The Impact of Strategic Human Resource Management on Nigeria Universities
(A Study of Government-Owned and Private Universities in South East Nigeria)

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Abstract—The study investigated the impact of strategic Human Resource Management on Nigeria Universities in South East State. 106 respondents from 17 Universities across the South Eastern State were sampled. The study used descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean, and percentages) to answer the three research questions posed for the study. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used to test the three hypotheses that guided the study. The specific objective of this research work is to determine the extent to which strategic HRM is being practiced by Nigerian Universities. Results from the analyses indicated that the adoption of strategic Human Resource Management has significant effect on competitiveness, performance level and also influence Universities.

The study concluded that though strategic HR management is not yet a general practice among Universities in South East States; it has been identified as veritable tool for improving the competitiveness, performance levels, and structural development of Universities in Nigeria and South East in particular. The research recommends that further studies be carried out among Polytechnics, Monotechnics and colleges of educations since the results of this research work cannot be generalized.

Keywords— Employee productivity, Economic Growth, Human Resources, Strategic Management, and Structural Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

The main purpose of establishing Universities is for propagation and dissemination of knowledge for the benefits of humanity with a view to producing high level manpower for the rapid growth and development of nations. Among the various factors that contribute to the attainment of the above objectives, HR is the most vital/critical thus; Universities must attract, develop, motivate and maintain an energetic workforce to support the attainment of their mission and vision with a view to gaining competitive advantage (Oladipo and Abdulkadir 2011). How well Universities perform their mission and accomplishes their vision and goals of effective service delivery is of paramount concern. Improving administrative capacity and especially those aspects dealing with human resource offers the most challenge for improving the effectiveness of the Nigerian Universities system. Human Resource Management (HRM) enhances employee productivity and the ability of universities to achieve their mission (Adeyeye, 2009). Integrating the use of HR practices into the strategic planning process would enable Universities to better achieve their goals and objectives.

Existing studies (e.g., Bower and Ostroff, 2004; Singh, 2004; Katou and Budhwar, 2006; Dimba and K’obonyo, 2009; Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2010) have generally addressed the relationship between Strategic Human Resources Management practices and performance in big private sector organization. Several studies have addressed the issues of HR (see Ilesanmi, 2011 and Akinyele & Fasogbon, 2007). Of these studies in Nigeria, none have assessed the impact of Strategic Human Resource Management on Nigerian Universities. How the educational sector, most especially, the Nigerian Universities respond to SHRM practices is still a subject of intellectual ferment in the literature. This study is therefore, a part of this process by evaluating strategic HRM practices in the Nigeria University system.

Statement of Problem

The major focus of intensive research work in recent times is to ascertain the level of organizational performance. The paramount concern of every Universities is to know how best to implement its policies and programs and accomplishes its strategic intent in terms of its mission and vision. Managers and administrators in both private and public sector organization have become aware that a critical source of competitive advantage is having an appropriate system of attracting and managing the organizations; human resources best public relations strategy or state-of-the art technology. Despite the existing studies in Nigeria on SHRM since the late 1990s, there is very little solid evidence or the ways in which various types of HRM strategies and practices are shaped in practice in Nigerian Universities and how their synergistic effects can impact on the attainment of set goals and objectives. Prior studies (see, Jules et al., 2001, Adeyeye, 2009 and Oladipo & Abdulkadir 2010; Raduan, Jegak,
Haslinda and Alim in (2009) have generally addressed the relationship between SHRM practices and performance in some selected public organizations, there is still a dearth of empirical studies that will explain impact of some mediating factors affecting the adoption of SHRM practices in educational settings such as the University. To this effect, the study attempts to empirically analyze how the SHRM practices can be adopted in an academic setting in Nigeria to effectively derive plans for growth and development.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to determine whether the adoption of strategic HRM practices by Nigerian Universities is influenced by ownership type and Age. The specific objectives are to:

1. To determine the extent to which strategic HRM is practiced by South-East Nigeria Universities.
2. To examine the effect of ownership type and Age of Nigerian Universities in South-East in practicing strategic HRM.

Research Questions

1. How does the practice of strategic HRM affects the performance level of Nigerian Universities in South-East state?
2. How does a strategic HRM practice affect the ownership type and Age of Nigerian Universities?

Hypotheses

Ho1: Adoption of strategic HRM has no significant effects on performance level of Nigerian Universities.

Ho2: Adoption of strategic HRM does not have significant effects on ownership type and Age of Nigerian universities in South East.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Walker, (1992) defines Strategic HRM as the “means of aligning the management of human resource with the strategic content of the business and human resource strategy so that the latter supports the accomplishment of the former and indeed helps to define it.”

Brewster and Larson (1992) define SHRM “as the extent to which HRM is considered during the formulation and implementation of corporate/business strategies”. Strategic HRM has also been defined as “the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goal” (Wright and Mc Mahan, 1999). Budwar (2000) defines strategic HRM as a concept that views human resources as assets for investment, and the management of human resources as strategic rather than reactive, prescriptive and administrative. Strategic HRM involves designing and implementing a set of proactive HR policies/practices that ensures that an organizations human capital contributes to the achievements of its corporate objectives (David, Chin and Victor, 2002).

Theoretical framework

This study would discuss two major theories that become the backdrop of the SHRM and organizational performance research: human capital theory and resource based theory. Human Capital Theory has long been argued as a critical resource in most firms (Pfeiffer, 1994). Human capital refers to the productive capabilities of people (Becker, 1964), skills, experience, and knowledge have economic value to organizations because they enable it to be productive and adaptable; thus, people constitute the organizations human capital (Schuler, 1995).

On the other hand Resource-Based Theory (Barney, 1991, 1995) is generally accepted as a background for understanding the relationship between Strategic Human Resource Management and Organizational Performance (Cappelli & Singh, 1992; Lado & Wilson, 1994; Wright & McMahan & Mac Williams, 1994). Kanoche (1996) refers human resources as the accumulated stock of knowledge, skills, and activities that individual possess, which the firm has built up overtime into an identifiable expertise. Wright, Dunford, and Snell (2001), discussed at length the impact of the resource-based theory on SHRM theory and practice. A fundamental assumption of this view is that organizations can be successful if they gain and maintain competitive advantage (Porter, 1985).

Empirical literature

Sigh (2004) investigated the relationship between six HRM practices and firm level performance in India. 359 firms were drawn from firms listed in the Centre for Monitoring India Economy (CMIE) database. Of these 359 firms, 82 responded positively to the survey. Using regression and correlation analysis to analyze the data, findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the two HR practices, namely, training and compensation, and perceived organizational and market performance.

In their comparative study of 137 large manufacture firms, Budhwar and Boyne (2004) differentiates the HR practices in public sector and private sector companies in India. Their findings suggest that against the established notion, the gap between the Indian Private and public sector HRM practices (Structure of HR department, role of HR in corporate change, recruitment and selection, pay and benefits, training and development, employee relations and key HRM strategies) is not very significant but in a few functional areas (compensation, training and development) Private- Sector firms have adopted a more rational approach than their public sector counterparts.

III. METHODOLOGY

Instrument for Data Collection

The data collection instrument used was a structured questionnaire because questionnaires are extremely flexible and could be used to gather information concerning almost any topic, from a large or small number of people (Moore,
The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A collected basic demographic information regarding the respondent such as gender, age academic qualification, cadre and working experience; section B sought to determine the extent to which strategic human resource management is practiced by Nigerian Universities; section C: captured information on level of practice of strategic HRM on South Eastern State Universities; Section D assessed information on the effect of ownership type and age on strategic HRM in Nigerian Universities. Section A consisted of closed –ended questions Section B to D used a structured 5- point modifies likert scale battery of strongly Agree (5) Agree (4) undecided (3) Disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) in line with Atiku, Genty and Akinlabi (2011). The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree with various statements.

Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage and graphs are used for the analysis of the research question while the hypotheses testing were done with Spearman rank Correlation Coefficient. SPSS (statistical package for social Sciences) Computer software was used to run the analyses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. At 5% level of significance, reject null hypotheses for test with probability estimates lower than 5% (0.05) and conclude that they are statically significant. Otherwise, we accept 0.05 (when probability estimates are above and conclude that there is no overall statistically significance.

IV. PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULT

Introduction

Of the 120 questionnaires distributed to 10 government owned Universities and 7 private Universities, a total of 106 completed and usable questionnaires from 8 government owned University and 4 private Universities representing a response rate of about 88.3 percent are returned.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the study

Table I: Results from the analysis of the Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents indicated that majority of the respondents are male suggesting that most of the management team of Universities is male. Moreover, the respondents concentrated within the age bracket of less than to 35 years to 45 years and above. Most of the respondents were persons with first degree, Master degree following by persons with Doctorate degree. 34 percent of the respondents are in the Professorial cadre and 20 percent are Registrars and Deputy Registrars. Senior lecturers constitute about 22 percent of the respondents. This is an indication that the respondents are highly rated employees who should know more about the human resource management practices of their respective Universities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.sc or its equivalent</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate degree</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank of the respondent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors/ Readers</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Lecturers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrars/ Deputy Registrars</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Assistant Registrars</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey 2012

About 91 percent of the respondents have put in at least 4 years of service and majority of who are males. About 91 percent of the respondents are at least 35 years old.

In general, the study gives a favorable picture concerning the level of education of the respondents. Majority of the respondent have at least a first degree. This is an indication that the respondents are composed of highly educated people as expected in any University setting.

Analysis of Research Questions

Usage of strategic HRM by Universities

Research Question 1: How does the practice of strategic HRM affects the performance level of Nigerian Universities?

As shown in table II, Questionnaire item 7, 8, 9 and 10 were used to address research question one. The responses to research question one is shown in table 2 above. The study showed that majority of the Universities in South East Nigeria does not adopt strategic HRM. This is evident from the results which indication that majority of the respondents staff of the universities were in disagreement that their universities does not have structured planning mechanism, alignment with University objectives, vision and mission statement, resource control team and does not based decisions on formulated policies. Ticking disagreement to these variables implies that these universities do not adopt them in their management processes. This equally means that strategic HRM is not in use in these sampled Universities and as well affect their performance level.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Structured planning mechanism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Agreeement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
<td>(40.6)</td>
<td>(5.7)</td>
<td>(50.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Alignment with University’s objectives, vision and mission statement</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disagree-ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(9.4)</td>
<td>(37.7)</td>
<td>(5.7)</td>
<td>(43.4)</td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Has resource and control team that allocates and control resource use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree-ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(45.3)</td>
<td>(3.8)</td>
<td>(49.0)</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Bases decisions and actions on formulated policies and career planning system</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disagree-ment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(34.9)</td>
<td>(5.7)</td>
<td>(55.7)</td>
<td>(3.3)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Computation from SPSS 17 Analysis

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Ho1: Adoption of strategic HRM has no significant effect on performance level of Nigerian Universities.**

Hypothesis one was testing with questionnaire item 7 and 8

Spearman rank (Table) at $P = 0.05 = 0.900$

Degree of freedom (df) = 3

For values of $r$ of 0.9 to 1, the correlation is very strong. This represents strong positive correlation between strategic HRM and performance level of Universities in Nigeria. This implies that adoption of strategic HRM have significant effect on performance level of Universities in South-East State. Since the P. Value is below the 5% level of significance for this study. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis that adoption of strategic HRM does not have any effect on performance level of Nigeria University.

**V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**Summary of Findings**

The idea that strategy content influence performance is a central element of generic management theory, to remain competitively advantaged, studies have equally suggested the use of strategic human Resource Management. This is because strategic HR management identifies the purpose of the organization and the plans and actions to achieve the purpose.

Existing studies in Nigeria, aimed at evaluating Strategic HRM practices, and the impact of ownership type and Age (eg Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2010; Oladipo and Abudulkadir, 2011; Addulkadir, 2012). Based on the above premise, the study investigated the level of use and effect of strategic HRM on Nigeria Universities in South East States. Descriptive and Spearman Rank correlation coefficient indicated the following findings:

1. Strategic HRM is an important and indispensable tool for any organization or institutions performance and for any
organization or institution that wants to gain competitive advantages over others.

2. The study reveals that a genuine application of strategic HRM by Universities will enhance staff and students performances.

3. Strategic HRM has effect on ownership type and age of Universities in Nigeria.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended that further studies be carried out in Nigeria because questions need to be asked about the generalizability of the results earlier mentioned to after tertiary institution, or to business organizations. Would this result, for instance hold for poly techniques and colleges of education in Nigeria or would it be different for large corporate organizations? Further studies should be carried out on polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education to ascertain the impact of strategic HRM on their performances. Secondly to investigate the causes of non-adoption of strategic HR management in Nigerian University the causes of this when known and curbed, University might become more competitive in boosting the development of Nigeria economy.

REFERENCES


