



JULIUS NYERERE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCES HONOURS DEGREE
IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

LEVEL 4 SEMESTER 1

EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPER

MODULE CODE HRMH 412

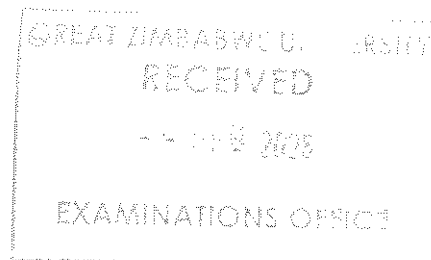
MODULE NARRATION EMPLOYEE RESOURCING

DATE

DURATION 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

Answer all questions in section A and any two questions in section B.
Section A carries 40 marks and each question in section B carries 30 marks.
Questions may be answered in any order.



SECTION A

Case Study: Workforce Planning and Employment Flexibility at Harare Foods Ltd

Harare Foods Ltd (HFL) had long been one of Zimbabwe's leading food processing companies, supplying major supermarkets, restaurants, and export markets across Southern Africa. Established in 1995, the company had grown steadily over the years, employing over 2,000 workers across various departments. However, as Zimbabwe's economic challenges intensified, HFL found itself struggling to balance operational costs with employee resourcing demands. Rising inflation, currency fluctuations, and skills shortages placed immense pressure on the company's ability to maintain a stable workforce.

For many years, HFL had relied on a traditional model of permanent full-time employment, believing that job security for workers would lead to greater productivity and loyalty. However, by 2021, management realized that this approach was no longer sustainable. Production costs had skyrocketed, and demand for food products fluctuated due to unpredictable agricultural cycles. The company needed a more flexible employment strategy to cope with market uncertainties.

In response, HFL implemented the Flexible Firm Model, restructuring its workforce into three categories. Core employees, such as senior managers and machine operators, remained on permanent contracts. However, factory workers, packagers, and drivers were shifted to fixed-term contracts, while casual labourers were hired on a seasonal basis during peak production periods. Although this model helped the company manage labour costs more effectively, it created tension among workers. Many employees feared that the company was using contract work as a way to avoid providing benefits such as pensions and medical aid. Trade unions criticized the move, arguing that it undermined workers' job security and their right to long-term employment.

As the shift toward flexible resourcing continued, HFL also faced recruitment and selection challenges. Previously, the company had followed a structured recruitment process focused on hiring full-time staff. However, the new approach required a greater reliance on short-term hiring, creating instability in the workforce. Many skilled workers, particularly factory operators and quality control specialists, left after completing their contracts, causing disruptions in production. Temporary employees often lacked the necessary experience, leading to frequent errors and production delays.

In an effort to mitigate these issues, HFL introduced new recruitment strategies, including a digital workforce management system to track contract

renewals and optimize staff scheduling. Additionally, the company partnered with local vocational training institutions to develop a talent pipeline for skilled roles. While these measures improved staff deployment, employee dissatisfaction remained high. Workers on short-term contracts felt excluded from opportunities for career progression, leading to increased frustration and low morale.

As workforce instability became a growing concern, HFL's staff retention issues intensified. By 2022, turnover rates had risen significantly, with many employees leaving for more stable job opportunities in Zimbabwe and beyond. A company-wide employee survey revealed three key reasons for high turnover. Many workers cited low salaries as their primary concern, as inflation eroded their purchasing power. Others felt that contract work provided little job security, making it difficult to plan for the future. Lastly, employees expressed frustration over limited career growth opportunities, believing that the company favoured long-serving workers for promotions.

In response, HFL attempted to address these issues through various retention strategies. One initiative involved performance-based contract extensions, allowing high-performing temporary workers a chance at renewal or permanent employment. The company also introduced skills development programs, giving employees the opportunity to attend training workshops to improve their career prospects. Furthermore, recognizing the economic challenges in the country, HFL began offering hybrid compensation packages, where portions of employees' salaries were paid in US dollars to help them cope with inflation.

Despite these efforts, dissatisfaction among lower-wage employees remained a problem. Many workers in short-term roles felt that they were being used for temporary needs, with no clear path to long-term stability. Trade unions continued to press for better wages and permanent employment opportunities, but HFL maintained that flexibility was essential to the company's survival in Zimbabwe's uncertain business environment.

The situation became even more contentious when HFL was forced to lay off 200 employees in late 2022 due to budget constraints. This decision led to labour disputes, as some workers claimed that the selection process for redundancies was biased. Union leaders accused the company of targeting employees who had previously been involved in industrial action, while others alleged that severance payments were unfairly delayed.

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) soon became involved, demanding legal action against HFL. The Ministry of Labour intervened, mediating discussions between the company and affected workers. After several months of negotiations, a settlement was reached. The company agreed to distribute severance payments over a six-month period to ease the financial strain on retrenched employees. Additionally, HFL committed to implementing

fairer contract termination policies and pledged to consult employee representatives before making future redundancies.

While the agreement helped defuse immediate tensions, it also raised questions about HFL's long-term approach to employment resourcing. Many employees remained skeptical about the company's commitment to fair labour practices, and union leaders warned that further disputes could arise if flexible employment policies were not carefully managed.

Looking ahead, HFL faces the challenge of balancing operational efficiency with fair employment practices. The company must find ways to improve job security while maintaining financial sustainability. Employee engagement will be crucial, as well as refining recruitment and retention strategies to reduce high turnover. Additionally, building ethical workforce restructuring policies that align with Zimbabwean labour laws will be essential to avoid further disputes.

HFL's case highlights the complexities of implementing flexible employment strategies in a challenging economic environment. While flexible resourcing offers cost advantages, companies must ensure that their workforce remains engaged, motivated, and fairly treated. The ability to balance business efficiency with employee well-being will determine the company's long-term success in Zimbabwe's dynamic labour market.

Questions

- a. Assess the effectiveness of HFL's retention strategies. (20)
- b. What additional measures could the company implement to improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover among temporary employees? (20)

SECTION B

2. Examine the role of bundling resourcing strategies in Zimbabwean organizations.
3. Examine how Zimbabwean companies can implement flexible resourcing strategies while ensuring compliance with labour laws and employee rights.
4. a. Examine the role of HR architecture in shaping employee resourcing strategies in Zimbabwean businesses. (15)
- b. How can firms design HR structures that align with both local and global HR trends? (15)
- 5a. Compare and contrast talent acquisition and talent recruitment in the Zimbabwean context. (15)