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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF INEQUALITY AND EXCLUSIONS

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ABSTRACT

The paper addresses the subject of human resource management of diversity in the public sector to tackle challenges of inequality and exclusions. The emphasis is on human or people resource as a point of reference, contending that personnel administration ignores the human face of the workplace by concentrating on systems and procedures. The means of an end approach in the transformation of personnel administration into human resource management is crucial at the level of the preparation of the soil, concretized by the descriptive differences of personnel administration and human resource management. The context and content of the discussion is informed by the South African paradigm shift from apartheid to the constitutional and democratic dispensation. The shift classified scholars of Public Administration into the purists and reformists. Undoubtedly, the reformist school of thoughts informs the perceived ideas while the purists traditional school of thought adheres dogmatically to personnel administration orientation. Although human resource management is associated with the private sector and personnel administration with the public sector, the multidisciplinary approach of Public Administration closes the binary divide through the creation of soft boundaries. Diversity in the workplace is recognized when the identification of the worldviews that the workforce subscribes to is carried out. It is at this level of the discussion that the seed of recognition requires to be planted. The assorted variations of languages, religions, and lifestyle, as the total sum of human cultures, are positioned within the worldviews. Recognition of the worldviews is valuable and is a resourceful means in the public sector. The Emmanditsh dimensional model of diversity that denotes a forest of trees indicates the levels, namely; personal, interpersonal, cultural and interpersonal where variations exists, and manageable within the parameters of human resource management. This model articulates the primary and secondary dimensions of diversity. The application of human resource management strategies and applications effectively manages these dimensions at all
levels. The implications for the transformation of personnel administration into human resource management, and the recognition of the worldviews on policies have highlighted that the needs of the workforce should be taken into account.

The formulation of human sensitive policies to address human needs is crucial if the transformation process has to reach its highest level. The conceptualization of the corporate cultures, arguably, requires strategies to create viable cultures that incorporate values of humanity based on its workforce. The question of encouraging and removal of the weeds as referred to imaginatively, addresses the aspects of conflict management. Human resource management and its interactionist view as well as human relation accept that diversity related conflict is healthy and necessary and thus it doesn’t have to be removed like weeds. The diagnostic and determinative approach on the functionality and dysfunctionality of diversity related conflict is fundamental in a human resource management environment. Conversely to the traditional view that appreciation is the first step towards diversity management, the farming of knowledge approach applied in this work contends that appreciation, understanding and celebration are rather the fruits to be reaped in an environment where the diverse workforce is effectively managed. The stereotypes and prejudices against and for each other create exclusions and inequality, and can be addressed when the fruits of diversity are reaped.

Introduction

The subsequent efforts advocate the typical South African public sector incorporating human resource management of diversity. There are peculiar diversity related challenges of inequality and exclusions, as contended that are addressable through human resource management at different dimensional levels. Human resource management plays an
important role in reforming the public sector from its traditional personnel administration orientation. There are considerable number of circumstances and factors that influence the public sector reform. The substance and quality of the reform is determined by the ultimate objective(s) to be pursuit. The nature and scope of the reform is time and place in that the public sector of a specific country might require specific modification in order to adapt to the challenges of the specific time(s). The South African public sector is undergoing drastic transformation, functionally and organically to present itself dissimilar to the apartheid era. The human resource management element of the reform is crucial in that it presents the human face of the workforce and their diversified attributes. It is however distinguished that this human face element of the reform, although crucial, is not an exclusive panacea to all challenges of inequality and exclusions except that it is appropriate at the level of humanity. Since it is argued that employees are human beings in the first place, their cultural-value orientation originate from worldviews. The inequality and exclusions of specific group of employees by another occurred in the past as one worldview dominated the other. Human resource management is geared towards re-dressing and re-balancing the imbalances towards reaping the fruits of an effectively managed diversity. The multidisciplinary Public Administration approach, which is often contended theoretically, is applied more practical in the delivery of the conceived ideas using the uncommon farming approach. The farming approach is preferable for its relevance to the topic and that it is value adding through the articulated stages. The quest for knowledge, from resource to knowledge economy requires intellectuals to be farmers of knowledge in their own right.

Context and content

The content of the following discussions is positioned within the development of both the theory and practice of public administration in South Africa. South Africa is part, if not an important part of the African
Continent within the ambit of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Consequently, the expressed views regarding human resource management vis-à-vis personnel administration may impact on public administration of other nations in the African continent and beyond through globalization of knowledge. In this vein, arguable, the context influences the content. The South African paradigm shift from apartheid to the constitutional dispensation created the classification of scholars into categories, namely the purists and reformists. The Public Administration purists are those traditional academics and practitioners (be it from the first, second and third generation) who willingly or unwillingly submit themselves completely to the generic function approach that encompasses personnel administration. The reformists are those academics and practitioners from the ranks of second and third generation who supports the generic function approach but do not necessarily adhere to it dogmatically (Hanekom et al, 1987). In addition, the reformists are modernists who call for major transformation among other aspects, of personnel administration into human resource management. The explanation of major transformation comprises according to Keulder (1998), the refashioning of traditional practices to contemporary thinking, arguable within the multidisciplinary context. The phrase refashioning may rather sound negative, it is contended that the major transformation refers to, is a result of critical analysis that entails deliberate efforts defining the causes and effects of what is to be transformed into what to achieve which objectives than mere refashioning of traditional practices. To this end, it is accepted that the second and third generation of scholars and practitioners are the understudies of the first generation. They broaden the knowledge scope of the discipline and practice from where the purists left. Notable, the purists never rejected the use and the application of human resource management in the public sector, what they have rejected is the name change from personnel administration into human resource management without substance, while the theory and the practice of the latter remain the same
with the former (Hanekom et al, 1987). The application of human resource management specifically in relation to diversity related issues is not only in name but also in the approaches, methodologies and content. Unquestionably, the traditional school of thoughts that adheres to personnel administration established itself over time in the public sector as compared to the emergence of the contemporary school of thoughts that promotes human resource management. Although established, the balance of recognition between the traditional and contemporary schools of thoughts, specifically in respect of personnel administration and human resource management, is maintained.

Preparing the soil

The preparation of the soil is the state of the public sector’s readiness to transform from personnel administration to human resource management as the first step towards effective diversity management in the public sector. The envisaged transformation requires an extensive and purposeful preparation. It is the extent at which the public sector is primed, to be receptive of new approaches to advance its effectiveness and efficiency through the transformation process. The advanced argument does not imply that the public sector is less effective and efficient as compared to the private sector. Although it is effective and efficient, efforts to make it more effective and efficient are advantageous. The paper is rather appreciative of the differences and similarities for the reason that they constitute multiplicity and that possible areas of cooperation could be identified. In the public sector, managing people has traditionally been the task of personnel administration. In the execution of the involved tasks, personnel administration is perceived to have been regulative and inhibitive of the human attributes valuable to the sector (Department of Public Service, 1987). There are deficiencies, inequalities and exclusions created in the application of personnel administration systems, addressable through human resource management strategies. Figuratively and
imaginatively, reference is made to the soil to symbolize the tremendous extent to which the sector should be attuned for the plantation of the seed to achieve the transformational objectives. The contended transformation process is more of a means than an end. The ultimate end is the realization of the human resource management practices in the public sector mindful of its conventional practices in the private sector. The multidisciplinary approach to management issues requires the creation of soft boundaries permitting both the public and private sector to cooperate mutually on issues of common interest. The assimilation of human resource management in the public sector produces desirable fundamental changes. To this end, the transformation process is vertical both at the level of the human capital and structural exposition of the sector itself. Table 1 stipulates the descriptive differences between personnel administration and human resource management in view of the South African history of public institutions. The descriptive differences are applied guided by Holt (1987) sentiments that one of the challenges in the social sciences is the misunderstanding that arise from the indiscriminate use of terms. Terms such as personnel administration and human resource management are frequently defined in the same manner. The environment within which these terms are used, whether in the private or public sector, the context of use and personal perspectives of individuals complicate their meanings. The writers often adopt the similarity of meanings approach in that conclusion is often reached that a specific term means what another term stands for (Massey, 1993). In addition, writers define terms in accordance with their own needs and purposes. The definitions and explanations of terms with a contradictory variety of meanings are in popular use in the field of Public Administration. A specific term in country X with apparently the same meaning in country Y may have a different emphasis owing to the differences in the history of a particular country’s institutions (Appleby, 1981). It is indicated under context and content that this paper exposes the South African scenario. Consciously, the dictionary definition to clarify what personnel administration is vis-a-vi human resource management is
avoided due to its common interchangeable approach in tracking down meanings of words and concepts. The unquestionable terminological precision is often doubtful at the level of complexity of those terms to be defined where dictionary meanings have been employed. To this end, the avoidance of a semantic argument through the application of the descriptive analysis positions the theory and practice of this paper relevant.

Table 1: Descriptive differences between personnel administration and human resource management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personnel Administration</th>
<th>Human Resource Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees are regarded as</strong> “employees”</td>
<td>Employees are regarded as “human beings” in the first place and, therefore, a “resource” for the public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees are expected to apply</strong> rules and prescripts</td>
<td>As human beings, employees are diversified and resourceful to the public sector and are not necessarily expected to dogmatically apply rules and prescripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees are expected to comply</strong> with central rules</td>
<td>Employees are expected to provide professional advices and guidance in the application of management theories and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Managers <strong>have no responsibility</strong> for human resource management and diversity</td>
<td>Line managers are primarily responsible management and development of human</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from White Paper on new Employment Policy for Public Service, 1997)

The above descriptive differences denote that personnel administration views employees as employees while human resource management views them as human beings in the first place. On this note, it is interpreted that the workforce diversity in the public sector at different dimensional levels
could be recognized and managed effectively within the human resource management. The human resource management is central at the Emmanditsh dimensional model for forest of trees indicated in figure 1. Human resource management values aspects of humanity meaningfully. It perceives people as constituting one of the most important assets in the public sector. The focal point is human or people, the modifier word is value and the action word is management. Managing the people side of the organization create value for any establishment as well as the workforce itself and ultimately value for the society (Fitz-enz, 1990). Regardless of the size and purpose of the organization and the technology involved, people are the common denominator when facing challenges. Success or failure hinges on the ability to attract, develop, retrain and motivate a diverse array of appropriately skilled people. The human factor is the driving force behind any success (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001). Grobler et al (2002) refer to Thomas (1996) exposition of managing diversity, that it is a systematic and comprehensive managerial process for developing an organizational environment in which all employees, with their similarities and differences, can contribute to the strategic and competitive advantage of the organization, and where no one is excluded on the basis of factors unrelated to productivity. Diversity management is, according to the argument advanced in this paper, possible through human resource management principles-strategies and applications. According to Hackett (1996), the basic dignity of human labour deserves recognition in that the employees are human beings who constitute the workforce and not just numbers on a clock card. According to Ulrich et al (1997), the human in human resource is losing emphasis in management. Organizations are made of people who are their hearts and souls. Each of these individuals presents a value system and peculiar code of conduct. Furthermore, there are certain fixed patterns of behavior that differ from one individual employee to another recognizable while the human in human resource management is emphasized (Smit and Cronje, 1992). The human resource management is emphasized in that it views employees as the organized
whole empowered from different spheres of life be it social, political or economical. Van Rensburg (1981) quoted former President Kaunda of Zambia’s sentiments articulating that *man* should always come first to ensure that he does not become a meaningless cog in the wheel, but a keystone on which development of *human* resource policies hinges. The public sector should plan for the better future of the *people* and that the word *people* is rather abstract unless converted to the single unit in that the *people* refers to *man* or *human* beings. The material development has been so emphasized that plans to advance more and more have become more important than *man* whom these plans are after all, made or supposedly made for. *Human* resource management positions *man* at the center of development and acknowledge that *man* is more important than policies–rules and prescripts. To this end, the differences-commonness and uniqueness of individual employee in relation to others requires incorporation within the life of the organization(s) (Gibson, 1976). In the process leading to the preparation of the *soil*, the Department of Public-Service and Administration (1997) released a *Batho Pele-White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery*. Batho Pele is a Sesotho language expression that means “People First”. Gerber et al (1987) attest that individual employees are *human* beings *first* and *foremost*. As *human* beings, they are the *human* resource or capital of the organizations and they posses value adding diversified experiences, knowledge, skills and understandings. They represent unique cultures useful to the organizations. Personnel administration system and its practices that the application of rules and prescripts from its administrators is more crucial, requires re-consideration towards a new paradigm.

Planting the seed

The acceptance of the notion that employees are *human beings* in the first place, and the readiness of the public sector to apply *human* resource management is the fertile ground for planting the seed to recognize the worldviews that the workforce subscribe to. In the personnel administration
settings, rules and prescripts are more crucial than worldviews, the greatest deficiency being that the existing rules and prescripts do not incorporate the worldviews of its workforce. From the cradle to the grave, every person finds himself in certain situations and circumstances that shape his views of the world. This is the blueprint according to which all impulses received during one lifetime are categorized and judged. A people’s worldview is their picture of the way things are in reality. It is their concept of nature, of self and society (du Preez, 1997). The importance of the worldviews lies in that they are associated with humanity and cultures. The worldviews demonstrate the assorted variations of cultures, languages, religions and lifestyle as preferences of the total sum of human cultures. They are the most valuable and worthwhile assets of human kind and they enhance the quality of life and strengthen the workforce decisively. Despite their positive effects in the work place, if discovered, they can sometimes be the source of considerable conflicts (Papp,1984). To this end, human resource management according to Schwella et al (1996) is capable of managing conflicts to the highest level where the existing differences become transformed into a resource. Vander Walt and Du Toit (1997) define the sum of the multiplicity that emanate from the worldviews as the uniqueness of human qualities that distinguishes one person from and to another. Although there is variety of worldviews, for the purpose of this work, the African and European centered worldviews, as shown in table 2 are the point of reference. The purpose of these expositions is not to be judgmental on either side, but is to emphasize that these multiplicities are of equal importance in the public sector’s workplace.
TABLE 2: AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN CENTERED WORLDVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFRICAN CENTERED</th>
<th>EUROPEAN CENTERED</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COLLECTIVISM</td>
<td>INDIVIDUALISM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTENDED FAMILY</td>
<td>NUCLEAR FAMILY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECENTRALIZATION</td>
<td>CENTRALIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRADITIONALISM</td>
<td>MODERNIZATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARMONY</td>
<td>CONTROL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO-OPERATION</td>
<td>COMPETITION</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*(ADAPTED FROM PAPP, 1984)*

From table 2, it can be interpreted that the public sector dominated of or by the African work force would value collectivism in decision-making, decision-taking and policy formulations. Collectivism emanates from the notion of extended family, a common feature in the African centered worldview that is not accorded recognition at the workplace even at the very minimal rate of inclusion. The exclusions and inequalities created around these aspects of the African centered worldviews require
contemplation in the public sector. The African workforce may insist on the development of policies to accommodate extended family background for example. In order to achieve collectivisms, decentralization of services would be the vehicle to achieve harmony and cooperation. Conversely, influenced by the concept of the nuclear family, the European workforce would require individualistic elitist approaches to decision making, decision taking and policy formulations. This approach enjoys the centralization of information and knowledge to the elite, ensuring that mechanisms of control are constructed to remain competitively advantaged. Resultantly, innovation through modernization is desirable to sharpen own competitive edge. The public sector that underwent a purposeful transformation of its personnel administration system to adapt human resource management would be capable of managing these variations.

5. **Dimensional model for diversity: forest of trees**

The paper identifies four levels of dimensions, namely; *personal, interpersonal, cultural* and *institutional*. Diversity management through human resource management occurs at these different levels of dimensions. They are referred to as dimensional levels because they are *levels* at which measurements of multiplicity take place. According to Jackson (1992), diversity is a multidimensional *mixture* of total *mixture* that can be equated to a forest of trees. Furthermore, Jackson (1997) contends that the Corporate America focused primarily on the *trees* of race and gender, and has devoted relatively little if any attention to the entire *forest*. The workplace diversity refers to more than just cultural differences based on race and gender. It also includes other differences at the level of religion and ethnicity among others (Chang, 1996). In order to understand the challenges of managing a diverse workforce, it is necessary to understand the true character of bureaucracies and human nature. Many a time, challenges are perceived to be arising out of racism and sexisms attitude or other forms of negative -isms when in reality it is
due to the nature of people’s own neuroses (Fernandez, 1991). The following figure represents the Emmanditsh dimensional model for forests of trees:

**Figure 1: The Emmanditsh dimensional model for diversity**

From *figure 1*, the dimensional levels are identified with some examples while *human* resource management is positioned central. At the personal level, *human* resource management becomes concerned about the wellness and well being of individual employees through checking in of their diversified feelings, values, thoughts and beliefs. Sensitively, *human* resource management penetrates the home environment and inquires on the challenges affecting the individual employees mindful of the effects thereof in the work environment. Such an inquiry is carried out due to the
sensitivity of *human* resource management to *human* relation. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an example of such a mechanism that serves as a vehicle to assist the workforce with problems and challenges from the home environment. Sonnenstuhl and Trice (1986) highlight problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction, marital difficulties and emotional distress as issues of concern that can disrupt the work of the troubled workforce. The involvement of *human* resource management in these issues is informed by the understanding that the prevalence of problems in the society becomes so, even in the workplace. The concerns of personnel administration are limited to the work environment, advocating that the home environment issues are outside its scope. As long as employees report to work, and be perceived to be carrying out their tasks within the parameters of prescripts, the goals of personnel administration become fulfilled. Late-coming to work, for example, among other perceived misconducts, is addressed through the application of punitive measures without proper inquiry on the reasons behind the behavior from the home environment. At the interpersonal level, *human* resource management is able to manage effectively, the relations of individual employees in terms of gender, marital status and age as well as the variations on income among other concerns. Its responsiveness to multiplicity at the interpersonal level is regularized by appropriate *human* sensitive policies.

At the cultural level, supplementary to the reasons for the present worldwide interest in diversity and multicultural management, are the complexities of the South African situation. South Africa is a radically pluralistic society where race and ethnicity are the most visible examples of its diversity. Many cultural differences exist between ethnic groups, namely; Blacks, Asians, Coloureds and Whites. There is a *forest* of *trees* within a specific population group in that variations from one population group are certainly manifold. These groups share a common history, while at the same time maintaining certain uniqueness (Smit and Conje,
2001). The ethnic diversity is further complicated by the fact that eleven languages are officiated for communication purposes. The recognition of these languages, post 1994, denotes a paradigm shift from personnel administration to *human* resource management. The affiliations of individual employees to various religions are the *bread* and *butter* issues of *human* resource management. At this level, the insensitivity of personnel administration extended to the extent of subscribing the acceptable and unacceptable religion and practices in a specific work environment without due consideration of the affiliations and belief systems of its diverse workforce. At the institutional level, the balance between the experience, qualifications and specific occupation is maintained appropriately. It can be identified from the Emmanditsh dimensional model for diversity depicted in figure 1, following Londen and Rosener (1991) articulation that there are *primary* and *secondary* proportions of diversity. Primary proportions are inherent and unchangeable while secondary ones are changeable or made adaptable with time. At the personal level, feelings manifest themselves secondarily as they change from time to time. At the interpersonal level, gender manifests itself as an unchangeable primary proportion although age is secondarily due to its changeability through the normal aging processes. The marital status and income are also the secondary proportions, changing from time to time. The vision of the White Paper on *human* resource (1987) is that *human* resource management should accommodate diversity (both with its primary and secondary proportions) to advance employability of a competent workforce.

**Implications on *human* resource policies**

The transformation of personnel administration into *human* resource management, and the recognition of the existing worldviews, subscribed to, by the workforce implicates on *human* resource management policies. The conceptualization of the corporate cultures should be cognizant of the
existing worldviews that employees subscribe to, and devise strategies to create viable culture that incorporates values of *humanity* based on its workforce. When the public sector is reformed to an extent that it incorporates the cultures of its individual employees into its corporate cultures, challenges of inequality and exclusions are effectively addressed. The White Paper on the New Employment Policy for the Public Service (1987) stipulates that cultural diversity is not a matter of encouraging the workforce from different cultural backgrounds to become assimilated into the prevailing corporate culture, rather it requires that the existing corporate culture should change in response to the cultures of its workforce. The melting pot approach to differences in the public sector, assuming that employees who are different would somehow automatically assimilate is unrealistic. The public sector should be accommodating to diverse groups of employees, addressing their different lifestyles, background and family needs. The melting pot assumptions are being replaced by *human* resource management applications that recognize and value differences through the formulation and implementation of appropriate policies. Personnel administration needs to shift from its traditional philosophy of treating everyone alike to recognizing differences and responding to those differences in ways that ensure greater retention and productivity, while at the same time not discriminating. This is attainable through emphasis on the *human* in *human* resource management. The shift includes providing diversity training and revamping benefit programs to make them more family friendly (Robbins, 1998). While that occurs, appropriate *human* friendly policies require to be developed cognizant of the needs of the workforce in line with how they view the *self* in the workplace in relation to the society where they live. According to Cloete (1981), circumstances and public needs are factorial in influencing policy decisions. Once circumstances suggest otherwise and public needs identified, the worldviews and multiplicities on the dimensional levels will undoubtedly influence the development of policies to *address human* capital needs. The emphasis on *human*
resource management is on *addressing*, through appropriate policies, and not on *regulating*. The *human* resource management establishments within the public sector are the custodians of the wellness and well being of its employees; hence the *addressing* approach is emphasized. The emotional *wellness* and *well being* of individual employees is positioned within the worldviews. Meyer & Botha (2000) defined wellness as a state of being that must be reached in order for well being to be experienced, and well being as an optimal state *that* is experienced when a state of wellness has been realized. To this end, the *wellness* and *well being* of the workforce is made possible through appropriate *human* resource policies among other things. The majority of the workforce in the South African public service subscribes to the African centered worldview although personnel administration policies were formulated based on the Eurocentric normative values. Resultantly, during the apartheid era, the basic needs of the majority of the workforce in the public sector were not accommodated within the policy framework. Whilst *human* resource management is apparently promoted in this paper, the retraining of the existing personnel administrators could achieve the same objectives. In the development of policies, *human* resource management applies power dynamics favorable than personnel administration. Wouter (1995) explains that *power over, against* and *under* represent a practice of oppression and domination. It is interpreted, cognizant of the descriptive differences between personnel administration and *human* resource management, that personnel administration practices and its Eurocentric normative value orientation over Afrocentric practices exercised power *over, under and against* the majority of the workforce. In view of this, *human* resource management, sensitive of *human* relations, is capable of exercising *power with, power for, power to be, power within,* well as *power to* in order to respond meaningfully to the existing differences and similarities between and among the workforce. Such usage of power assists in the development of appropriate policies.
Encouraging and removing the weeds

The question of encouraging and removal of the *weeds* imaginatively refers to conflict management. Conflict is a perceived or experienced as incompatible difference within an individual employee or between employees. The phrase *within* the individual employee suggests that an employee may experience conflict *with* and *within* himself that may lead to discomforts and other forms of self-oppositions (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1982). It is perceived to exist in the form of the *weeds* that need to be removed or encouraged depending on the level of the transformation achieved. Although conflict is not always negative, personnel administration perceive it as a harmful occurrence that should be avoided at all costs, hence the establishment of the rules and prescripts of compliance geared at governing the behaviors of employees. Thus, it is perceived to be a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness and trust. The perception that conflict is harmful creates negative attitudinal relations against the employees perceived to have been the cause of a quarrel (Robins, 1998).

Conversely, *human* resource management adopts the *human* relation and interactionist view that conflict is healthy. The *human* relation view in *human* resource management contends that conflict is a natural occurrence between and among employees. It is inevitable and beneficial to the workforce. Since it is not avoidable, *human* resource management advocates for its acceptance and the creation of mechanisms to manage it effectively. The *interactionist view* in *human* resource management attests that conflict is not only a positive force among the workforce, but is necessary for the employees to increase their level of performance. In this vein, managers are encouraged to keep the workforce viable, self critical and creative by maintaining an ongoing minimum level of conflict (Robins, 1988). Where *human* resource management is prevalent, diversity related conflicts are encouraged and not necessarily prohibited or removed as weeds. The encouragement of conflict is based on an analysis
of its functionality within the organization and its removal is based on its dysfunctionality. Of the most important is that human resource management theory and practice is capable of being diagnostic and determinative of its functionality and dysfunctionality.

Reaping the fruits

When the soil has been prepared, the seed planted to produce the trees that constitute a forest; the fruits of a well-managed diversified workforce emerge. In this work, along the farming approach that has been used, it is contended that understanding, appreciation and celebration are the threefold fruits that ensure the prevalence of the culture of tolerance. The following discussions on these fruits to be reaped within the ambit of human resource management of diversity is essential to broaden the arguments:

Understanding

Adler’s opinion (1986) is that understanding is the first step towards recognizing workplace diversity; this paper contends that it is more of a fruit of a well-managed diversified workplace through human resource management. In a personnel administration environment, it is argued that the thoughtfulness pertaining diversity related matters and aspects is not an issue in the first place, and expecting understanding to be the first step towards recognizing workplace diversity is unthinkable. As denoted that personnel administration is not orientated to perceive employees as human beings in the first place due to its less emphasis on the human aspect of the workforce, understanding could rather be an ultimate end to be achieved in an environment where the transformation of personnel administration into human resource management has been realized. The argument is also informed by the competence of human resource
management to understand that diversity related conflict is healthy. Understanding differences, a fruit of an effectively managed diversity in the workplace breaks down the barriers to cross-group communication and cooperation. The differences are understood as valid alternative ways of thinking and acting that lend vitality to the public sector. Accordingly, employees are ultimately positioned to understand the richness of diversity. Rather than ignore or minimize differences, the public sector is expected to understand differences and capitalize on them (Jackson, 1992). Managing people involves understanding them as individuals and recognizing their differences as well as drawing up some general principles (Thomson, 1993). While building an effective workforce is critical, diversity may become an obstacle to clear communication and teamwork. However, the workforce pursuing common objective(s) may benefit from understanding through human resource management strategies. Resultantly, the workforce may pool their skills to increase creativity and to become effective decision makers (Chang, 1996).

**Appreciation**

The understanding of workplace diversity leads to appreciation of differences. As a fruit of an effectively managed diversified workforce, appreciation manifests itself at the personal-interpersonal-cultural and institutional levels. At the personal level, it acknowledges self-qualities and the attributes of others. It stimulates the desire to learn and re-learn from the uniqueness of other employees at the interpersonal level. The stereotypes and prejudices against and for each other that creates exclusions and inequality can be recognized and addressed at this level. At the cultural level, appreciation acknowledges that our way and their way may differ, but neither is inherently superior to the other. It is contended that human resource management is fruitful in bringing understanding to appreciate the multiplicity transcending the parochial
personnel administration view suggesting that our way is better or superior to their way. At the institutional level, it brings unison between the leadership and followership and acknowledges the existence of the worldviews and rally support around them. It is understood and appreciated that there are various mechanisms of working together (Adler, 1986). As a fruit, appreciation encourages the workforce to pay attention to their differences and similarities, and raise their level of comfort with differences and capitalize on them as major assets to productivity. The broader the spectrum of the differences, the richer the synergy of the workforce (Jackson, 1992).

**Celebration**

The New Lexicon Webster’s Dictionary of the Encyclopedic Edition (1992) defines celebration as an act of performing publicly, to honor and praise or to seize an occasion for being festive. Understanding and appreciation of the differences and similarities in the workplace ushers the public sector towards celebrating its multiplicity. The celebration may take place in the form of cultural festival or food extravaganza, among other forms. It is argued that such a celebration is feasible within the human resource management demonstrating that the public sector is reaping the fruits of the planted seed.

**Conclusion**

It is concluded from the prevailing discussions that human resource management is effective in managing workplace diversity. It is acknowledged that traditionally, personnel administration is associated with the public sector while human resource management is associated with the private sector. The transformation of personnel administration into human resource management is crucial towards reforming the public sector. The advanced argument does not necessarily conclude that the
private sector is more effective and efficient than the public sector; rather the desire to be more effective and efficient is crucial particularly in relation to the workplace diversity. The competence of the human resource management strategies to address inequalities and exclusions is desirable. The employees are not only employees, but also human beings in the first place from the diverse background. The worldviews that the workforce subscribes to are identifiable in a human resource management environment. Resultantly, they are taken into cognizant in the development of human resource policies. Comparatively, human resource management exercised power relations more favorable than personnel administration. The Emmanditsh dimensional model of forests identifies the levels at which diversity manifests itself. It is concluded that these levels are interlinked in that the personal level communicates messages to the interpersonal, while the interpersonal communicate further to the cultural up to the institutional. Ultimately, an effectively managed diversified workplace produces the fruits of understanding, appreciation and celebration of differences and similarities.
References


