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IMPACTS OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON PERFORMANCE OF DISTRIBUTIVE FIRMS IN NIGERIA

Author's name: AjalaOladayoAyorinde [1], Adetunji Solomon[2].
[1]*Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Department of Management and Accounting, Ogbomoso Nigeria*
[2]*Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Department of Mass Communication, Kwara State, Nigeria.*
Corresponding E-mail:dayoajala@gmail.com

Abstract *The paper examined the human resources management practices in the Nigerian distributive firms with the aim of determining their effects and the extent to which they influenced performance. A simple random technique was used to select twenty three distributive firms on the Nigeria stock exchange. A stratified random technique was then used to select respondents in the human resources department across the selected firms. Both secondary and primary data were involved in the study. Stepwise regression analysis was used to capture the relative contribution and effect of the human resources management practices on performance. The results exhibit a strong relationship between the performance of distributive firms and the human resources management practices –recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation. Recruitment and selection was indentified to be the major driving force adding value to the performance of Nigerian distributive firms, training and development and employees compensation.*

Keywords *Recruitment and selection, training and development, employees' compensation, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) describes people management activities in organizations. It describes the process of managing people. Boxal et al (2007) saw HRM as the management of work and people towards desired ends. It is an inevitable consequence of starting and growing an organization. Boothby et al, (2010) and Buller and McEvoy (2012), human resource management is an important determinant of organization effectiveness. Emphasis is now placed on the need for human resource (HR) to be strategic and business – like and to add value to business by the expenditure of effort, time and money on HRM activities.Human resource management (HRM) is the management function that implements strategies and policies relating to the management of persons (Patterson 2002). HRM practices therefore is an innovative view of workplace management than the traditional approach because its techniques force the managers of enterprise to express their goals with specificity so that they are understood and undertaken by the workforce and to provide the resources needed for them to successfully accomplish them. It is concerned with the employment, development and reward of people in organizations and the conduct of relationships between management and workforce. It involves all line managers and team leaders but human resource specialists exist to make important contributions to the processes involved.

The major aspect of HRM is in the recruitment and selection. Recruitment and Selection is the process of attracting, screening and selecting qualified people for a job. Montana and Charnov (2000), recruitment includes sourcing candidates by advertising or other methods, screening potential candidates using tests and interviews, selecting candidates based on the results of the tests or interviews and on-boarding to ensure that the candidates are able to fulfill their new roles effectively. As Ugo and Nguyen (2012) notes, recruitment activities need to be responsive to the increasingly competitive market to secure suitably qualified and capable recruits at all levels. However, to be effective, these initiatives need to include how and when to source the best recruits (McLean et al, 2004).Training and development is the organizational activity concerned with improving performance of individuals and groups in organizational settings. Legge (2004), training and development encompasses training, education and development. Generally, training ensures that the identified competency requirements are built through a systematic and focused approach (Montona and Charnor, 2000) and development ensures that individuals are provided with opportunities to develop competencies that enable them to achieve professional and personal career objectives within the organization's goals (Ugo and Nguyen, 2012). If the employees are not evaluated against their current jobs, those that they are likely to hold in future or against the activities of the organization, there will be no basis for training and development. The employees and organizations affected are likely to witness reduced performances.

An equally important aspect of HRM practices is employee compensation. Compensation consists of every item of payment that is both monetary and non-monetary. Roche (2000), this practice improves organization performance. The quality of recruitment process, training and development and employee compensation on the performance of a corporate organization will remain unknown without being compared to the performance of the corporate organization. Consequently, it is against this background that the researchers will now attempt to evaluate human resource management practices and the impact on performance of distributive firms in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Issues

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and skilled workforce, using an integrated array of structural, cultural and personnel techniques (Storey 1995). Armstrong, 1999 believes it is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets - the people working there who individually and collectively contributes to the achievement of its goals. It is concerned with the employment, development and reward of people in organizations and the conduct of relationships between management and the workforce. It involves all line managers and team leaders but HR specialists exist to make important contributions to the processes involved.

Recruitment is the process of attracting, screening, and selecting qualified people for a job According to Montana and Charnov (2000), recruitment includes sourcing candidates by methods, screening potential candidates using tests and interviews, selecting candidates based on tests or interviews, and on-boarding to ensure that the candidate are able to fulfill their new roles effectively. Ugo and Nguyen (2012) notes, recruitment activities need to be responsive to the increasingly competitive market to secure suitably qualified and capable recruits at all levels. However, to be effective, these initiatives need to include how and when to source the best recruits (McLean et al., 2004). Effective recruitment demands well-defined organizational structures with sound job design, robust task and person specification and versatile selection processes, and employee engagement and on-boarding strategies.

Training and development is the organizational activity concerned with improving the performance of individuals in organizational settings (Legge, 2004). Montana and Charnov (2000) training and development encompasses training, education, and development. Generally, training ensures that the identified competency requirements are built through a systematic and focused approach (Roche, 2000), and development ensures that individuals are provided with opportunities to develop their competencies that enable them to achieve professional and personal career objectives within the organization's goals (Ugo and Nguyen, 2012). Employee Compensation is another important aspect of HRM practices. Compensation consists of every item ofpayment, both monetary and non-monetary. According to Roche (2000), this practice improves external performance. Blinder (1990) points out that the way employees are compensated impacts on their levels. There are various kinds of compensation. The more common are piecework payments, production bonuses, commissions, maturity curves, merit raises, pay-for-knowledge or pay-for-skills compensation, non-monetary incentives, executive incentives, international incentives.

THE NIGERIAN DISTRIBUTIVE FIRMS IN PERSPECTIVE

Around the globe, distributive firms account for significant quantum of economic activities whether Measured as a function of contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or share of total employment. According to International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), distributive firms consist of national entities which engage in trading and provision of visible/invisible goods. The following activities are defined by the ISIC as falling within the scope of distributive trade and services (firm); Wholesale trade, retail trade, restaurants, café and other eating and drinking places, hotels, camps and other lodging places, real estate, data processing services, advertising services, machinery and equipment retail, leasing and so on.

However, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in Nigeria affirmed that distributive trades (DTSIs) are the only channels through which goods and services available for consumption reach the final consumers. Based on the NBS official statistics, firms that involved in distributive trade and services (distributive firms) in Nigeria are classified under the codes ranging from 4901-4965 depending on the type of business they engaged in. Some of the businesses identified by NBS are as follow; food, livestock feeds, beverages, petroleum products, agricultural raw materials, paints, pharmaceuticals, tyre and tubes and plastic products. Others are cement, building materials, and hardware, steel and iron rods, wholesale and retail establishment and so on. Presently, the NBS is the only agency which data-bank firms that engage in distributive trade and services in Nigeria. Coming from this background information, it is crystal clear that selected firms for this study met the criteria set for the distributive firms by both the ISIC and NBS.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Human resource management appears to lean heavily on theories of commitment and motivation and other ideas derived from the field of organizational behavior." These theories are summarized below:

Commitment Theory

The significance in HRM theory of organizational commitment (the strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, **a** particular organization) was highlighted in a *Seminal of Harvard Business Review* article by Richard Walton. Walton believed that 'workers respond best - and most creatively - not when they are tightly controlled by management, placed in a narrowly defined jobs and treated as an unwelcome necessity, but, instead, when they are given broader responsibilities, encouraged to contribute and helped to take satisfaction in their work. It should come as no surprise that eliciting commitment - and providing the environment in which it can flourish - pays tangible dividends for the individual and for the company'.

Motivation Theory

Motivation theory explains the factors that affect goal-directed behavior and therefore influences the approaches used in HRM to enhance engagement (the situation in which people are committed to their work and the organization and are motivated to achieve high levels of performance).

Organizational behavior theory

Organizational behavior theory describes how people within their organizations act individually or in groups and how organizations function in terms of their structure, processes and culture. It therefore influences HRM approaches to organization design and development and enhancing organizational capability (the capacity of an organization to function effectively in order to achieve desired results).

AMO Theory

The 'AMO' formula as set out by Boxall et al(2007) states that, performance is a function of Ability + Motivation + Opportunity to participate. HRM practices therefore impact on individual performance if they encourage discretionary effort, develop skills and provide people with the opportunity to perform. The formula provides the basis for developing HR systems that attend to employees' interests, namely their skill requirements, motivations and the quality of their job.

Human capital Theory

Human capital theory is concerned with how people in an organization contribute their knowledge, skills and abilities to enhancing organizational capability and the significance of that contribution.

Resource Dependence Theory

Resource dependence theory states that groups and organizations gain power over each other by controlling valued resources. HRM activities are assumed to reflect the distribution of power in the system.

Agency Theory

Agency theory states that the role of the manager of a business is to act on behalf of the owners of the business as their agents. But there is a separation between the owners (the principals) and the agents (the managers) and the principals may not have complete control over their agents. The latter may therefore act in ways that are against the interest of those principals. Agency theory indicates that it is desirable to operate a system of incentives for agents, i.e. directors or managers, to motivate and reward acceptable behavior.

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory states that HRM practices are dependent on the organization's environment and circumstances. The relationship between the relevant independent variables (e.g. HRM policies and practices) and the dependent variable (performance) will vary according to the influences such as company size, age, and technology, capital intensity, and degree of unionization, industry/sector ownership and location. Contingency theory is associated with the notion of fit - the need to achieve congruence between an organization's HR strategies, policies and practices and its business strategies within the context of its external and internal environment. This is a key concept in strategic HRM.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

There have been a number of studies concerning effects of training on firm performance; however, the findings have been inconclusive. Westhead and Storey (1997) argued that the reasons for an absence of positive impact of training on firm performance might be the poor quality of the training provided. A study by Holzer (1993) indicated that increases in formal training significantly reduced the scraps. Kalleberg and Moody (1994) concluded that training appeared to enhance all dimensions of firm performance (quality of product, development of products, employees, relations, growth in sales, profitability and market share). Huselid (1995) indicated that training was positively related to productivity and firm financial performance. Boothby et al (2010) found provision of related training has a positive impact on productivity performance. Millar and Stevens (2012) found that organizational performance would increase following training. Specifically, organizational performance increased significantly immediately after training and remained higher than the pre-training scores at the 3 month time measure. Although it is still controversial, theoretically training improves skills, abilities and positive behavior of employees, and motivates them to work more effectively and efficiently, thus enhancing firm performance.

Martell and Caroll (1995) found no relationship between executive compensation and SBU performance, except for competitiveness of compensation packages. However, most of study found positive relationships between incentive compensation and firm performance. Leonard (1990)

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investigated effects of executive compensation policy and organization structure on performance of 439 larger US corporations. The author found that companies with long-term incentive plans enjoyed significantly greater increases in return on equity than did companies without such plans. Kalleberg and Moody (1994) studied impacts of HRM practices on perceived measurement of firm performance. The author found that gain sharing, profit sharing, and having compensation tied to performance positively related to all types of performance (product, employee, customer satisfaction, relations, and market. Mitsudome, Weintrop, and Hwang (2008) found a significantly positive relation between the changes in CEO compensation and the lagged performance measures. Specifically, CEOs are rewarded for firm performance for more than one period. Even though the findings were mixed, theoretically incentive compensation provided motivation to employees to work effectively and efficiently, thus improving firm performance.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

HRM practices are viewed as recruitment and selection, training and development and compensation. Performance on other hand is viewed as life span, profit and sales volumes. Intervening variables include environmental, political, and global and insecurity factors which may impact on the performance. The framework holds that if there is proper HRM practice based on proper recruitment and selection procedures; effective training and development of staff and compensation, then a company will have long life spans, make profits, has large sales volumes, and expand considerably.

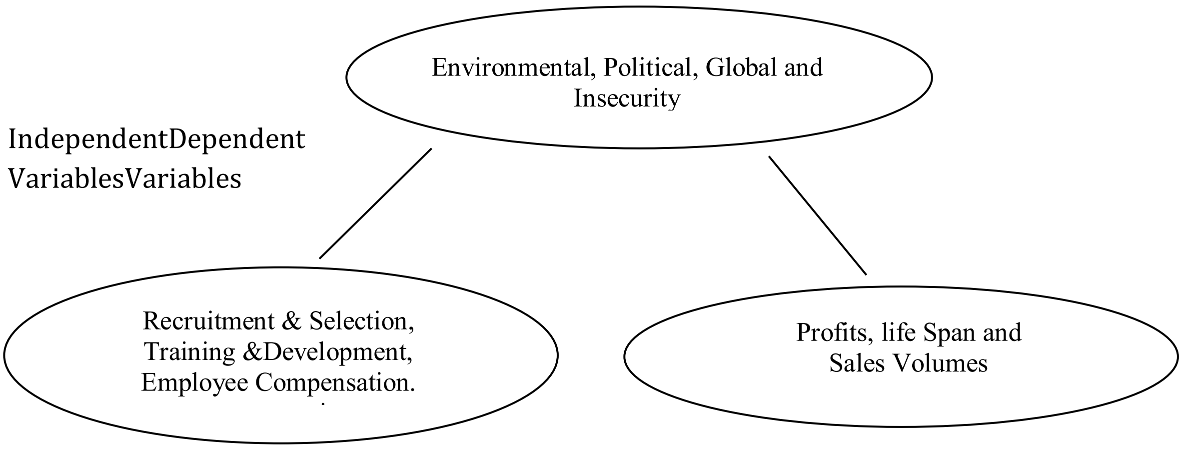

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out within the distributive firms in Nigeria. Population of the study consisted of sixty-nine (69) distributive firms out of the entire 159 companies listed on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) as specified on its official website as at May, 2019. Most of these firms have also been in existence over the entire 10 years study period (2010-2019). In arriving at the sample size for this study, stratified and purposive sampling techniques were employed. To this end, the entire population of the study was segregated into stratum using capitalization basis. From each stratum, the sampling technique ensured that at least one firm, whose annual reports and accounts can be accessed for the ten year period (2010-2019), is purposively selected on the basis of "large/medium/small" share capital categorization to ensure a fair representation of the entire population. The sample size for this study is twenty-three (23) firms selected on the basis of capitalization. Another important criterion used to arrive at this sample size was for those selected companies to have their annual reports and accounts readily accessible for the study period (2010 - 2019).

Primary and secondary sources were explored to generate necessary data for the purpose of

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this study. The primary data employed consisted of a structured questionnaire wherein respondents' opinions were graduated using Likert scale design. Questions in the questionnaire were closed ended. The questionnaires were administered on the members of staff of human resources departments of the sampled firms. The secondary data on the other hand were gathered from extract from annual reports and accounts of the sampled firms with particular concentration on the performance variables covering the period of 2010 – 2019. The study variables include both company's performance and human resources management. Company's performance is the dependent variable. This was measured from profits of the company. The independent variables are the HRM practices.The three main effect variables are: recruitment and selection, training and development and employee compensation. Data on recruitment and selection was collected on sourcing, attracting and screening of prospective employees. Data on training and development was collected on analysis of training needs, analysis of training outcomes and capacity of trainers. Data on compensation was collected on performance referencing, retention mechanisms and salary structuring.

The study engaged Pearson Product Moment Correlation to evaluate relationship between dependent variables and the explanatory variables. Stepwise regression analysis was used to determine the contribution of each explanatory variable on the company's performance. Each variable's ability to make the regression equation was 0.05. The Mathematical function specified to determine the (regress) performance and list of regress or recruitment and selection, training and development and employees' compensation was stated in explicit form as:

$Y= f(x_1\, x_2\, x_3)$

Where Y= Performance (Profits)

x_1=Recruitment and Selection

x_2=Training and Development

x_3=Employees Compensation

The Stepwise regression equation used for the prediction was expressed as :

$Y= \alpha+b_1x_1+b_2x_2+b_3x_3\ldots\mu$

Where Y= Performance

α= Constant (Intercept)

$b_1...b_3$= Partial regression coefficient attached to variables x_1,x_2,x_3.

$x_1\ldots x_3$=Independent variables that significantly contributed to the variance of firms' performance.

x_1= recruitment and selection

x_2= training and development

x_3= employees compensation

μ= error term (unexplained variance).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the findings, it was revealed that recruitment and selection, training and development, employees compensation were the variable selected on the basis of highest partial correlation to meet the entry probability requirement of less or equal to 0.05 (≤ 0.05) but do not meet the removal probability requirement of greater or equals to 0.10 (≥ 0.10) .The result showed the relationship between the dependent variable (firms' performance) and each selected human resources management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, employees compensation). The study revealed that three variables; recruitment and selection, training and development, employees compensation had a strong positive correlation of 0.780 with the company's performance. These mean that the three variables together had a strong relationship with the performance of Nigerian distributive firms. The relationship between

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firms' performance and the independent variables recruitment and selection, training and development with the effect of employees compensation partial out was also stated as 0.752, thus indicating a gradual decline in the relationship by 0.028 (0.780-0.752); which means despite the decline in the relationship as a result of partialling out the effect of employees compensation there exist still a strong positive relationship between performance and the independent variables recruitment and selection, training and development. In addition, the result showed that recruitment and selection had a 0.712 positive relationship with the firms' performance while partial out the effect of training and development, employees compensation. A reduction in the relationship by 0.04 (0.752-0.712) can again be deduced while maintaining the positive relationship. The finding above shows that recruitment and selection had greater relationship with firms' performance, followed by training and development then employees' compensation.

The result also showed the contribution of human resources management practices on firms' performance. Recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation had an R^2 of 0.608 on the firms' performance which implies that recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation jointly accounted for 60.8% of the variation in distributive firms' performance. The significance of R^2 was confirmed with an F value of 187.9 which was statistically significant at of 0.05 level significance; a good indication of the models ability to measure the distributive firms' performance. These results confirmed the important roles recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation played in adding to Nigerian distributive firms' performance The result further revealed a R^2 value 0.565 attributed to recruitment and selection, training and development with the contribution of employees compensation partial out. This implies that recruitment and selection, training and development jointly accounted for 56.5% contribution to Nigerian distributive firms' performance. Again the significance of the R^2 was tested with the with an F-value of 236.6, which was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance .This again confirms the contribution of recruitment and selection, training and development at improving the distributive firms' performance. In addition to that, the result showed the contribution of recruitment and selection with the effect of training and development and employees compensation partial out. The findings indicate that recruitment and selection has a R^2 value of 0.507 on distributive firms' performance, which means that recruitment and selection accounted for 50.7% of the firms' performance. The R^2 was tested at 375.3 F- value which was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significant, an indication of what recruitment and selection has done in explaining the variation in the distributive firms' performance.

In an attempt to determine the human resources management practices that contributed most to the variation in the firms' performance, the individual effect of the three independent variables were considered using the R^2 change which is the different between the R^2 with ith independent variable and the R^2 without the ith variable where the ith is the variable that enter the equation next. In this study, the R^2 for recruitment and selection is 0.507, that for training and development is 0.058(0.565-0.507) and that for employees compensation is 0.043(0.608-0.565). Recruitment and selection was found to have accounted for the highest variation followed by training and development and employees compensation. This implies that recruitment and selection has contributed most to the performance of Nigerian distributive firms, thus justifying the findings of Ugo and Nguyen (2012) that effective recruitment and selection of employees is imperative for the survival, growth and profitability of most enterprises.

Model	Adjusted		
	R	R Square	R Square
1	0.712	0.507	0.506

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2	0.752	0.565	0.563
3	0.780	0.608	0.605

a. Predictors:(constant) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

b. Predictors:(constant)RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

c. Predictors:(constant) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT,EMPL OYEES COMPENSATION

SOURCE: Data Analysis, 2020.

ANOVAResult (Stepwise Regression Analysis)

MODEL	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	12043.241	1	12043.241	375.330	.000
Residual	11711.672	365	32.086		
Total	23754.913	366			
Regression	13428.832	2	6714.419	236.600	.000
Residual	10326.081	364	28.368		
Total	23754.913	366			
Regression	14449.852	3	4816.617	187.900	.010
Residual	9305.061	363	25.633		
Total	23754.913	364			

a. Predictors: (constant) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

b. Predictors: (constant) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

c. Predictors:(constant) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT,EMP LOYEE COMPENSATION

CONCLUSION

Following the findings from this study, the highlighted were made: There was a strong relationship between the Nigerian distributive firms' performance and the selected human resources management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation). The three variables; recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation had a strong positive correlation of 0.780 with the distributive firms' performance. These mean that the three variables together had a strong relationship with the distributive firms' performance. Three human resources management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation) accounted for 60.8% variation in the performance of distributive firms in Nigeria. Recruitment and selection was discovered to be the major driving force adding value to the Nigerian distributive firms' performance, followed by training and development and employees compensation. The findings indicate that investment in recruitment and selection, training and development and employees compensation are likely to improve firm performance.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

Firstly, this study was limited by the selected distributive firms. This suggests that future research should replicate this study using other samples of manufacturers in various cities and provinces, and of enterprises operating in other industry sectors. Secondly, this study examined relationships between three major aspects of human resource management and distributive firms' performance, while effects of other HRM activities, such as staffing, incentive and motivation on firm performance have not been investigated. Future research may therefore examine relationships between such HRM activities and firm performance as above mentioned. Finally, this study focused on effects of HRM practices on firm-level performance rather than on employee-level performance. Future research may also address relationships between HRM activities and employee performance.

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