

Strategic Human Resource Management of the Public Sector Personnel During Economic Austerity: Policy Transfer from the United Kingdom to Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This article examines public sector human resource management methods during economic austerity through policy analysis of Nigerian and British experiences. The public sector encounters special labor management problems because economic austerity creates budget reductions, workforce reductions, and salary restrictions. Nigeria continues to face three major challenges: unpaid wages, labor strikes, and inadequate workforce planning. The UK implemented SHRM to achieve equilibrium between organizational flexibility and budgetary discipline. The study investigates how HRM practices, which include performance management, training, and employee engagement, adapt to austerity measures in both settings through secondary data analysis and comparative methodology. The study demonstrates that the United Kingdom employed austerity measures to transform HR operations while enhancing organizational responsibility and implementing digital transformations. The new system has brought severe damage to Nigeria's wage systems, workplace relationships, and staff motivation levels. The paper recommends that Nigeria adopt UK SHRM methods through the specific application of British strategic human resource management components, which focus on staff growth and performance assessment and open communication.

Keywords: Human Resource Management (HRM), Public Sector, personnel, Economic Austerity, Workforce Management, United Kingdom, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

Governments apply austerity measures to decrease budget deficits through tax increases, spending reductions, and sometimes both methods at once. Austerity measures became widespread

across wealthy economies because of the worldwide financial crisis that began in 2008. The public sector, which normally functions as a cost center, became the primary focus of these initiatives (Bordogna, 2018). Governments are having to deal with more and more economic austerity because of financial crises, low income, and pressure to cut public spending. Austerity policies often mean fewer jobs, delayed advancements, stagnant pay, or lower morale among public sector workers (Adebisi, 2014).

During these times, good management of human resources is very important for keeping institutions strong and providing services. Nigeria has a lot of different ways of doing things, while the UK has made systematic HRM policies in reaction to austerity measures. Wright and McMahan (1992) characterize strategic human resources management (SHRM) as "the systematic arrangement of human resource allocation and initiatives designed to facilitate an organization's attainment of its objectives." Additionally covered is the analysis of HRM systems (and/or subsystems) and how they relate to various components of an organizational system, such as the internal and external environments, the people responsible for putting HRM systems into place, and the stakeholders who assess the organization's performance and determine its viability (Jackson et al., 2014).

Human resource management (HRM) in the public sector is still being studied by researchers since it functions differently from profit-driven private sector businesses (Blom et al., 2020). In the 1990s, New Public Management (NPM) was introduced, and management reforms followed (Bezes, 2018; Leisink&Knies, 2018). Van de Walle et al. (2016) impacted the values of the public sector by often emphasizing efficiency and

effectiveness in addition to more conventional public values like impartiality and legality. Furthermore, during this timeframe, private sector enterprises have become increasingly socially aware (Poole et al., 2006) and have adopted a "model employer" approach to human resource management, akin to the welfare-oriented HRM of the public sector (Paauwe&Farndale, 2017). This study aims to examine the notion that various transition processes will result in a convergence of human resource management across public and private sectors.

Historically, public personnel policies have predominantly emphasized fairness, employee welfare, and constructive relations with trade unions, which clearly somewhat interprets the context of soft HRM rather than being driven by a rational managerial interest in improving organizational performance that aligns to "hard" HRM (Farnham& Horton, 1996). These studies, however, provide insights into HRM in the public sector from nearly two decades ago, during the inception of NPM (Boyne et al., 1999; Kalleberg et al., 2006). This paper talks about what Nigeria may learn from the UK when it comes to policy, but it also looks at how both nations deal with their public sector workers during times of economic trouble.

1.1 Problem Statement

Public sector workers are important for carrying out policies, but austerity can hurt their motivation and productivity. Nigeria is still dealing with wage arrears, labour strikes, and poor workforce planning. In contrast, countries like the UK have made human resource policies a permanent part of their economies to deal with problems. This mismatch shows how important it is to know how different institutional settings affect the consequences of austerity on HRM outcomes. Without this understanding, policy interventions could become useless or even destructive.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

To analyze the human resource management strategies utilized in Nigeria and the United Kingdom for the management of public sector personnel during times of austerity; to juxtapose the outcomes of these practices; and to derive policy lessons for Nigeria from the UK's experience.

1.3 Research Questions

Some research questions guide this investigation, thus; how have HRM tactics been

utilized to oversee public sector personnel in Nigeria and the UK during times of austerity?, What were the challenges and results in each country?, What lessons could Nigeria learn from the UK's approach?

1.4 Justification of the Study

Effective human resource management within public sector institutions yields three critical outcomes, enhanced public trust, institutional stability, and sustained service delivery during periods of fiscal constraint, underscoring the significance of the topic. This research presents practical strategies for reinforcing HR resilience amid budgetary austerity through a comparative analysis of the United Kingdom and Nigeria. By examining the effects of management reforms on employee performance and motivation, the study contributes to the broader academic discourse on public sector transformation and organizational adaptability.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The research examines how austerity measures affect human resource management practices in Nigeria and the United Kingdom through an analysis of secondary data that spans from 2008 to 2023. The timeframe contains two distinct economic periods because of the UK's austerity program, which started after the 2008 financial crisis, and Nigeria's current budget crisis because of unstable oil market prices. The research combines current information to generate policy-related findings, although it lacks original survey data.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Human resource management (HRM)

Human resource management (HRM) is the process of hiring, training, assigning, motivating, and keeping government employees to make sure that services are delivered effectively. Public sector human resource management has to deal with rules, politics, and money problems that private businesses don't have to deal with (Bach & Bordogna, 2011). When the economy is unstable, the government tries to cut spending, keep salaries low, and make structural changes to balance the budget. This makes Human Resources operations more complicated. This is because the government needs to balance service continuity, staff morale, and budgetary prudence (CIPD, 2014).

In countries like Nigeria, austerity usually leads to strikes, late paychecks, and worse services (Obansa, 2018). In the UK, austerity measures,

including wage freezes, pension reforms, moving employees, and making things more efficient, have been put into place more consistently (Lewis et al., 2016). As a result, Human Resource Management during times of austerity is more about keeping the integrity of the institution than just cutting costs.

2.2 Economic Austerity

Researchers have examined public sector layoffs to get insights into economic austerity (Bach, 2012). Decreased revenue bases and cuts in public expenditure have been employed to diminish the public sector. Governments in the US and the UK have diminished tax bases to attract foreign investment and enhance employment. The principal source of revenue for the public sector is diminishing concurrently with tax revenues. Governments have tried to win back investors' trust by cutting budgets, which they say is required to lower public deficits (Nadel&Savès, 2025). The state functions as a guardian of rights crucial for preventing the social exclusion of marginalized groups encountering obstacles to labor market participation, and is also characterized as a redistributive entity capable of balancing resources between wealthy and impoverished communities (Alabi, 2019).

Mousa and Samara (2022) contend that the vulnerable are disproportionately affected by reductions in public sector financing. Evaluations of national budgets have refuted these claims, demonstrating that in nations that have independently implemented austerity measures, public expenditure remains a substantial component of GDP (Kwong et al., 2021). The neoclassical argument for reducing the public sector to make the private sector more competitive and profitable also argues against it. All households throughout the income spectrum are expected to receive equivalent advantages from the latter. Neoclassical theory asserts that the public sector undermines the competitiveness of the private sector by offering pay premiums that compel private firms to offer competitive salaries, hence diminishing their profitability. A secondary neoclassical argument asserts that public expenditure might result in deficits, eroding investor confidence due to concerns about the government's ability to meet its debt commitments.

2.3 Strategic Human Resource Management and Uncertainty in Austerity Contexts

SHRM ensures that the organizational context and HR systems (employee competencies,

knowledge, and conduct) are effectively engaged (Delery & Gupta, 2016; Sikora et al., 2016; Cooke et al., 2021). Public institutions experience resistance to alignment because austerity programs reduce their stability through budget reductions, wage limitations, and employment terminations. The Western HR models face implementation issues in developing nations because institutional power structures and social and political elements differ extensively from Western systems (Mousa & Samara, 2022).

The concept of strategic human resource management aligns with neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991), who argue that organizations need to modify their HR practices to navigate outside pressures while fulfilling various stakeholder requirements. Public sector organizations need to stay adaptable during difficult times because their employees must manage resource deficits, personnel changes, and salary restrictions (Zucker, 1991). The process of adaptation becomes extremely difficult because austerity measures create work-related stress and employee burnout, absenteeism, and withdrawal from work activities (Reade, 2009; Ererdi et al., 2022; Howie, 2007).

According to SHRM (Kwong et al., 2021), staff members serve as the vital factor that determines if a business will survive or not. The organization needs to establish HR standards that include precise training methods, open communication systems, and performance management support to maintain staff motivation and work output during times of financial constraint (Mousa, 2024). Research shows that SHRM practices create positive effects that enhance performance results for both employees and organizations, yet most of this research comes from Western societies with stable cultural environments (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Paauwe et al., 2013; Guest, 2011; Jiang et al., 2012; Paauwe et al., 2013).

The existing studies reveal a lack of understanding about how public sector HR systems will alter under austerity because SHRM research studies scarcely examine African organizational settings (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016; Akwei & Nwachukwu, 2023). The Nigerian government implemented austerity measures, which resulted in delayed wage payments, worker strikes, and reduced effectiveness of performance assessment systems. The United Kingdom adopted austerity as a strategic reform tool through pension system changes, performance-based management, and digital human resource tools (Adeleye, 2011).

The difference shows how important it is to put SHRM in context because Western public service policies encounter difficulties when they try to function in African bureaucratic systems due to common sociocultural elements and institutional instability and political influence (Anibaba&Adeleye, 2014; Dibben et al., 2017; Mousa et al., 2024). The study of SHRM in relation to austerity between the UK and Nigeria reveals important knowledge about how strategic HR practices function to either reduce or increase financial crisis impacts. This research paper studies international learning experiences to develop United Kingdom-based methods for enhancing Nigerian human resource management practices.

2.4 Understanding the Public Sector in the Context of Austerity

The government maintains ownership of public sector assets through tax revenue, which functions as the main funding source for these operations (Okorie&Onwe, 2016). The Office for National Statistics states that government decisions create instant changes in public sector operations because political authorities maintain control over these organizations. The public sector experiences changes because of political control, which includes national priority shifts, administrative restructuring, and budget modifications. Private businesses face less influence from market forces than public sector organizations do.

These aspects of the public sector play a crucial role during economic downturns because the economy faces a recession. Because it gets most of its money from the government, suggestions for cutting the deficit and consolidating the budget quickly lead to cuts in the budget, freezes on hiring, or limits on staff development and training. The UK government introduced austerity measures in 2010 because it wanted to decrease the national debt, which led to major changes in public sector employment. The Nigerian economy faces a prolonged recession while the government implements cost reduction measures, which produce wage delays and staff reductions and transform public service delivery (Alabi&Okeke, 2023).

Public institutions exist as large complex systems, which cause austerity policies to create ongoing effects that spread across all government agencies and departments. The staff members will experience prolonged resource shortages, which will limit their professional development possibilities while their workload continues to increase. The analysis of public sector

organizational structures provides insight into how HRM practices transform during economic downturns.

2.5 New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management (NPM) emerged during the 1980s and 1990s as a new approach to public administration. The system introduced business practices into public administration to obtain better operational performance, accountability, and efficiency in government operations (Hood, 1991). NPM has established a financial explanation system for governments, which shows why they must reduce expenses while maintaining public service delivery. Organizations streamline their operations through four main strategies, which include creating performance metrics and moving non-essential work outside the organization and reducing staff numbers, and using performance-based management systems (Bach & Bordogna, 2011).

The United Kingdom implemented austerity measures after the 2008 financial crisis through NPM principles, which functioned as its main guiding framework. The government established three main priorities to improve public services through specific performance targets and salary restrictions, digital transformation efforts, and organizational restructuring. The implementation of NPM allowed government agencies to achieve better accountability and resource management, but it created negative effects on employee morale (CIPD, 2014).

Nigeria has not always followed the rules of NPM when cutting costs. Theoretical models of performance management systems exist, but political interference, together with weak accountability systems and limited monitoring capabilities, reduces their effectiveness according to Ogunrotifa (2012). The Nigerian austerity measures have exposed weaknesses in public institutions instead of creating better efficiency because of delayed employee payments, ongoing worker conflicts, and unstable human resource management systems (Alabi, 2019). (Choi et al., 2018). Consequently, NPM demonstrates that institutional robustness dictates whether austerity serves as a detriment that undermines the public sector, as evidenced in Nigeria, or as a driver for reform, as witnessed in the UK.

2.7 The Impact of Austerity Measures on Public Sector Employment

Austerity measures create major changes in how public sector employees maintain their

workplace safety, organizational structure, and work motivation. When governments experience financial shortfalls, they tend to apply cost reduction methods which include lowering salaries and freezing all new hiring, reducing staff numbers, and modifying pension benefits (Hood, 1991; Bach & Bordogna, 2011). The main goal of these policies requires balancing national budgets, yet they create negative effects on public worker morale and productivity, which makes HRM practices both more important and harder to do (Scott, 2008).

The United Kingdom needed to implement multiple challenging transformations because of austerity measures that followed the 2008 financial crisis. The implementation of voluntary layoffs and pension reforms, together with salary freezes, reduced wage expenses between 2010 and 2015, but the entire workforce remained intact (Choi et al., 2018). Redeployment tactics together with trade union agreements and digital HR systems and efficiency targets based on New Public Management principles have reduced the impact (Carter et al., 2015). Research indicates that frontline personnel and middle management staff experience increased work-related stress while their job satisfaction levels decrease (Bach, 2012).

Nigeria faces worsening challenges because of austerity measures. The government faces two main problems, which occur when workers do not receive their paychecks and when their salaries are paid late, because these issues reduce trust between the government and its employees. The HRM system loses its reliability because of union strikes and hiring practices that favor certain groups and promotion systems that base decisions on political factors (Adebisi, 2014). Financial crises often result in budget reductions for training and capacity development programs, which intensify existing skill shortages while decreasing service standards (Nadel&Savès, 2025). The Nigerian government has failed to implement any changes from austerity measures, which have proven effective in the United Kingdom. The institution has created more problems than it has solved.

The situation in Nigeria demonstrates how public sector employment faces disruption because of weak institutional frameworks and poor financial management systems. The UK serves as an example that proves austerity management becomes successful through established human resource procedures. The organization can transform austerity into a strategic advantage

through its human resource management system, which includes transparent compensation structures and intelligent employee placement and ongoing training initiatives.

2.8 UK Experience with Austerity HRM

The UK government executed specific human resource initiatives to achieve cost reduction during the post-2008 financial crisis period. The organization responded to the common practice of wage freezes, pension changes, and employee reductions between 2010 and 2015 by using redeployment and voluntary separation programs and union negotiations (Bach & Bordogna, 2011). The British public sector faces major work-life balance problems because of austerity measures. The organization implemented flexible work policies, but employee satisfaction levels dropped during this period (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2013).

Organizations established budget-friendly training programs and online learning platforms, although they reduced their training development funding (Alabi 2019). Studies demonstrate that austerity programs force middle managers to execute dual functions, which involve maintaining organizational objectives together with staff welfare requirements (Carter et al., 2015). The UK HRM system maintained its strategic direction through performance management, digital HR tools, and accountability systems (CIPD, 2014).

2.9 Nigeria's HRM Practices During Austerity

The Nigerian human resource management system, based on austerity, faces multiple distinct challenges that require separate solutions. The practice of paying employees late and not giving them their full wages (Adebisi, 2014) leads to decreased employee work motivation and increased staff departures. Public sector employees choose to strike to defend their workplace rights, which proves that existing worker protection programs fail to deliver adequate protection (Ufua et al., 2022). The process of hiring and promoting staff encounters political interference, which creates morale problems while blocking access to top talent (Ogunrotifa, 2012).

Alabi and Okeke (2023) conducted a recent study, which showed Nigeria's institutional problems, including corruption, cronyism, and weak policy enforcement, prevent HRM reform success. The initial budget cut during economic downturns tends to target training and capacity development funds, which results in diminished quality of public service delivery (Okolie, 2010).

The system faces a vulnerable point in its performance management structure. Alabi (2019) observed that most Nigerian ministries maintain superficial appraisal systems that do not connect to either compensation or job duties. The United Kingdom employs performance metrics to boost operational efficiency, yet this approach remains absent in the current system.

Recent research focuses on analyzing Human Resource Management deficiencies that affect underdeveloped areas like Nigeria, and the effects of budget cuts on wealthy countries, including the UK. There exists a shortage of studies that analyze human resource management strategies from wealthy countries during austerity to generate useful information for economically disadvantaged nations. The research paper addresses the existing gap by performing an analysis of Nigeria and the United Kingdom while offering policy recommendations for Nigeria.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research study analyzes Nigeria and the United Kingdom through a comparative qualitative research framework, which serves as its case study material. The method of comparison works well because it allows researchers to study how different institutional capacities and governance structures affect human resource practices during economic downturns between two countries. The UK serves as a suitable reference point for Nigeria because it operates as a developed economy with established government institutions, which Nigeria needs to study for its own development.

3.2 Population of the Study

This investigation ensures that only studies that relate to the research topic get included while excluding all other HRM studies. Empirical research created during the years 2008 to 2024 receives primary attention because this period follows the global financial crisis, when many governments started using austerity as their main policy approach.

3.3 Data Collection Technique

The data collection contains working papers from professional organizations, which include the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), together with policy documents from governments and reports from international organizations such as the OECD, ILO, and scholarly articles from peer-reviewed

journals. The research data collection depends on complete documentary methods, which employ online academic databases that include Web of Science, JSTOR, ResearchGate, Scopus, and Google Scholar. People often view grey literature through the lens of government white papers and policy briefings. The UK civil service reform documents, together with Nigerian public service commission reports, determine the official HRM methods. The literature gives major attention to studies that analyze HR methods, including recruitment, training, compensation, performance evaluation, and workplace relationships during times of economic downturn.

3.4 Data Analysis

The research study analyzes existing materials that focus on public sector human resource management practices during times of financial crisis and austerity measures. The research method applies thematic analysis to find patterns, trends, and differences between the two countries' HRM austerity response methods. Training and capacity building stand as one of the essential areas, together with employee relations, workforce reorganization, and pay management. The research provides policy recommendations for Nigerian public sector reform through a detailed study of British and Nigerian public sector systems. The research maintains ethical standards through the correct citation of all data sources, which prevents plagiarism from occurring. The study uses only secondary data, which eliminates any problems regarding informed consent and confidentiality because it does not involve human subjects directly. People attempt to share their conclusions properly while they try to evaluate evidence without bias.

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Comparative research indicates that Nigeria's experience has been predominantly marked by institutional instability, insufficient human resource management frameworks, and increasing employee dissatisfaction, whereas the UK perceived austerity as an opportunity for public sector modernization and reform. The results are presented in a thematic format.

4.1 Workforce Restructuring

The austerity program in the UK, implemented from 2010 to 2015, resulted in an almost 19% reduction in the civil service personnel, decreasing from 492,000 in 2010 to 400,000 by 2016 (Office for National Statistics,

2017). Personnel redistribution, voluntary exit programs, and service digitization were employed to meticulously manage workforce reduction. The government's focus on maintaining service continuity is evidenced by the effective reassignment of redundant staff to new positions within ministries such as HM Revenue & Customs and the Department for Work and Pensions (Bach & Bordogna, 2011). The nation of Nigeria exhibits unique political attitudes. The staff reorganization process operates without any methodical planning or strategic coordination systems. Organizations establish hiring freezes and promotion delays as emergency measures during financial crises, yet these actions fail to become permanent organizational transformation strategies. Employees who remain in their positions for extended periods without professional advancement are described as undergoing workforce stagnation. Moreover, ad hoc layoffs have historically incited union opposition and public indignation, as evidenced by the Structural Adjustment Programme of the 1980s and similar fiscal crises in the 2010s (Alabi, 2019).

4.2 Reward and Compensation Systems

The two scenarios under austerity operated with two different sets of remuneration policies. The UK established public sector pay restrictions through a two-year freeze from 2010 to 2012, followed by a 1% annual cap from 2013 to 2017, which produced widespread employee dissatisfaction. The government implemented these pay restrictions while protecting lower-income workers and pension system changes and transparency requirements (Nadel & Savès, 2025). The government reforms preserved their legitimacy even though public morale experienced a decline.

The Nigerian government faced severe austerity measures, which became apparent through delayed salary payments, unpaid benefits, and pension dues that reached six months or more in certain states (Akwei & Nwachukwu, 2023). The 2016 oil price shock forced multiple state governments to stop paying salaries, which led to extended work stoppages in both the health and education fields. The Nigerian workforce encounters difficulties when trying to understand their employment rights because they cannot access proper communication systems, which UK workers use routinely. This paradox creates a harmful effect on public service motivation, which destroys public faith in government institutions.

4.3 Education and Capability Development

Training budgets for government organizations were reduced by 25–30% due to the UK's austerity policies (McCartney & Teague, 2014). To address resource deficiencies, new initiatives such as knowledge-sharing networks, internal seminars, and e-learning platforms were instituted. These projects illustrated the application of Human Capital Theory, ensuring that skills were not entirely neglected despite budget reductions.

The Nigerian government cuts professional development and training budgets during economic downturns because they represent the initial expenses that receive budget reductions. According to Federal Civil Service Commission data from 2019, less than 10% of workers took part in official training programs between 2015 and 2019, while the participation rate dropped from more than 40% during the previous ten years. The ongoing lack of investment reduces service quality while making it tough to adapt and prolongs the time required to address skill shortages. The United Kingdom shows different results because its institutional strength determines how well human capital protection functions during times of fiscal tightening.

4.4 Employee Morale and Relations

Austerity measures created stress between employees but failed to break their fundamental work relationships, as evidenced by the United Kingdom (Nadel & Savès, 2025). The administration held organized talks with unions that had planned protests and work stoppages because of salary limits and pension plan changes, which reduced the total length and severity of the disruptions (Carter et al., 2015). The staff survey results showed declining satisfaction levels, but employees continued to support the long-term reform targets.

The Nigerian labor relations system has shown continuous hostile behavior throughout times of economic austerity. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) started three major strikes in 2013 and 2017, and 2020 because of fiscal deficits and unpaid salaries, which created more than 24 months of academic interruption throughout ten years. The conflicts demonstrate how weak negotiation systems have become while institutional trust continues to decline. Public sector employee morale and motivation decline because workers see their human resource management systems being used for political purposes while they experience ongoing systemic neglect (Ogunrotifa, 2012).

4.5 Comparative Synthesis

The data shows that the United Kingdom implemented strict budget cuts, which formed the basis of a reform program to advance modernization, digital transformation, and human resource professionalization. The austerity measures in Nigeria created additional problems while they destroyed human potential and worker motivation. Nigeria faced two outcomes from austerity measures, which created instability yet pushed the United Kingdom to implement new reforms. The analysis shows that austerity produces different results based on how well institutions function and how clear communication is, and how organizations make their human resource decisions.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper demonstrates that public sector job outcomes during austerity depend on the extent of managerial reform and institutional capacity to withstand challenges. The research uses NPM theory to explain how organizations view budget cuts as prospects to improve their workforce instead of viewing them as obstacles. The analysis shows Nigeria needs to establish a connection between its austerity programs and well-structured human resource policies, which will defend staff members and maintain continuous service delivery.

Conclusion

The research findings demonstrate that austerity measures, together with public sector evaluation, have their strongest impact on public sector employment positions. Nigeria and the United Kingdom faced similar budgetary challenges, yet they chose to address employment issues through different strategies. The main reason for this difference stems from their distinct approaches to applying New Public Management (NPM) principles. The UK government established workforce reorganization plans, which followed New Public Management principles as a result of its austerity program. The organization implemented wage caps together with staff departures and internal staff transfers to protect essential skills while reducing expenses. The reforms encountered multiple challenges, but they demonstrated a management approach that focused on controlling expenses and maintaining accountability and operational effectiveness (Hood, 1991).

The Nigerian job market faced increased difficulty because of austerity measures, which included employment restrictions, salary

postponements, and staff development. The policies introduced only minimal NPM-style reforms, which resulted in operational stagnation, worker disputes, and declining employee morale instead of boosting organizational efficiency.

The various experiences demonstrate how NPM principles create opposing effects, which either reduce austerity impacts on employment or intensify their severity. Staff reduction occurred in the UK alongside performance-based management systems to sustain service operations. The Nigerian strategy exposed political human resource protocols and bureaucratic lethargy, which resulted in reduced productivity and deepened institutional splits. The austerity period operated as a stress test, which revealed Nigeria's institutional weaknesses while showing Britain's power to reshape public sector employment systems.

Comparative studies indicate that Nigeria could adopt British methods to prevent employment downturns during economic recessions. The emergency response system needed to transition from its current unplanned emergency response to a more organized emergency planning system.

Recommendations

Organizations need to create succession plans, staff requirement evaluations, and digital HR system deployment and staff redeployment for optimal workforce management. Second, pay systems that are clear and easy to understand are important. Nigerians maintain their morale through regular wage payments, which prevent extended strikes that have historically affected the public sector, even though these payments remain constrained.

Third, training and capacity-building should not be seen as optional during times of austerity. The United Kingdom shows cost-effective methods through peer mentoring and online learning, and professional institution partnerships, which help preserve and enhance human capital despite financial limitations. Nigeria needs to establish better union collaboration structures to enhance its industrial relations system. Service delivery remains operational through effective negotiating systems during economic downturns because these frameworks protect against labor conflicts. The policy insights demonstrate that austerity measures can maintain public sector employment levels without causing job losses in government positions. Human resource development through strategic management leads to better work results and the defense of employee

value and stronger organizational stability during financial downturns.

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