this concept is that of creating a better and committed relationship between the organisation and its employees as necessarily to achieving higher levels of outputs to the organisation's objectives. This is indicated with the four C's implying commitment of employees, overall competence of the employees, the degree of congruence between organisational goals and objectives and employees and cost-effectiveness of the HRM approaches. It is argued that the Harvard models intention is to identify the process of equating the respective interest which is expected in turn to influence the organisation's choice to human resource management practice to policies, employee influence, organisation structures, reward system and human resource inflow and outflow in the organisation (Beer, et al, 1999, Clark, 1999, Sisson & Storey, 1994). Therefore, its emphasis is related to the "soft" variant approaches of HRM.

The Harvard Model consists mainly of two parts; the human resource system and a map of the HRM territory, which can be traced in the diagram. However, from the basis underlying this concept, it should be recognised that the model is focused on people, basing on individual influence, work system and human resource inflow and out flow thereby concentrating on people's outcomes using analytical strategies. It composes of the work system, human resource flow, rewards, stakeholder interest, HRM policies choices, HR outcomes and long-term consequences (Cakar, et al, 2003; Beer et al, 1999). However, it is good to question if these components work in separated format or not. It should be that for the HRM policies, goals and objectives of an organisation to be achieved, these components are to be integrated into the business strategy and fully aided by line management at all levels. This, Clark (1999) argued that the Harvard Model is formative emphasising on human relations tradition, although it is the most popular, comprehensive and remains the most influential model to the basis for the modern HRM development. However, Torrington and Hall (1998), Lundy and Cowling (1996) while accepting it argued that it was analytical in approach, while Storey (1994) and Guest (1999) contended that it was prescriptive and descriptive strategy respectively.

Michigan model or concept is another of the earlier thinking or views that lead to HRM development. The Michigan concept of HRM is that developed at the University of Michigan in the early 1980's. It is opined here to be similar to the Harvard concept, however; it put more emphasis on strategic measures directed towards the employees and on a high level of thinking about the organisations strategies. Afterward, Clark, (1999) and Fombrun (1984) as cited in Fombrun, et. al. (1999) argues that, the Michigan models concentrates on rewards and it is this reward measures that are used to attain acceptable attitudes in the organisation. Further, that the controlling factors are strategic selection, strategic appraisal, strategic rewards and strategic development and that, these factors are found in all three decision-making levels of the organisations. That is; the strategic, managerial and operational levels (ibid). But, the Michigan concept in its overall perspectives emphasizes that there should be interrelatedness and the coherence of HRM activities in the organisations; and that the HRM cycle ought to centre on selection, appraisal, development and rewards focused to increasing organisational performance. It further stress on expressing the coherence of internal human resource policies and the importance of matching these policies, strategies to the external business strategy and environment. However, it excludes stakeholder interests, situational factors and the idea of HRM strategic choice. The Michigan models focuses on individualist and organisational performance, based on strategic control and organisational structure system for managing human resource which onus lied on managing human assets to achieve strategic goals and objective of the organisation. Furthermore, it concludes that, it is normative aiding to human resource performance through the hard approach of human resource management. The components and contents are HRM cycle, strategic management, environmental pressures, organisational structure, mission and strategy, HRM, selection, performance, appraisal, rewards and development (Cakar, et al, 2003, Legge, 1995). In this concept, mission and strategy refers to the fact that the organisation has to have a reason for being; for using money; material; information; and people to carry out the mission and these people are organized to do the necessary task. Also, the HRM relates to division of labour; performance; monitoring; and the equitable spread of rewards to maintain employees' productive performance (Devanna et al., (1999). However, Truss (1999) argued that, Michigan model is prescriptive but Legge (1995), Pinnington and Edwards (2000) classified it as normative.

Again, the Guest Model or Concept represents another or the third model advanced towards the development of HRM today. The Guest concept as argued by Guest (1987, 1997) indicates that for the achievements of the four main human resource outcomes (selection, training, appraisal and rewards), several policies and strategies are needed. It also recognised that if this sequence is properly followed would lead to better and acceptable organisational outputs. This reflects the view that a core set of integrated human strategy through human resource practices can achieve superior employees and organisational performance and then financial outcomes, and that within the context of this concept, human resource management is different from personnel management. However, in the Guest models, it surfaces that the human strategy involves differentiation of innovation focused on quality and cost reduction through HRM functions of selection, training, appraisal, rewards, job design, involvement, status and security. It is argued that, with better employees selection, training, appraisal and rewards system, would lead to

employees increased commitment, quality and flexibility. Also, that the HRM approach to employee's motivation; cooperation; involvement and organisational citizenship create higher levels of productivity, quality, and innovation, aiding to organisations profits (Guest, 1997). However, non-integration of these factors into the organisations HRM structures might compensate with low returns on investment, but, for the model leading to desirable organisational results had giving the contention that the concept is similar to the Harvard concept of HRM, though other categories emerge which are broadly based on the Harvard models. For instance, where the Harvard model has human resource flow, Guest model has manpower flow and recruitment, selection and socialisation; where the Harvard concept has work system, Guest concept has organisational and job design.

Another recent contextualised model or concept by Analoui (1998, 1999 and 2002) in advancing HRM development is the Choice Model/Concept. It accentuates that managerial strategy for an organisation is crucial to the effective and committed employee performance and to the organisations outcomes. Therefore, HRM should not be based on human relations alone but there should be an open system that allows every organisation employees to contribute to the achievement of the organisational objectives (Analoui, 2002). It further argue that, the strategic human resource manager's function as decision-makers and the political perspective in which policies formulation and decisions-making are made and achieved, the personalizes HRM style, the strength to commitment and interaction, the power which has an effect and that been affected plus the truth about top management effectiveness are the benefits which the choice model help to address in the emerging development of HRM (Analoui, 2002). The Choice Model in its overall opinion stresses that internal (organization), personal (individual) and external environmental parameters are needed to be identified and diagnosed for the organisations objectives achievement. These parameters relate to the policies formulation and framework of strategy for the HRM and that, it should done at the senior level of management and transferred to the line managers for implementations. The resulting effect would be an improved organisations performance, effectiveness and quality of work and life (Analoui, 2002). The Model refers to these as the input-process-output HRM strategy and that the external and internal sources are influenced and determined by the personal behavioural effectiveness of the senior managers of the organisation (Analoui, 2002). This implies that personal: attitude; aptitude; awareness; political; socio-economic status; plus the understanding of the stakeholders' priorities; are paramount to organisational performance and effectiveness to achieving their mission statements. Considering this model in the context of hard and soft approaches, it is built strongly on soft approach of HRM since the benefits centred on total commitment of all organisational employee, involvement, decentralisation and participations towards the decision-making process for organisational objectives achievement. Also, the choice model is a rational model that provides for: a wider range of opportunities to pursue a mission; finding new strategy that would be relevant to further appraisal of opportunity; makes reconsideration of the positive and negative influences of all alternatives; and the implementation strategy that achieve the organisation objectives leading to high performance and effectiveness (Analoui, 2002).

Real Estate Development Process and Property Developer/Manager Fusion

The real estate development process encompasses several activities at different stages, and it is so dynamic that all the activities needs to be organically linked and collaborating each other in the course of the development success (Millington, 2000). It is much more than a mere carrying out a construction work as it goes beyond until the real estate developed is occupied, used and continuously undergoing the required maintenance and management (property management). The real estate development process in practice consists of the stages: development conceptualisation; site identification and purchase; development feasibility and viability assessment; development decision; development planning and design; development implementation and management; development finance; marketing the end product; and property management (Millington, 2000; Nwanekezie, 1996). As this development procedure steps are many, so also, are required different human resources from different professions (land surveyors, architectures, planners, estate surveyors and valuers, engineers, project administrators/human resource managers' etc.) to perform each step activities tasks. Therefore, in these stages undoubtedly require the recruitments, trainings, commitments and rewards to the human resources if success was bound for the proposed real estate development and for the accruable returns to be achieved. However, the study circumstance here is not to lurch into explanations of the different real estate development stages but to investigate on how best practice approach of human resource management should the property developer/managers utilise in the scenarios. For example, from the development conceptualisation stage to the property management involves collaborations between the property developer/manager and the rest of the team members (employees). This collaboration is effective and efficient depending on the manner the property developer/manager utilises in managing the employees' relations and the charged responsibilities in the development. It is likely that the strategy implemented in ensuring and enhancing these employees relationship should promote effectiveness and efficiency performance through total commitments by the employees in attaining the real estate development goal success.

Findings/Discussion of "Hard" and "Soft" Approach to Real Estate Development Success

The critical review and assessment of the three earliest models of Harvard, Michigan and Guest to the development of HRM, has shown in the findings thatdisguised contradictions, ambiguities, discrepancies and difficulties as

presented by the various authors opinions in giving clarity about which concept to adopt. Also, to the clarifications of the consensus if a model is descriptive or analytical or prescriptive or normative. For example, Tyson (1995) argued that *“a major difficulty has been confusion over the types of model being used: sometimes they are normative or prescriptive and sometimes descriptive or analytical and that the descriptive models have alluded to the way human resources management is conducted”*.

Furthermore, in both concepts of Harvard and Michigan, the findings reveal that rewards system exists but the Guest Model has other additional stages of policy formulation and management of changes, employee appraisal, training and development and communication systems (Cakar, *et al*, 2003). It therefore suggest for, as being a “soft” approach to human resource management and normative contributing to organisational effectiveness (Cakar *et al*, 2003, Legge, 1995). Although, contradictions still exist as Pinnington and Edward (2000), Torrington and Hall (1998) suggested that Guest model is prescriptive, while Storey (1994) argued it has being a conceptual human resource management approach.

The results also reveal that in the contest of ambiguity, difficulties and a lack of clarifications of which model or models to apply in managing human resource from the development of HRM; and because it has failed in the literature to recognise the influence of senior manager’s to their choices of HRM, the political context in which the organisation strategies are formed and the other factors which affect and gauge the effectiveness of senior managers and top management, permitted the pursuit for other alternative concept by researchers in the field (Analoui, 2002). This is particularly at the strategy level of policy formulations and decision-makings in organisations, and that, the Choices Model of HRM was conceptualised for the purpose of addressing the gaps in the other three models of HRM (Analoui, 2002). Therefore, it is opined here to be adopted as one of the most effective, efficient and notable concept since it is built on open system strategy that is completely rooted in “soft” variant of managing human resources in an organisation, and this is supported by the work of Analoui (2002).

In addition, the findings reveal that the hard approach is more of mechanistic strategy that is related to the traditional method and believed in human productive as a measure of effectiveness and performance of an employee. Whilst the soft approach is more of an open system strategy that allowed the total participation, integration of all employees in the process of policy formulation and the consideration of the external organisational environmental issues, and with that, the organisational objectives are achieved (Analoui, 2002).

In most property development organisations, the property managers/developers cadre is the decision- makers’ level (Millington, 2000) and their influence and effectiveness to the HRM strategy is a function of their managerial behaviour (Scarrett, 1995). The managerial effectiveness is a multi-dimensional issue that basing it alone on ability and competence cannot satisfactorily exploit the managerial effectiveness of those property developers/managers in real estate development organisations (Analoui, 2002). However, the degree of property developers/managers effectiveness is a function that is centred on identifying and acknowledging a lot of other factors affecting or aiding their effectiveness and managerial capabilities (Analoui, 1999 and 2002; Stapleton, 1994). These factors according to Armstrong (2001) and Analoui (1998, 1999 and 2002) includes: workplace culture; task and technology; size; history and types; personal perception; attitude; aptitude; awareness; politics; socio-economic; market competition; stakeholders’ priorities and community interference. Hence, it is the responsibilities of the property developers/managers to critically integrate the antecedents from these factors into the HRM best approach for the real estate development success. The property developers/managers eventually should expect that they are capable of influencing and determining the real property performance and effectiveness if proper strategies are not maintained. The issue of interest and its distinct characteristics reflect that a particular property developer/manager is mainly shaped by his perception and the real estate development priorities from within and outside factors influencing the development (Stapleton, 1994; Scarlett, 1995). But the choice of decision and policies formulated and implemented strategically by the property developer/manager are not always the best because of organisational culture and environmental issues. It is always better to allow the participation, involvement and commitment of the other sub-ordinate managers (line managers). Despite these earlier mentioned factors, there are other fundamental factors which should influence the level of property developers/managers effectiveness. Using example of a study conducted on senior managers and executives in the ministry of environment, Ghana, (Analoui, 2002); it conclude that managers’ perceptions, skills, management philosophy, and inter-organisational relationships are prominent to organisational and development effectiveness and performances. This suffices to opine that the property developers/managers ought to have a balance of commitment and ensure other employees commitment through participations, involvement, decentralisation and formal and informal contributions in the decision –making process. Again, these should be utilised in all the processes and activities that should ensure success to real estate development purpose. As well as including into the approach to human resources (skilled and unskilled) selection, training and development, commitment, appraisal and reward structure (Analoui, 2002).

Reflecting on the study review on the growth movement of HRM that created the two prominent concepts of “Soft” and “Hard” approach of managing human resource, it is assessed and assumed in this paper that the Michigan model, Harvard model, and Guest model are ingrained in the “hard” approach (Analoui, 2002). But, the conceptualised model in this study as notable and acceptable is the Choice model of HRM and it is opined here as that well-established in the “soft” approach. Although, each of the model is conceived on the perceptions or assumptions of how human resource management in an organisation is looked at, handled and managed or on individual perception. The first three models failed to include or consider the influence of property

manager/developer and their effectiveness in decision-making process and other environmental factors influence (Analoui, 2002). Therefore, they are not comprehensive to be adopted by the property manager/developers in the processes of real estate development for successful completion. These models are either only basing it management approach on hard or mixture of both (semi-hard). The use of this method by property development manager will endanger the real estate property being completed. It will also create issues that lead to material piling, quarrying and other resources waste at the project site by some of the uncompromising skilled and unskilled employee. Most times, observations have shown that this incident occurrence in real estate development site has been through conspiring by the employee to cause mischief as to detract the development completion success. Consequently, the overall effect is increased development costs and eventual abandonment of the real estate development. In the circumstance of this study and as contextualised to real estate development processes success, the "soft" approach of HRM which is basically built on an open system (soft) of HRM is advocated for use by property development managers. The "soft" approach provides that: internal; personal; and external environmental factors; should be included in the property development managers function. This is essential in the selections, trainings, appraisals, commitments and rewards of the employee. At the same time, integrated into the HRM strategy of the property development organisation for best practice approach achievement and for better employee performance, effectiveness, efficiency and quality of work and life of the real estate that is developed.

Further, the property developers/managers skills, managerial philosophy, inter-organisational relationship, personal behavioural perceptions, political status and market competition are imperative. As a result, the property developers/manager should strive for stability by ensuring that every employee commits through participations, involvements, and formal and informal contributions in the decision-making process in the real estate development and in the organisation as a whole. This will make the employees feel that they are fully an integral part of the development processes. It should regularly be in the mind of the property developers/managers that their ideas are not always the best practice method in order to achieve successful real estate development. Rather, make sure to improve on building stronger employee partnership, commitment and contributions in all the real estate development steps.

Conclusion:

The investigation into this phenomenon and how it would be beneficial in real estate development project on time completion success has demonstrated that in the development of HRM from the literature marks ambiguities in the field for a concise definition of what HRM is all about. The paper has also demonstrated this through the trace of the HRM development from the classical and human relations to the open system approaches, and how the perceptions has been based on the assumption of either theory X or Y of human resource management. It further established that four models (Harvard, Michigan, Guest and Choice Models) had emerged in the development of HRM and these models was theorised on supporting two variants approaches of HRM- "hard" and "soft". The study discovered that the "hard" and "soft" approaches have various advantages and disadvantages when they were investigated using the models, and that the "soft" approach of managing human resource is preferred to that of the "hard" approach in the success of managing the various human resources involved in real estate development steps. The "soft" approach is expected to be providing the opportunities of awareness and understanding of the internal, personal, and external environmental factors that should be included in the property development managers function apart from the selections, trainings, appraisals, commitments and rewards responsibilities. It also permits the easy integration of these parameters into the HRM strategy of the property development organisation for best practice approach to manage the human resources. This guarantee improvement in employees' work performance, effectiveness, efficiency and to sustain the life-cycle of the real estate developed. The property developers/managers skills, managerial philosophy, inter-organisational relationship, personal behavioural perceptions, political status and market competition needs to be aligned in the "soft" approach principles. The imperative of this is the guarantee that the real estate development would be completed on time as anticipated by the owner. Therefore, the development of real property which encompasses several process involving the recruitment, training and rewarding of human resource, the best practice approach to utilised in manage these people is the "soft" HRM approach. This reflects that all property developers/managers, decision-makers, government, non-governmental bodies and agencies involved in real estate development should promote for in managing the employees. Finally, the study profoundly associate and advocate for an open system (soft) approach of HRM in real estate development steps and in organisations strategic management processes as a whole even though it is context specific. However, the paper recommend that since there are ambiguities, discrepancies, and difficulties inherent in finding a common ground for the concept of HRM, more research should be encouraged and sustained until a consensus impression for HRM is achieved. Although, its popularity and importance in the development of how human resources and the entire economic system should be interrelating is not underrated in this study frame. Further, since this study is based on a conceptual review and contextualised in the context, it should be applauded that an empirical investigation through the utilisation of other research instruments (questionnaire survey and interviews) with key actors in the research circumstance be conducted. This should assist in establishing the credibility and reliability of the findings of the study.

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