

Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Performance

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Abstract

The practice of human resource management is increasingly becoming the central focus in every organization, given the fact that effective human capital is one of the best practice weapons for better corporate positioning in today's competitive world. The purpose of this work therefore is to assess the effect of human resource management practices on organizational performance with particular reference to PZ Cussons Plc. Aba and Nigerian Breweries Plc. Ama, Enugu. To achieve this purpose, a survey design was adopted using the simple random sampling technique on a sample size of 146. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze and test six hypotheses. The results of the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient in SPSS version 20 reveals that human resource management (HRM) practices (planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, employee relations and compensation/incentives) are significant correlates of organizational performance. The study recommends that organizations, irrespective of size and type, should embrace effective HRM practices to improve corporate performance and global competitiveness. This requires a strategic focus by recognizing emerging trends introduced by technological explosion and sophisticated competition which affects modern HRM practices.

Keywords: HRM Practices, Organizational Performance, Corporate Positioning, Competition.

Introduction

The practice of human resource management (HRM) is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organizations. It covers activities such as strategic HRM, human capital management, corporate social responsibility, knowledge management, organizations development, resourcing (human resource planning, recruitment and selection, and talent management), performance management, learning and development, reward management, employee relations, employee well-being and safety and the provision of employee services. HRM practice has a strong conceptual basis drawn from the behavioural sciences and from strategic management, human capital and industrial relations theories. Human resource of a company as one of the important capitals plays such an important role in the operation of an organization. Pfeffer (1994) argues that human capital has long been held to be a critical resource

in most firms. Companies are now trying to add value with their human resources and human resource (HR) department has been set up in order to manage their human capital, whereas organization in last decade managed their human capital through personnel department which is only a small division of the company. The process of managing the human capital is called human resource management (HRM).

Organizations have started realizing the importance of the HRM. As several scholars have noted that managing people is more difficult than managing technology and capital (Barney, 1991; Lado & Wilson, 1994), principally, in a country as Nigeria which is a multiracial country, failure in managing human capital and maintaining the harmony within an organization will create fatal problems to the organizations. Managing human resources has become critical to the success at all companies, large and small, regardless of industry (Ulrich, 1997). Stavrou Costea (2005) also argues that the effective human resource management can be the main factor for the success of a firm. Today, the most of the companies believed that without sufficient HRM programmes and activities, companies would not have achieved and sustained effectively (Schuler, 2000).

Consequently, most of the organizations, domestic companies and multinational companies/corporations (MNCs) in Nigeria, today, tend to focus more on HRM and also treat HRM as a key to success. The objectives of this paper are:

1. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between HR planning and organizational performance.
2. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between recruitment and selection and organizational performance.
3. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between training and development and organizational performance.
4. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between performance management and organizational performance.
5. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between compensation and incentives and organizational performance.
6. To determine whether there is any significant relationship between employee relations and organizational performance.

Research Hypotheses

Following the stated objectives of the study, six hypotheses were raised to ascertain the nature of relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance.

Review of Related Literature

Developmental concept of HRM:

The terms ‘human resource management’ (HRM) and ‘human resources’ (HR) have virtually replaced the term ‘personnel management’ as a description of the processes involved in managing people in organizations, although what is now described as HRM is in practice often synonymous with what used to be described as personnel management. In the early days of HRM it was suggested by Armstrong (1987) that: HRM is regarded by some personnel management as just a set of initials or old wine in new bottles. It could indeed be no more and no less than another name for personnel management, but as usually perceived, at least it has the virtue of

emphasizing the virtue to treating people as a key resource, the management of which is the direct concern of top management as part of the strategic planning process of the enterprise. Although there is nothing new in the idea, insufficient attention has been paid to it in many organizations.

However, commentators such as Guest (1987) and Story (1995) regard HRM as a substantially different model built in unitarism (employees share the same interests as employers), individualism, high commitment and strategic alignment (integrating HR strategy with the business strategy). It is claimed that HRM is more holistic than traditional personnel management. HRM has also emphasized the notion that people should be regarded as assets rather than variable costs. Human resource management (HRM) according to Armstrong (2009) is a strategic, integrated and coherent approach to the employment, development and well-being of the people working in organizations. Others see it as involving all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organization and its employees – its human resource (Beer, *et al* 1984), a set of policies designed to maximize organizational integration employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work (Guest, 1987), as “the management of work and people towards desired ends” (Boxall *et al*, 2007), and that which concerns how organizations manage their work force (Grimshaw & Rubery, 2007).

Theoretical Frameworks/Models of HRM

The practice of HRM is underpinned by a number of theories. These theories were compiled by Guest's (1997), Boselie's (2005), and Ms Shabnam (2011). But the framework for this work will be based on the following specific theories and models:

- 1. AMO Theory:** The formula **Performance = Ability + Motivation + Opportunity to Participate** provides the basis for developing HR systems that attend to employees' interest, namely their skill requirements, motivations and the quality of their job (Appelbaum *et al*, 2000. Bailey *et al*, 2001, Boxall and Purcell, 2003).
- 2. Patterson's Model of HRM:**

The Patterson's model of HRM (1997) simply emphasizes that HRM practices can improve company performance by: Increasing employee skills and abilities, promoting positive attitudes and increasing motivation, providing employees with expanded responsibilities so that they can make full use of their skills and abilities. The above factors provide a basis for determining 'good' or 'high performance' HRM practices.

- 3. Contingency Theory:** This theory emphasizes that HRM is influenced by the organization's environment and circumstance (Legge, 1978).

There are factors affecting high performance for both individuals and organizations. These factors were considered by Armstrong (2009) thus;

Individual Performance:

There are three factors that affect the level of individual performance:

- Motivation

- Ability
- Opportunity to Participate

The first two were highlighted by Vroom (1964) who made the following suggestion on the basis of his research.

The effects of motivation on performance are dependent on the level of ability of the worker, and the relationship of ability to performance is dependent on the motivation of the worker. The effects of ability and motivation on performance are not additive but interactive. The data presently available on this question suggest something more closely resembling the multiplicative relationship depicted in the formula: $\text{Performance} = f(\text{Ability} + \text{Motivation})$.

Vroom is therefore suggesting that people need both ability and motivation to perform well and that if either ability or motivation is zero there will be no effective performance.

The 'AMO' formula put forward by Boxall and Purcell (2003) is a combination of the Vroom and Bailey *et al* ideas. This model asserts that performance is a function of Ability + Motivation + Opportunity to Participate (note that the relationship is additive not multiplicative). HRM practices therefore impact on individual performance if they encourage discretionary effect, develop skills and provide people with the opportunity to perform.

Organizational Performance:

It may be possible to detect an association between HRM practices and the economic performance of firms. But because of all the other factors involved, it may be difficult if not impossible to demonstrate that the HR practices caused the high performance. As contingency theory tells us, what happens in organizations will be influenced, even governed by their internal and external environment. There is also the problem of reversed causality – HR practices may have resulted in high performance but high performance may have encouraged the use of sophisticated HR practices.

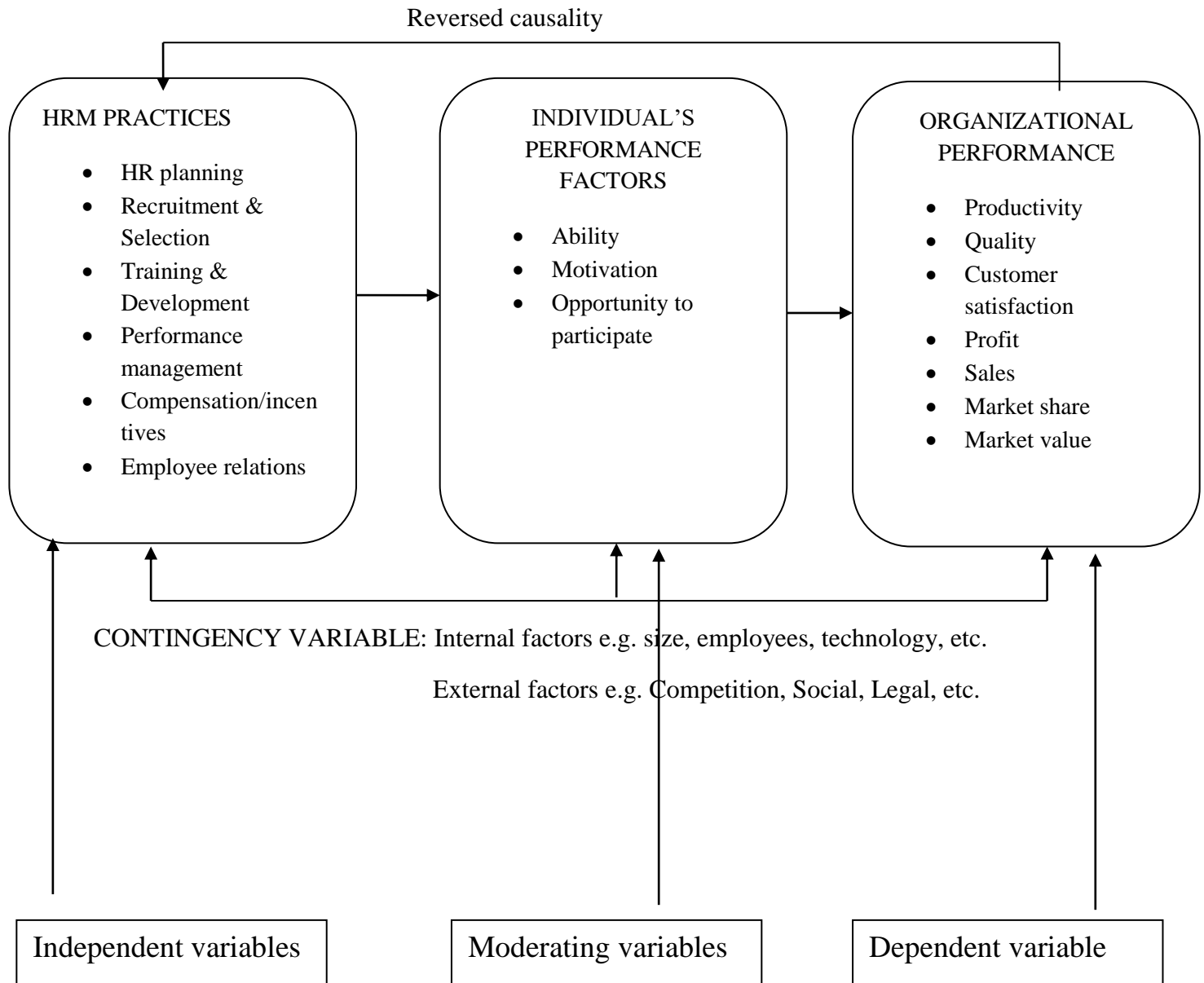
In essence, any theory about the impact of HRM on organizational performance must be based on three propositions:

1. That HR practices can make a direct impact on employee characteristics such as engagement, commitment, motivation and skill.
2. If employees have these characteristics it is possible that organizational performance in terms of productivity, quality and the delivery of high levels of customer service will improve.
3. If such aspects of organizational performance improve, the financial results achieved by the organization will improve.

Based on the foregoing, this study hereby adopts the AMO theory and Patterson's theory approach to individual performance and the contingency theory approach to organizational performance. The AMO and Patterson's theory argue that there is no strong, direct link between HRM practices and organizational performance, rather a function of the extent to which they lead to favourable climate via motivation, ability and opportunity to participate.

The contingency theory on its own emphasizes that both the internal context and external context help to shape organizational performance.

A schematic diagram of the framework for this study is shown below:



Source: Authors' Conceptual Model 2016.

Empirical Review

A number of researchers have found a positive impact of HRM on organizational performance. For instance, Becker and Gerhart (1996), Becker and Huselid (1998), and Dyer and Reeves (1995) empirical studies found that firms which align their HRM practices with their business strategy will achieve superior outcomes. Lee and Lee (2007) uncovered six underlying HRM practices on business performance, namely training and development, teamwork,

compensation/incentives HR planning, performance appraisal, and employee security help improve firms business performance including employee's productivity, product quality and firms flexibility. The study reveals that only three items of HRM practices influence business performance: training and development, compensation/incentives and HR planning.

In an empirical study conducted by Patterson's *et al* (1997), the research examined the link between business performance and organization culture and the use of a number of HR practices, and its outcomes are that HR practices explained significant variations in profitability and productivity (19% and 18% respectively). Two HR practices were particularly significant: The acquisition and development of employee skills, job design including flexibility, responsibility and variety. In a related work by Thompson (2002) on the study of the impact of high performance work practices such as team working, appraisal job rotation, broad – banded grade structures and sharing of business information in UK aerospace establishments, he discovered that the number of HR practices and the proportion of the workforce covered appeared to be the key differentiating factor between more and less successful firms.

Guest *et al* (2003) researching on an exploration of the relationship between HRM and performance in 366 UK companies using objective and subjective performance data and cross – sectional and longitudinal data discovered that some evidence was shown of an association between HRM, as described by the number of HR practices in use, and performance, but there was no convincing indication that the greater application of HRM is likely to result in improved corporate performance. Joseph and Dai (2009), on their work on Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Performance: An Empirical Analysis, surveyed 320 enterprises using factor analysis of 13 bundles of HRM practices. Their findings were among others that, there is a significant connection between HRM practices and firm performance; and that the strategic alignment of HRM is also a driver for firm performance.

A recent study by Jalil, Shaikl, and Alam, (2015), the simple random sampling, Correlation analysis, regression analysis and T-test were used to examine the relationship between the selected HRM practices and operational performance. Their finding among others reveals that, there is a positive and significant relationship between effective HRM practices (especially recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, involvement and communication and employee relationship) and the operational performance of KSML. In a related work from Marwat, Qureshi and Ramay, (2015), on Impact of HRM Practices on Employee Performance, using training, career planning, compensation, performance appraisal, job definition and employee participation on perceived employee performance, it was discovered that all the tested variables were positively correlated but correlation of compensation (0.67) and training (0.66) were highest respectively.

Most of the works discussed above tend to prove that the number of human resource practices employed determine the extent of organization performance to be achieved. They failed to recognize the creation of enabling environment for these practices to thrive. Hence, this gap is what this work tries to fill.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this work was the survey/descriptive method. Data were collected using both the primary and secondary sources. The population of the study was 228

members of staff of the selected firms (PZ and Ama Brewery) and the sample size determined using Taro Yamane's (1964) formula was 146. After data cleaning, 107 copies of the questionnaire which were properly filled and returned were used for analysis. In selecting the respondents, the simple random sampling technique was adopted. The research instrument consists of structured questions on a 5-point Likert from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree. The data analyses techniques for this study include the frequency tables and the simple percentages. Also, the SPSS Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was used for test of hypotheses.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section shows results of analyzed data. This is to add value and meaning to the raw data generated, make it easy for users to summarize the information presented, aid the researchers to draw conclusion from the generated data and to provide meaningful base to critical research decisions (Agu, 2016).

Table 1: Human Resource Management as a Known Practice in the Organization

staff levels Response Options	Mgt staff	Senior staff	Total	Percentage %
Strongly agree	18	44	62	58%
Agree	9	32	41	38%
Undecided	0	4	4	4%
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Total	27	80	107	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

From table 1 above, a total of 62 respondents representing 58% strongly agreed that human resource management practices are known practices in the organization, 41 respondents representing 38% gave their agreement, 4 respondents (4%) were undecided while none neither disagreed nor strongly disagreed respectively

Table 2: HRM Practices Being Adequately Handled in the Organization

Staff levels Response Options	Mgt Staff	Senior staff	Total	Percentage %
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Strongly agree	16	40	56	52%
Agree	11	34	45	42%
Undecided	0	6	6	6%
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Total	27	80	107	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

From table 2 above, a total of 56 respondents representing 52% agreed strongly that HRM practices are being handled adequately in the organization, 45 respondents representing 42% gave their agreement, 6 respondents were undecided.

Table 3: Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Organizational Performance

HR Practices	HR Planning	Recruitment & Selection	Training & Dev.	Perf. Mgt.	Compensation / Incentives	Employee Relations	Total
Response							
Strongly agree	31	37	32	33	29	24	186
Agree	71	59	62	57	56	54	359
Undecided	5	11	13	17	16	25	87
Disagree	0	0	0	0	6	4	10
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	107	107	107	107	107	107	642

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

Test of Research Hypotheses

To test the hypotheses, the researchers made use of the Spearman Rank method in SPSS version 20 to test the strength of the relationship using the 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1) as their weighted values respectively. This study adopted six HRM practices to see their overall impact on organization performance. The result from the statistical package shows that all the six hypothesized variables had significant relationship with the dependent variable. The tables below are the output of the SPSS.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Organizational Performance	4.4673	.60373	107
Human Resource Planning	4.2430	.52917	107
Recruitment and Selection	4.2430	.62708	107
Training and Development	4.1776	.62666	107
Performance Management	4.1495	.67017	107
Compensation and Incentives	4.0093	.80676	107
Employee Relations	3.9159	.77850	107

Correlations

		Organization al Performance	Human Resource Planning	Recruitment and Selection	Training and Development	Performance Management	Compensati on and Incentives	Employee Relations
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.704**	.769**	.726**	.735**	.785**	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
Human Resource Planning	Pearson Correlation	.704**	1	.844**	.893**	.854**	.856**	.806**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
Recruitment and Selection	Pearson Correlation	.769**	.844**	1	.921**	.900**	.853**	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
Training and Development	Pearson Correlation	.726**	.893**	.921**	1	.947**	.892**	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
Performance Management	Pearson Correlation	.735**	.854**	.900**	.947**	1	.905**	.838**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
Compensation and Incentives	Pearson Correlation	.785**	.856**	.853**	.892**	.905**	1	.903**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107
Employee Relations	Pearson Correlation	.767**	.806**	.796**	.824**	.838**	.903**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	107	107	107	107	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show that all the variables are significant correlates of organizational performance.

Conclusion

The framework for this study relied on the six HRM practices earlier identified; HR Planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and incentive, and employee relations. Based on the result of the study, all the HRM practices were found to be significant correlates of organization performance. Therefore, to achieve and sustain enviable corporate performance in terms of improved productivity, enhanced quality of output, customer satisfaction, profitability, sales volume, market share and market value, organizations are required to be effective in human resource management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this work, the researchers hereby proffer the following recommendations:

1. Corporate bodies both medium and large-scale enterprises including government agencies and parastatals are encouraged to embrace best- practice HRM as this will make the firms nationally and globally relevant in the face of increasing competition.
2. There should be a total commitment from both the public and private bodies in enforcing standardized, consistent and uniform policies in all business sectors, agencies or subsidiaries on HRM practices and policies.
3. The practice of HRM should be strategic. That is, it should focus on emerging trends brought about by technological explosion and sophisticated competition.
4. Employees are the greatest asset of any organization. Therefore, organizations are encouraged to review their HRM practices periodically to ensure that their best hands are retained.

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