



HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF PURE WATER PRODUCING COMPANIES IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to ascertain the correlation between human resource management and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt. Fifty seven (57) owners, managers and supervisors of pure water producing companies in the study area, constituted the sample elements. To achieve the objectives of the study, two (2) hypotheses were formulated and tested. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses, with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences at 5% level of significance. The two null hypotheses were not supported, therefore the alternate hypotheses were accepted. This implies that a significant positive correlation exist between human resource management and business performance. Specifically, it indicated that recruitment and selection and training and development has significant positive impact on the performance of pure water producing businesses in Port Harcourt. Thus, from the results and discussions it was concluded that human resource management practices such as recruitment and selection, as well as training and development, significantly enhance the performance of pure water producing companies, especially in Port Harcourt. As such, it was recommended that the managers, owners and supervisors of pure water producing companies should: standardized their employee recruitment and selection methods and employment should be offered on the basis of competency (not necessarily academic or professional qualifications), as against individual recognition, social affiliations and in other times sold to the highest bidder; and build the capacity of its human resources and move away from conventional human resource management techniques to a more contemporary in line with evolving trends in organizational structures and functions.

KEYWORDS: *Human Resource Management, Business Performance, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Business performance is essential for the operations of organizations. All organizations desire to perform well in the market (Dien, 2020). Organizations that attain their objectives have good performance (Bilan et al., 2020). Goal setting is therefore primary in reviewing business performance. In most cases, objectives are along financial lines to support an organization's goals, maintaining a balance between costs and revenue. The success of organizations is determined by their financial performance. However, not-for-profit organizations must focus on other aspects which are not financial like helping the community, spreading the gospel, or fighting a disease. The organizations have therefore adopted a shift in what they consider good performance.

Other aspects of organizational lives are now considered when evaluating performance. For example, organizations desire to attract top talents in the market and meet their customer preferences (Zaharee et al., 2018; Reilly, 2018). Therefore, organizations are becoming more aware of how other aspects contribute positively to business performance. Another vital aspect that organizations consider is the well-being of their employees. Employee well-being directly influences their productivity and ability to achieve objectives (Krekel et al., 2019). Other aspects considered by organizations include relations with stakeholders, sustainability, and social responsibility. Human resource management helps organizations to evaluate their performance, making it necessary to study the impact of human resource management on business performance.

Human resources management decisions have a significant and unique impact on business performance (Becker & Gerhart, 1996). With the application of human resource strategies, managers can achieve optimal business performance by making appropriate use of opportunities and threats (Bamberger et al., 2014). Human Resource



Management is an indispensable function for the both the private and public sector organizations. The process deals with several operational objectives such as recruitment, providing proper training to the employee, selection of the employee, assessment of the employee, motivating and maintaining a proper relationship with the employee and maintaining welfare and health for the employees in the organization through laws created by the concerned state and country (Aoin, 2017). The human resource management is a process through which the organization utilizes their limited skilled workforce. The main intention is make effective utilization of the existing human resource for the organization. Therefore, the significance of the Human resource management with respect to the business performance is evident. Large number of organizations have established their human resource management departments and they understand its need in today's world of business (Cooke, 2005).

Whereas a myriad of studies establishing the nexus between human resource management and business performance abound, most of these studies did not focus on pure water manufacturing businesses, particularly those in Port Harcourt. To fill this contextual gap in literature, this study seeks to ascertain the relationship between human resource management and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Water is the most consumed beverage globally. This is particularly due to its uniqueness as a necessary tonic for the sustenance of human life. Water also exists naturally and abundantly flows through a large portion of the Earth's surface and sub-surface. A famous Nigerian singer and social critic, Late Fela Anikulapo Kuti sang in one of his songs: "water no get enemy". In this hit song, Fela highlighted the various uses of water; including its consumption as a necessity for human survival. This song goes a long way to highlight the criticality and universality of water to the varied needs of Man.

However, for water to be deemed suitable for human consumption, it usually needs to be purified and made safe for consumption. In Rivers State, where the city of Port Harcourt is located, the public water works set up by the government for extraction and purification of water has been out of service for decades. As with many other public infrastructures across the length and breadth of various cities in developing countries, the water works in Port Harcourt has been in a state of decay for many decades; hence, safe drinking water is typically made available to residents of Port Harcourt by the efforts of private entrepreneurs who have set up businesses which commercially extract, purify and package water for public consumption.

In their work, Enekwe et al. (2013) stated that due to high costs of production and the prevailing macroeconomic conditions across the country, many water packaging firms in Port Harcourt have performed far below expectation in terms of profitability. Moreso, water producing firms, like other businesses around Port Harcourt, have in recent times been experiencing unstable business performances due to a myriad of socio-economic, political and other dynamic business challenges. These poor performances have challenged the very existence of these businesses and have often totally eroded their profitability (poor profit margin), as well as led to low market share and slow growth (Engum, 2009; Cherry, 2012). These in effect eroded the original essence of setting up the business in the first place. Sub-optimal performance has been one of the many problems disturbing water producing firms in Port Harcourt and the inability to grasp it has resulted in the extinction of several firms. This has also affected the capacity of firms to cope within the industry in order to achieve optimal levels of performance (Onwughalu et al., 2017).

It is on the strength of these realities that this is poised to ascertain if these challenges can be buffered with strategic and effective human resource management practices.

1.2 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to ascertain the relationship between human resource management and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objectives are to:

- i. Ascertain the association between recruitment and selection and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.
- ii. Investigate the link between training and development and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.

1.3 Scope of the Study

Content scope: The paper is confined to a review of related literature on human resource management, its dimensions and business performance.

Geographical scope: The geographical scope of this research covers pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.



Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis for this study is at the organizational (macro) level. Consequently, respondents mainly composed of owners, managers and supervisors of pure water producing companies operating in Port Harcourt.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Harvard Method Theory of Human Resource Management

For the purpose of this analysis, the study builds on the submissions of the Harvard Method theory of HRM. Advanced by Beer et al. (2015), the Harvard Method emphasizes the central role of decisions and policies that conditions the outlook of the relationship between the organization and employees as a crucial determinant of organizational output. The components included in the model are: interests, situational factors, human resource management policy choices, human resource outcomes, long-term consequences, stakeholders and a feedback loop through. The outputs flow directly into the organization and the stakeholders and it neglects the people or pays minimal attention to them (Beer et al., 2015).

Beer and his contemporaries assert human resource management which is the life-line of organizations belongs to the line managers, other employees and operations who are directly involved in the production and delivery of products, goods and services in line with established operational procedure. In the absence of which they contend that, organizations that have deficiencies in human resource management are less likely to meet predetermined objectives. Line managers are usually the lowest level of management in the organization hierarchy. In their meetings, they suggested that human resource had two characteristic features: a) Ensuring the alignment of competitive strategy and human resource policies are the added responsibility of the line managers; b) Setting policies that govern how human activities are developed and take them into effect in a manner that makes them more strengthened (Beer et al., 2015).

According to Thierry et al. (2018), the Harvard Model outlines four human resource management policy areas: Human resource flows (recruitment, selection, placement, appraisal and assessment, promotion, termination, etc.); Reward systems (pay systems, motivation, etc.); Employee influences (delegated levels of authority, responsibility, power); Work systems (definition/design of work and alignment of people). This in turn lead to the 'four C's' or (of) HR policies that have to be achieved: Commitment; Congruence; Competence and Cost effectiveness.

Building on the pedestal of the Harvard model the research postulates, business performance can be determined by the extent to which an organization is able to effectively manage human capital resources at its disposal to achieve desired outcomes. It goes on to argue that, while other factors such as capital and means of production are necessary conditions for establishing an organization, in the absence of a motivated human capital, such organizations are less likely to compete in an increasing interdependent world.

2.2 Conceptual Review

Human Resource Management

Human resource management includes tasks like HR preparation, strategic recruiting, employee training, growth, compensation management, efficiency, worker relations, health care, employee satisfaction as well as provision of employee services. It includes policies and practices set to improve organizational efficiency, engagement of employees and work quality (Gbolahan, 2012; Khan & Abdullah, 2019). Having human resource management practices in place would positively improve the firm's performance such as, revenue returns, benefit, competitiveness and market share (Katou, 2008).

Often than not, human resource management is the term used to describe formal systems put in place to guide the conduct of employees as it relates to the discharge of their functions, remuneration, reward and social capital development amongst others. Essentially, the purpose of human resource management is to maximize the productivity of an organization by optimizing the effectiveness of its employees. As Gubman (1996) observed in the Journal of Business Strategy, the basic mission of human resources will always be to acquire, develop, and retain talent; align the workforce with the business; and be an excellent contributor to the business. Those three challenges will never change. This proclamation is unlikely to change in any fundamental way, despite the ever-increasing pace of change in the business world (Olasoji, 2019).

Business Performance

Existing literature indicates that organizational performance is managed and monitored by administrator. It is the management's role to optimize the organization's performance at any given time (Dien, 2020). One way of managing performance is by minimizing error occurrence at the workplace and ensuring there are systems to mitigate the effects of error occurrence (Guchait et al., 2018). Managers are dedicated to ensuring that they monitor and manage the performance levels at their organizations through various policy and human resource practice.

Business performance can be challenging because of their various standards including sustainability, profitability, pleasing the group, and willingness to deal with environmental changes. Somehow, however, business performance can be calculated using financial metrics have generally been thought of as conceptualized on paper rather than in practice. On the results obtained is seen as in many other-phrasing it is the mix, product variety of stakeholders and non-output measures (Anwar, 2021).

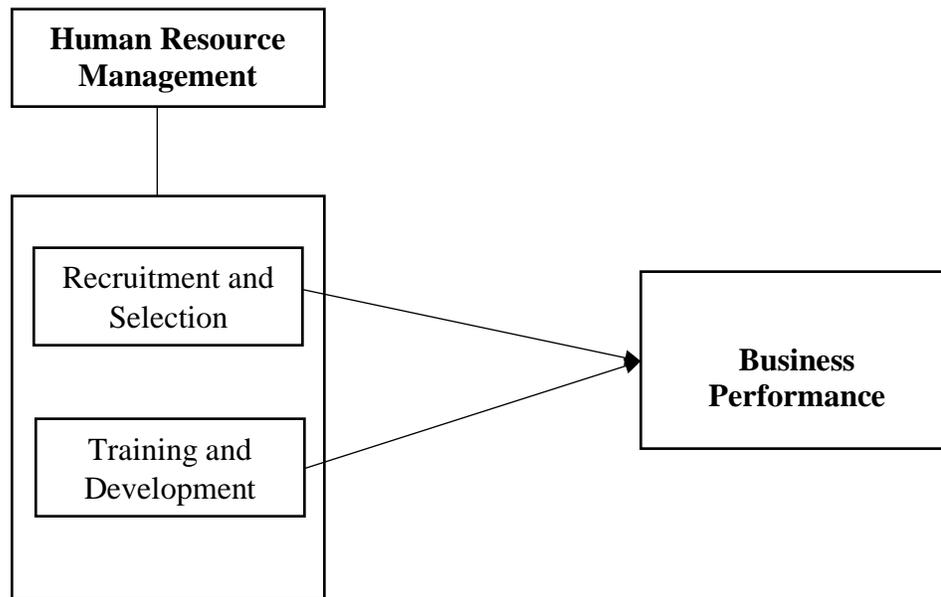


Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Human Resource Management and Business Performance

Source: The dimensions of human resource management, and the items depended on to measure business performance were all obtained from the work of Ghasemi (2013).

Human Resource Management and Business Performance

It is the human resource practices which determine the success of human resource management. A study conducted in the Middle East and North America concluded that human resource management practices and commitment promote organizational success despite where an organization is located (El-Kassar & Singh, 2019). The study findings indicate the types of human resource practices adopted to determine the expected business performance. It is therefore prudent to analyze the impact of human resource practices on organizational performance. Human resource practices that influence firm performance include training, recruitment, and incentives. The role of human resource in recruitment impacts the future performance of the organization. An organization with a skilled workforce has the excellent potential to meet customer expectations and consequently perform well in the market (Reilly, 2018).

Human resource selects employees during the recruitment process. Recruitment practices that identify skilled workers help to improve the capacity to perform well in the future (Wright & Constantin, 2021). It is important to consider how employees perceive the role of human resource management in organizational performance to effectively onboard them in human resource practices.

Recruitment and Selection and Business Performance

As a fundamental human resource management practice, recruitment is a procedure of discovering, delivering and securing the right candidates for an organization. Essentially, the procedure includes searching for and selecting the most qualified candidates for an organization by utilizing a few achievable recruitment approaches (Tong, 2009), while selection is the process of settling on the decision of the most suitable candidate from the group of candidates enrolled to fill the appropriate job position (Opatha, 2009). Similarly, recruitment and selection are considered the fundamental human resource management practices that facilitate the obtaining of applicants into the organization. It



is a fundamental practice that muddles together the organization with existing positions with suitable candidates for a possible future relationship (Rynes & Cable, 2003).

Many empirical studies were carried out and found recruitment and selection to be strong predictors of business performance. A study conducted by Alsughayir (2014) in the Asian context, specifically in Saudi Arabian organizations with 270 samples got a 92.9% response rate, SEM techniques were used in the data analysis, and the result found recruitment and selection positively significant to organizational performance. Similarly, in another study by Beh and Loo (2013) in insurance companies, 312 samples were used in the SPSS tool for multiple regression analysis considered in testing the relationship between recruitment and selection and organizational performance, result confirmed that recruitment and selection positively related to organizational performance. Again, in the study conducted by Chand (2010) in hotels, a quantitative approach with a total of 439 samples using the SPSS tool, the result of the study revealed that recruitment and selection were found positively related to performance. Consequently, we hypothesize that:

H₀₁: *There is no significant relationship between recruitment and selection and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.*

Training and Development and Business Performance

Training and development practice is considered an important component of human resource management, its plays a vital role in increasing talent, flexibility, work adaptability, motivating, and sustaining the necessary competence of employees. Similarly, training and development is the vibrant area of human resource management and is considered the fastest-growing part of personnel activities (Tai, 2006; Vlachos, 2008). Jauhar et al. (2015), argued that training and development are considered important because most of the companies use them to develop the skills and intelligence of their personnel to achieve both employee and organizational performance.

The main focus of training and development in an organization is to improve individual, groups, team, and organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Kraiger & Ford, 2007). Prior studies established that training and development are significantly related to business performance. For instance, in one study by Arshad et al. (2014), 50 samples were used using SPSS tool, the regression and correlation analysis result shows training and development as one the highest predictor of performance. Similarly, in another study conducted by Triguero Sánchez et al. (2013), 102 samples were used in second-generation analysis techniques (PLS-SEM), and the result revealed that training is found positively significant to organizational performance.

However, some studies report contradicting findings in the aforementioned studies. Some studies have shown that there is an indirect and insignificant relationship between training and business performance. A study by Aragón et al. (2014), used 1600 samples in quantitative analysis, and the result showed that training has an indirect effect on performance, it became significant through organizational learning. So also, in the study of Osman et al. (2011), 233 samples were used in the data analysis, the regression analysis result explained that training and development are not significantly related to organizational performance and the study recommended moderation. Despite several pieces of evidence in European and Asian countries, concrete empirical evidence is lacking on the relationship between training and development and organizational performance in African countries, particularly in Nigeria. As such, we hypothesize that:

H₀₂: *There is no significant association between training and development and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.*

3.0 METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was conducted in pure water producing factories in Port Harcourt. The owners, managers and supervisors available, participated in the study. Data were collected using a well-structured questionnaires. The statistical population consisted of all owners, managers and supervisors of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt (N = 59). Incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the study. Finally, the data of 57 participants were analyzed.

A part of the questionnaire was on demographics that included personal information including age, gender, level of education, work experience, and type of employment. Another part consisted of 12 items on a 5-point Likert scale (from very low=1 to very high=5), which simultaneously assessed human resource management practices and organizational performance. The items related to human resource management practices taken from the past research in two dimensions include; recruitment and selection (4 items) and training and development (4 items). Business performance items are designed based on a balanced scorecard, which is derived from the view of Kaplan and Norton (1996).

Ghasemi (2013) designed this questionnaire and confirmed its validity using the content validity method. Its reliability was also confirmed in the study by Ghasemi (2013) using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.88$). In our study, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ($\alpha=0.94$). Data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient by SPSS 21 software at significance level of 0.05.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Test of Hypotheses

The study focused of the desire to examine the existent relationship human resource management and business performance utilizing key dimensions such as recruitment and selection, and training and development. In order to determine the existent relationship between study variables, the study deployed the Pearson Correlation is used to test the correlations and strength of relations.

The decision rule is:

$p < 0.05$ significant level = reject the null hypotheses

$p > 0.05$ significant level = and accept the null hypotheses where.

All nine bivariate hypotheses were tested in the null form.

Table 4.1: Recruitment and Selection and Business Performance

Correlations		Recruitment and Selection	Business Performance
Recruitment and Selection	Pearson Correlation	1	.657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	57	57
Business Performance	Pearson Correlation	.657**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	57	57

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2022

H01: There is no significant relationship between recruitment and selection and business performance.

The result of the analysis in Table 4.1 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), $r = 0.657$ between recruitment and selection and business performance. This means that there is a significant, strong and positive relationship between recruitment and selection and business performance. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we restate that *there is a significant relationship between recruitment and selection and business performance.*

Table 4.2: Training and Development and Business Performance

Correlations		Training and Development	Business Performance
Training and Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	57	57
Business Performance	Pearson Correlation	.623**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	57	57

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2022

H02: There is no significant nexus between training and development and business performance.

The result of the analysis in Table 4.2 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), $r = 0.623$ between training and development and business performance. This means that there is a strong, positive and significant relationship between training and development and business performance. The null hypothesis is rejected, and we restate that *there is a significant nexus between training and development and business performance.*



4.2 Discussion of Findings

The outcome of the analyses reveals that there is a significant positive correlation between human resource management and business performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt. The result specifically, showed that recruitment and selection and training and development have a significant association with the performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt.

Recruitment and Selection Business performance (H_{01})

Schuster (2004) discussed that selective hiring is a major practice that enhances profits. Huselid (2010) investigated the human resource practices of high performance Government institutions and predicted that selecting and attracting proper employees enhances the productivity of employees, boost the performance of organization and contribute in reducing labour turnover. He also suggested that a possible indirect link between organizational performance and selective hiring can be internal bonds-forging between employees and managers that enhance right culture for growth in productivity. The study of Vlachos (2008) investigated the human resource practices namely self-managed teams, selective hiring, decision-making decentralization, extensive training, compensation policy and information sharing. They surveyed Greece food managers and collected their views of human resource practices and their association to performance of organization. The outcomes offer overall assistance for all human resource practices except job security. Selective hiring was predicted to be a major practice that enhances the performance of organization. Information sharing, compensation policy, extensive training and decision-making decentralization were essential predictors for entire variables of performance.

Training and Development and Business Performance (H_{02})

According to Ul Afaq and Khan (2005) the most essential employee performance factor is training. Training is essential to develop the employees' capabilities. The employees who have much on experience of job have better performance because there is an increase in both the competencies and skills because of much on experience in job. The organizational performance depends on performance of employee because HR capital of a firm plays an essential part in the development and performance of organization. So, to develop the performance of organization and employee, training is given to organizational employees. Thang and Buyens (2008) discussed that the success of firm is decided by HR definitely not the physical resources and is endorsed highly to develop the investments of firm in training to provide superior knowledge, features and expertise pertaining to employees rather than their rivalry relation between training and organizational performance. Tsaur and Lin (2004) have stated that the design of training plays an essential role in organizational performance as well as employees.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at investigating into the impact of human resource management on the performance of pure water producing companies in Port Harcourt. It further targeted at identifying the major variables involved in human resource management that have this impact. Finally, the research aimed at proving recommendations or strategies pertaining to the human resource management practices under review that can enhance or improve the performance of pure water producing companies, particularly in Port Harcourt. From the results and discussions, it can be concluded that human resource management practices such as recruitment and selection, as well as training and development, significantly impact on the performance of pure water producing companies, especially in Port Harcourt.

5.1 Recommendation

Based on the conclusion, it is plausible to recommend that the managers, owners and supervisors of pure water producing companies should:

- i. Standardized their employee recruitment and selection methods and employment should be offered on the basis of competency (not necessarily academic or professional qualifications), as against individual recognition, social affiliations and in other times sold to the highest bidder.
- ii. Build the capacity of its human resources and move away from conventional human resource management techniques to a more contemporary, in line with evolving trends in organizational structures and functions.



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