

Investigating the Effect of Human Resource Strategic Orientation on Employee Performance in Federal Civil Service Commission, Abuja-Nigeria

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Abstract

Investigating the link between human resource strategic orientation and employee performance is the first of its kind in the area of human resource management. The main objective of this study is to investigate the effect of human resource strategic orientation on employee performance in the Federal Civil Service Commission, Abuja-Nigeria. This study adopted a primary survey research method. The population of the study is 400. The sample size is 196 using Krijcie and Morgan (1970). However, the study adopted Salkind's (1997) suggestion of increasing the sample size by 50%. Therefore, the final sample size is 294. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique. Out of a total of 294 copies of the questionnaire administered and were duly returned. Hence, the number of 294 copies of the questionnaire was used for the analysis. The returned copies of the questionnaire were inputted, coded, and screened using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 22 software. The data were analyzed with the help of Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Hence, the study result showed that human resource strategic orientation is positive and significant to employee performance in Federal Civil Service Commission, Abuja-Nigeria. This study recommends that FCSC, Abuja-Nigeria, government, labour Unions and policymakers should promote human resource strategic orientation that will improve employee performance in FCSC, Abuja, and other related sectors in Nigeria to avoid agitations. The study also recommends the future researchers should adopt or adapt other dimensions of human resource management. The study further recommends that future studies should adopt or adapt the use of moderator and mediated variables which Africans and Nigerian researchers avoid. Finally, the study recommends the use of other methodological approaches and theoretical bases.

Keywords: Human Resource Management, Human Resource Strategic Orientation, Employee Performance.

Introduction

In the trend of current researches, it was found that there are challenges facing employee performance. This study has demonstrated scientifically the effect of human resource strategic orientation on employee performance. The matching between human resource management dimensions and employee performance have become an area of contention both in public and private firms in the developing economic like Nigeria. To hire good employee in this covid-19 pandemic era has become very expensive both in terms of logic, time, money and process is carried out effectively and efficiently in the appointment of every employee who fits the right job (Nuhu, Rogo & Mohammed, 2018). Many firms exist in their operations not because of their wish to be benevolent, but to also achieve the firm goals and objectives (Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017). Therefore, it has become necessary to plan strategically both in terms of the short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies for the growth of every organization.

Employee are individuals who possess their own competences, perspectives, skills, values and characteristics that benefit organizations. Human resources are very important in every organization. However, the attention of this study is being paid to the relationship between human resource strategic orientation and its effect on employee performance. Therefore, humanism and humanization in developing nations have enlarged the scope of human resource management in Nigeria. The development of every staff, their skills, competencies, education and the process of human resource strategic orientation have become the main concern of human resource management (Mullins, 2012; Nuhu & Hussaini, 2017).

In Nigeria, securing employment depends on political connections. The recruitment and selection processes in Nigeria are practiced both in public and private firms through affiliation, networking and political dispositions. Thus, it is very important that firms are encouraged to recruit individuals with the qualities essential for continued accomplishment in this competitive global village.

Previous studies have argued that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are undertaken to reduce direct employee costs and to improve effectiveness and efficiency by implementing compliance with the specific rules, principles, procedures and rewards on measurable output (Arthur, 1994; Mullins, 2012). Several empirical studies done in the area of HRM locally and globally have focused on analyzing either one indirect effect of HR practices on organizational performance, or the correlation between a HRM practice and firm performance (Arthur, 1994; Chan et al., 2004; Den et al., 2004; Kidombo, 2007; Pfeffer, 1994; Rodriguez & Ventura, 2003; Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017). Other studies focused on indirect and interactive effects of systems of HRM practices and firm performance with a view to explain the process through which systems of HRM practices lead to firm performance, but the results are incomplete with mixed findings (Gorondutse & Nuhu, 2019; Rodriguez and Ventura's, 2003).

Although the Nigeria public sector has received limited research attention in the past, which seems to suggest that improving employee performance is important for both the public and private organizations, the ongoing reforms attest to the contrary. More importantly, considering that the research mixed findings obtained in the private sector locally and globally has limited generalizability to the Nigeria public sector. These factors support the current study, which is required to fill the existing gaps. Hence, this study investigates the effect of

human resource strategic orientation on employee performance in Federal Civil Service Commission, Abuja-Nigeria.

Literature Review

The concept of human resource management is very important for survival of any organization functioning (French, 2007; Gorondutse, Nuhu & Ishak, 2018; Nuhu, Mohammed & Ahmed, 2018; Pilbream & Corbridge, 2006). Hence, Windhof and Wood (2012) argued that human resource management, strategic orientation, training and development, appraisal, performance management and reward management are very essential features of every organization. Human resource management is considering as the growth and development of employees.

Human resource strategic orientation is generally treated as only one-way process for organizations searching for prospective and qualified manpower (Chang et al, 2012). The main attention is grabbed by the selection process. The failures made in the process cannot be swept over by selection techniques. Taylor (2010) argued that the process of recruitment and selection is important and “the best employee should be placed at the right job”. Bratton and Gold (2013), said human resource management generally face a lot of criticisms because it cannot employ all applicants.

Every successful recruitment and selection begins with proper human resource strategic orientation, planning and forecasting (Chang et al, 2012). Thus, the success of a recruitment and selection process is the strategies every firm is prepared to employ identify and select the best applicants for its developing pool of human resource strategic orientation (Ifill & Moreland, 2014; Mulabe, 2013). A human resource orientation is a system exploited to gain, manipulate, analyze, and distribute information regarding firm human resources (Dale, 2010). Hence, the next sub-section is a review of human resource strategic orientation.

Human Resource Strategic Orientation

For the purpose of this study, human resource strategic orientation is defined as the pattern of tactical recruitment and selection associated with the management of employment awareness, advertisement, descriptions, placement, which explain the details of firm ability to employ labour force effectively and efficiently. Human resource strategic orientation is one among the dimensions of HRM practices (Sriviboon & Jermisittiparsert, 2019). Thus, a human resource strategic orientation, which is part of HRM seek to take advantage and complement amongst Human Resource (HR) practices, policies and programmes that define the direction of organizational HRM practices (Armstrong, 2012).

The recruitment of every manpower helps to demonstrate the firm’s aspirations, highlighting the competencies, skills and attitudes toward the employee highest priority. Human resource strategic orientation helps to provide an opportunity to converse the values and successes of the firm to explain why the organization needs the most attractive persons for the available jobs (Van Esch, Wei, & Chiang, 2018). The study reviewed the employee performance as a dependent variable in the next sub-section.

Employee Performance

For the purpose of this study, employee performance refers to the ability of a firm to attain goals and objectives through effectiveness, efficiency, profits, quality, market share, and financial viability. Even though in the literature, performance has been used as a dependent variable, but many studies concentrated on identifying those factors that upset the performance outcomes which is still an indistinct and 'loosely defined' variable and ignored employee performance (Saridakis, Lai, & Cooper, 2017; Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017a; Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017b; Van Esch, Wei, & Chiang, 2018)

Mullins (2012) contended that organizational performance encompasses three areas: financial performance, product market performance and shareholder return. While the efficiency and effectiveness of an employee are simply referred to as employee performance (Mullins, 2012; Kehoe, & Collins, 2017).

Other studies argued that, organizational performances are measured through financial and non-financial performance (Chang et al., 2012; Mullins, 2012). While financial measures are profit before tax and turnover and non-financial measures are customers' satisfaction, delivery time and employee turnover. Furthermore, non-financial performance is vital indicators of financial performance measures (Nolan & Norton, 2018; Yalico et al., 2020). Hence, this study focused on actual employee performance against standard, responsibility, commitment, time management, effectiveness and efficiency. The next sub-head are reviews of prior studies of the relationship between human resource strategic orientation and employee performance.

Human Resource Strategic Orientation and Employee Performance

The prior empirical studies between the relationship between human resource strategic orientation and employee performance are scanty. Previous studies, argued that if the returns from investments in HRM practices exceed their true costs, the greater the productivity, the higher the overall corporate performance (Mullins, 2012). Other paradigms that connote hard model include: traditional HRM (Walton-Fisette & Sutherland, 2018); buy and market HRM (Mullins, 2012). Although the hard model is proclaimed as common sense and the only route to business success (Mullins, 2012; Papa, Dezi et al., 2018), it is also dismissed as inhuman, because it strengthens management prerogative and legitimizes the worst employee relations excesses of the enterprise culture (Papa et al, 2018) Either way, this study conceives that HR is link to corporate performance and employee outcomes.

The emphasis on the human capital enhancing organizations that hire employees, primarily at job entry level have endeavour to develop them over the long term (Rodriquez & Ventura, 2003). While other features include extensive training and development, collaborative relations with employees, and extensive job security. Compensation policies emphasize internal consistency rather than external equity and performance measures seen as internal focus, implying that behaviour and processes are given more weight than the worker's performance level (Rodriquez & Ventura, 2003). Activities such as training enhance employees' competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities, thus committing them to their current employers, and enabling them to perform their duties more effectively, thereby enhancing firm performance (Mueller, 2009; Papa et al, 2018).

The challenges of liberalization and globalization, particularly the need to provide more efficient and effective products and services, have placed new demands on top managers in the public sector to think strategically, adapt and survive (Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017). In Nigeria, the ongoing reforms, which started in the late 1990s, have obligated the public firms to embrace modern business management practices to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery (Gorondutse, Nuhu & Ishak, 2018). While some firms may have adopted the hard strategy, characterized by efficiency-enhancing systems of HRM practices, others have adopted the soft strategy characterized by commitment enhancing HRM practices, in order to promote mutuality, greater motivation, organizational creativity and innovation for superior outcomes at employee and organizational levels.

Previous studies reported low performance in firms with hard HRM practices. This is attributed to, inter alia: poor pay, lack of challenging jobs and careers, lack of job security, limited training and development opportunities, presence of short-term goals, bureaucratic structures, and the pressure to reduce costs and hence tight supervision and control systems (Gorondutse, Nuhu & Ishak, 2018; Mullins, 2012).

Most studies that have suggested a link between HRM practices and firm performance have focused on the private-sector manufacturing firms mostly in USA (Arthur, 1994). UK (Lai, Saridakis, & Johnstone, 2017); and locally (Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017). In a study carried in the public sector in the United Kingdom, Lai et al (2017) found that training and development provide the skills and ability for employees to attend to work and exert themselves on behalf of the firm, thus enhancing their job performance. Employment security, selective hiring, team working, performance-related pay egalitarianism and information sharing are some of the HR practices that are thought to lead to superior performance, as they tap the discretionary effort of individual workers (Nuhu & Hussaini, 2017; Lawal & Nuhu, 2021).

In the same trends, Arthur (1994) found that commitment enhancing HR systems that led to higher productivity, lower scrap rates and lower employee turnover compared to controlled HR systems. In a study carried out in the Spanish manufacturing industry, Lai et al, (2017) established that make-HRM is equivalent to soft-HRM system that had a positive effect on employee outcomes such as morale and turnover. Locally, Nuhu & Ahmed, (2017) study established a positive and significant relationship between HR strategic orientation and performance of private large-scale manufacturing firms.

Other studies show lower performance in firms with hard HRM practices. This is attributed to, inter alia: poor pay, lack of challenging jobs and careers, lack of job security, limited training and development opportunities, presence of short-term goals, bureaucratic structures, and the pressure to reduce costs and hence tight supervision and control systems (Mullins, 2012; Rodriquez & Ventura, 2003).

From the above critiques, the empirical reviews show conflicting findings. Gahlawat & Kundu, (2019) and that of Lai et al (2017) argued that future studies should focus their attention on other HRM processes in an emerging economic particularly African. They further stated that the firms should focus their attention more on staffing to attract young potential employees who have the zeal to achieve goals for themselves and the organization as the current statistics shows that just 4 percent of the employees are recruited through interviews (Nuhu

& Ahmed, 2017). The companies can take up short term projects with new technologies and fix deadlines to bring out competitiveness and cutting-edge approach by the employees. This enables the firms to recruit the brightest and best manpower for the job.

Although human resource strategic orientation and the human capital are important, the driver for sustained superior outcomes at employee and organizational levels have also been associated with the complementary support of appropriate organizational factors (Gahlawat& Kundu, 2019; Mullins, 2012). The above empirical literature reviews show many mix findings. Therefore, this study filled the existing gaps recommended by Gahlawat& Kundu, (2019); Nuhu, Mohammed & Ahmed, (2018) and Lai et al (2017). Hence, this study investigated the relationship between human resource strategic orientation and employee performance in Nigeria, which is the first of its kind going by the literatures reviewed. Hence, the following hypothesis were developed:

There is no significant effect of human resource strategic orientation on employee performance in Federal Civil Service Commission, Abuja-Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The underpinning theory for this study is Human Capital Theory. Thus, Human capital theory emphasizes that people possess a dip innate abilities, personal energy and behaviours (Armstrong, 2012). Hence, it is the knowledge, competencies, skills, education and abilities of individual employee that create value. The focus on attracting, hiring, retaining and developing employee is part of the human capital. Individual employee generates, attract and retain, knowledge, skills and intellectual capital (Armstrong, 2010).



Figure: Research Framework

Materials and Methods

The Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC) is located in Abuja, Nigeria and is one of the government parastatals. FCSC has 400 total employees across all of its locations (FCSC, 2021). There are 477 companies in the Federal Civil Service Commission corporate family (FCSC, 2021). The population for this study consist of all the employees of FCSC, Abuja-Nigeria. The total population of employee as at February, 2021 stood at 400 (FCSC, 2021). The study sample size is 196 using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table. Hence, an additional of 50% of the sample result was added to the original sample size to avoid a low response rate as suggested by Salkind (1997). Thus, the higher the respondents' response rate, the better the results (Salkind, 1997). Therefore, 50% of 196 is 98 added to the original sample size of 196 which gives 294 as the final sample size. The study adopted stratified sampling technique. The unit of analysis for this study is individual employee. This study adopted seven - Point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Fairly Agree 4 = Neutral; 5 = Fairly Disagree; 6 = Disagree 7 = Strongly Disagree).

The employee performance (standard, responsibility, commitment, time management, effectiveness and efficiency) measured using six (6) items adapted from the studies of Nuhu,

Mohammed and Ahmed (2018). While human resource strategic orientation was measured using seven (7) items (i.e. Salaries and wages, training and development, healthcare, housing, transportation, workshop and retirement benefits).

The study adopted Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) for the analysis. The justification for using PLS-SEM has become an important and valuable statistical tool in management and many other disciplines of business. PLS-SEM is capable of modelling and expressing in line with the theoretical concepts via constructs by connecting these constructs through a structural model to the study relationships (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hair *et al.*, 2012; Henseler, 2012). Hence, PLS-SEM can be used to estimate a small sample size (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The above justifications are in line with this study.

Analysis and Results

The total of 294 copies of the questionnaire was administered to the employees of the Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Abuja-Nigeria. Therefore, the study adopted self-administered approach to distribute the questionnaire to the respondents. Interestingly, the study response rate yielded an outcome of 100%, which is a good response rate supported by prior studies (Jobber, 1989; Nuhu & Mohammed, 2018). Nasiru, Keat, & Bhatti, (2015), a response rate of 30% and above is sufficient for the survey. Thus, the study response rate of 100% is good enough to continue to run the data for the analysis.

From the respondent's demographic variables, the FCSC top level was 51 (17.35%), while the middle level was 87 (29.59%), and the lower level was 156 (53.06%). This study adopted the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Hence, for the PLS path modelling model validation, this study adopted a two-step process to evaluate and report the results using PLS-SEM path, as recommended by Henseler, (2012) and Hair (2014). Thus, this two-step process are: the measurement model, and the structural model (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hair *et al.*, 2012; Henseler, 2012).

Analysis of Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model consists of loading, composite reliability and average variance extracted (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Hair *et al.*, 2011; Henseler, 2012).

Table 1

Results of Measurement Model

| Constructs and Indicators | Loading | Composite Reliability | Cronbachs Alpha | AVE |
|---|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|------|
| Human Resource Strategic Orientation | | 0.95 | 0.94 | 0.72 |
| HRSO1 | 0.84 | | | |
| HRSO2 | 0.83 | | | |
| HRSO3 | 0.84 | | | |
| HRSO4 | 0.89 | | | |
| HRSO5 | 0.89 | | | |
| HRSO6 | 0.86 | | | |
| HRSO7 | 0.81 | | | |
| Employee Performance | | 0.95 | 0.92 | 0.86 |
| FP1 | 0.95 | | | |
| FP2 | 0.94 | | | |
| FP3 | 0.90 | | | |

From table 1 above, the value of average variances extracted range from 0.72 and 0.86. All the loading are above 0.5 thresholds. The Composite Reliability and Cronbachs Alpha are also above 0.7 which are all acceptable values (Hair 2014).

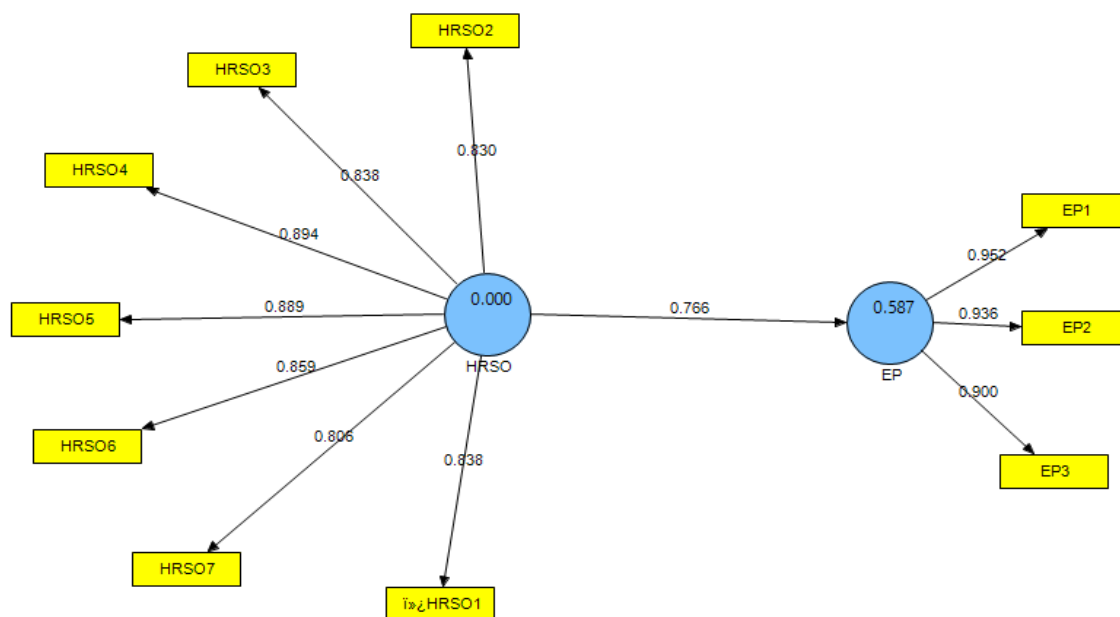


Figure 1: Measurement Model

Analysis of Structural Model

As recommended, this study applied 5000 bootstrapping standard procedure to examine the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler, 2012).

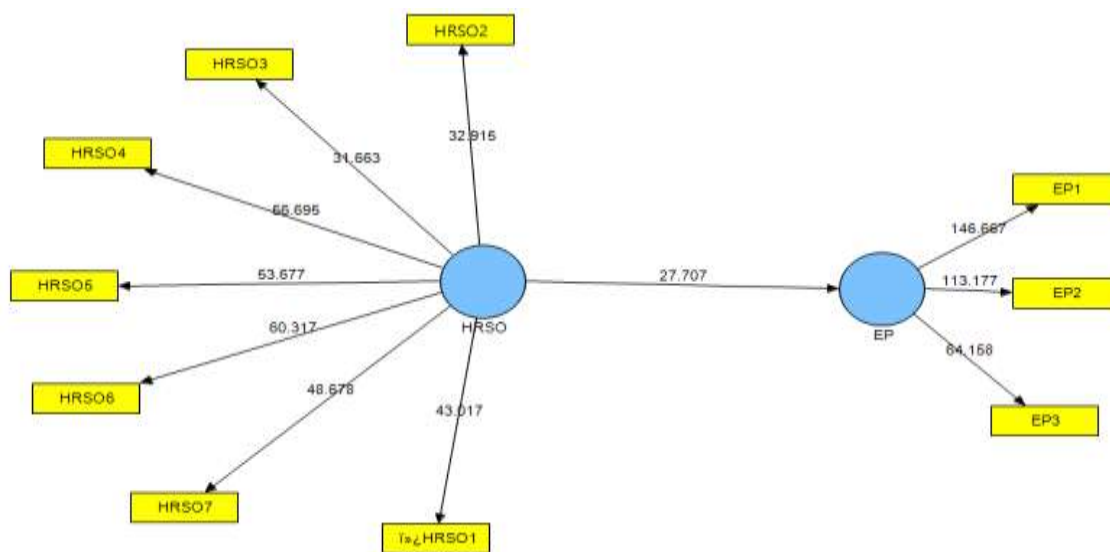


Figure 2: Structural Model

Table 2

Results of Structural Model

| Hypotheses | Relationship | Beta | SE | t-value | p-value | Finding |
|------------|--------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Hypothesis | HRSO>EP | 0.767 | 0.028 | 27.707 | 0.000** | Supported |

P. value significant at 1% ** (one tailed)

HRSO = Human Resource Strategic Orientation

EP = Employee Performance

Discussion and Recommendations

In line with the objectives of the study, the results showed that the study hypothesis raised in line with the expected findings. The study hypothesis was supported. The result showed that there is a positive and significant effect of human resource strategic orientation on employee performance FCSC, Abuja-Nigeria ($\beta = 0.767, t = 27.707, p < 0.000$). Hence, the R square is 0.587. This result is consistent with the findings of prior studies (Nuhu & Ahmed, 2017; Mullins, 2012; Nuhu, Mohammed & Ahmed, 2018; Papa et al, 2018).

Thus, this study recommends that FCSC, Abuja-Nigeria, government, labour Unions and policy makers should promote human resource strategic orientation that will improve employee performance in FCSC, Abuja and other related sectors in Nigeria to avoid agitations. The study also recommends the future researchers should adopt or adapt other dimensions of human resource management. The study further recommends that, the future studies should adopt or adapt the use of a moderator and mediated variables which Africans and Nigerian researchers avoid. Finally, the study recommends the use of other methodological approaches and theoretical bases.

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