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ONLINE RECRUITMENT ELEMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Online Recruitment Elements and Organizational Performance of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. The study sought to determine how application tracking systems affects expansion, to ascertain how online application submission affects customers' satisfaction and to examine how online assessment and test affects employee competence of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. To achieve this, three objectives and hypotheses were employed for the study. The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study consists of 558 employees from the tertiary institutions in Rivers State. A sample size of two hundred and thirty-three (233) employees was drawn from the population of the study using purposive sampling techniques. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire, the instrument was validated by the supervisor, the statistical tool used for testing of hypotheses were Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis formula with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The finding shows that, online recruitment elements and organizational performance has a significant relationship. The study concluded that online recruitment element which includes application tracking system enhances expansion, online application submission enhances customer's satisfaction and online assessment/test enhances employee competence as a matter of fact leads to increase in organizational performance of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. The study recommended that, Management team of tertiary Institutions should create applicant tracking system software tool that will enable them streamlines their recruitment processes to enable them manage job applications electrically, track the progress of candidates throughout the hiring processes and store applicant information in a centralized database as well enhance the performance of the institution, also they should create the process of submitting job applications electronically via the internet or a dedicated online platform instead of physically delivering a printed application or resume, applicants fill out an online form or upload their documents through a company's website or job portal as well enhance the performance of the institution, lastly they should create online assessment and test which will evaluate candidate's skills, knowledge, aptitude or abilities conducted through digital platforms or software as well enhance the performance of the institution.

Key Words:* *Online Recruitment, Elements , Organizational Performance, application tracking systems, expansion, online application submission, customers' satisfaction, online assessment/test and employee competence

INTRODUCTION

In traditional recruitment, which uses formal sources like advertising, starts with the identification of required applicants and proceeds with activities to attract and persuade qualified applicants to apply. Job applications are then received, screened and sorted, leading to the drawing up of a shortlist. The process ends with communicating the pre-screening results to applicants (Anna, 2010). Interestingly, internet has changed the world and the above scenario in a lot of ways and this has had an impact on various walks of life. In the view of Ashok and Priyanka (2014), one of the latest areas of technology that has changed the corporate world is online recruitment. According to him, the advent of the internet has radically changed the communication and information dissemination in the business world and in the society at large as well as the process of recruitment which plays a very important role in an organizational scenario.

Carlos et al (2002), opines that internet is one of the greatest recruitment resources available to recruiters today for locating job candidates, making newspapers advertising an obsolete recruitment method. The process of using internet to identify and attract potential employees to your organization has been termed as online recruitment. This online recruitment has proved to be a boon for the job seekers over the past decade. The internet is a medium which connects the job seekers and the employer for the recruitment purpose. Online recruitment takes care of the entire recruitment process, from placing the job advertisements, receiving the resumes and selecting the right candidates for the right job in a simplified and cost effective manner (Ashok and Priyanka, 2013 cited in Ashok and Priyanka, 2014).

Cole, (2002), states that the principal purpose of online recruitment is to attract sufficient and suitable employees to apply for vacancies in the institutions. More so, Zweig, (1991), defines online recruitment as the set of activities an organization uses to select candidates who possess the abilities and attitude necessary for the enterprise especially with the aim of achieving its objectives. In the same vein Kuntz and Donnel (1980) saw online recruitment as attracting qualified candidates to fill any vacancies. According to them, it is a process of choosing from among the candidates. It goes further to list three aspects of online recruitment that must be borne in mind while recruiting officers, namely the online recruitment requirement, organizational policies, procedures and organizational.

Online recruitment activities are either directed towards external candidates from outside organizations or towards current employees, in which case it is called internal recruitment. The focus of this study is solely on the process of recruiting external candidates, since internal online recruitment often involves other issues, such as career planning and development. An online recruitment system is a back-office system for administrating the e-recruitment process, and is normally designed to allow applicants to submit their data electronically. E-recruitment can thus be perceived as an umbrella term covering recruitment activities performed using various electronic means and the Internet, including online e-recruitment and online recruitment systems relationship.

To this end, Boxall (1998) revealed that firms which recruit and retain exceptional individuals have the capability of generating human capital advantage. According to Sparrow et al., (2002), technology and capital can be acquired by most firms any time, for a price, but it is not easy to acquire a ready pool of highly qualified and motivated employees. Thus, in order to be differentiated, the companies need to be very careful with the online recruitment process. Thus, online recruitment has become imperative in organizations because individuals need to be attracted on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications. Therefore, there is need to examine the influence of online recruitment on organizational performance in tertiary institutions in order to fill this identified gap in literature. This study focuses solely on the process of online recruiting external candidates, since internal recruitment may involve other issues such as career planning and development.

Stanton and Nankervis (2011), pointed out that organizational performance can be improved, especially through raised productivity and employment elasticity, by ranging entire employees' performance outcomes with wide strategic business and tertiary institutions obligations. In this way, the management of singular employee's performance, and their unified contributions to whole impressiveness, has possibly become the most significant actual tertiary institutions function in all organizations (Stanton & Nankervis, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

This study examined the online recruitment and organizational performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. One of the most effective ways of ensuring high standard of performance in any organization is through online recruitment of qualified and well-motivated candidates. The lack of inadequate information and evidence of recruitment and selection processes within tertiary institutions may cause institutions not to achieve setout organizational goals and objectives. The overall target of the tertiary institution can be ruined if adequate online recruitment and selection practices are not put into place. Therefore, there is the need for management of the tertiary institutions to put in place strategies that will aid the online recruitment of the best employees to achieve organizational goals and objectives as will enhance institutional performance.

Conceptual Framework

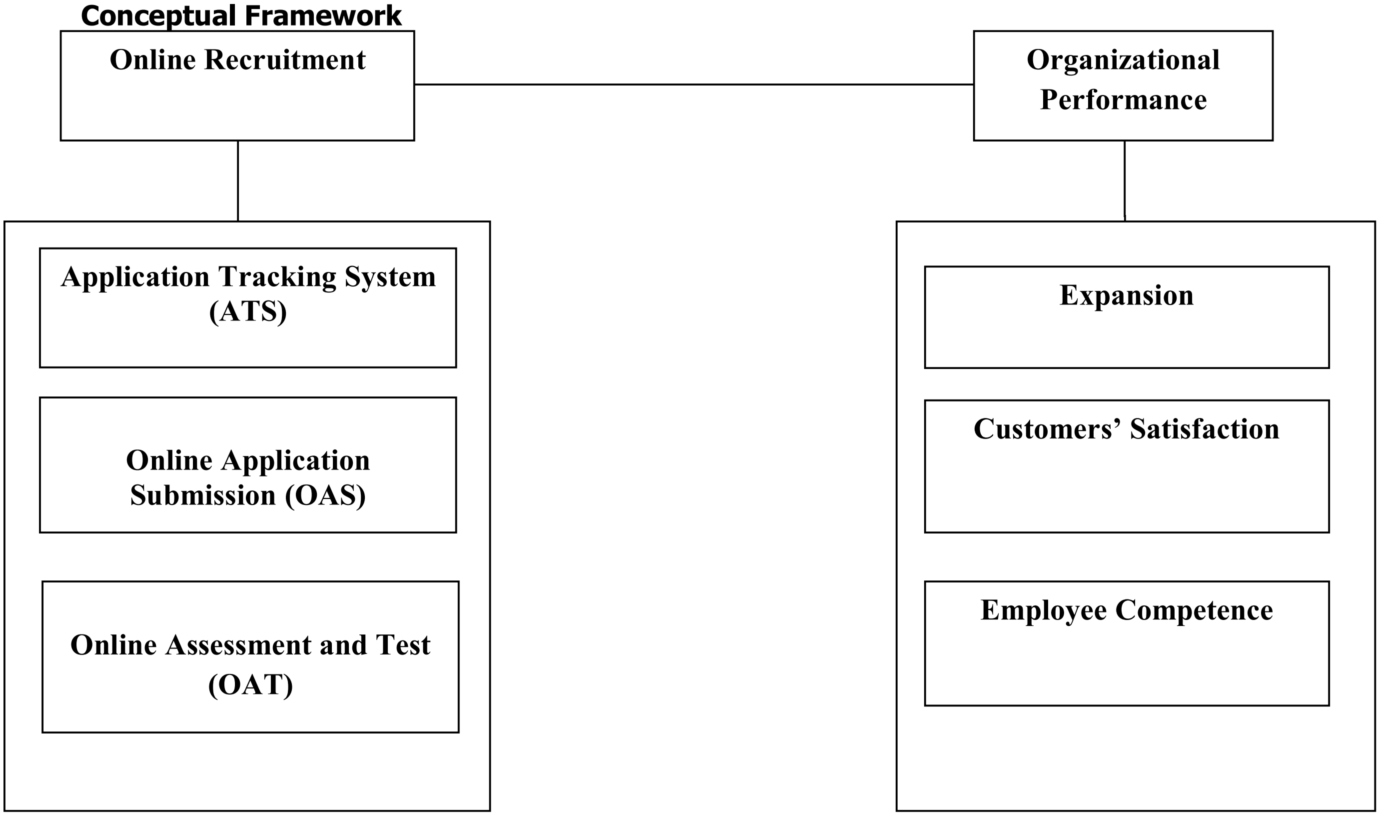

Fig. 1.1: Conceptual Framework showing relationship between Online Recruitment and Organizational Performance and their Dimensions and Measures.
Source: Njoku, C. C. & Ibiere, J. A. (2023).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine how online recruitment elements affect organizational performance. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to examine the relationship between application tracking systems and expansion in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.
2. to ascertain the relationship between online application submission and customers' satisfaction in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.
3. to examine the relationship between online assessment/test and employee competence in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the researcher in proffering solutions to the study.

1. What is the relationship between application tracking system and expansion in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State?

2. What is the relationship between online application submission and customers' satisfaction in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between online assessment/test and employee competence in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between application tracking system and expansion in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between online assessment and test and employee competence in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Concept of Online Recruitment Elements

Online Recruitment is the process of hiring a suitable candidate for the vacant position using electronic devices and other social media. Tertiary institutions employed internet to reach large number of applicants in order to hire the best talented person at less cost compared to physical recruitment process. It will be easier for the jobseekers to get updated without any queries and it is in the interest of the applicants to be a part of a firm or not. Thus, the website of an organization seems to be official and considered to be an essential element of electronic recruitment

Akila, et. al., (2020), indicates that online recruitment refers to the process of using the internet and various digital platforms to attract, screen, and select candidates for job vacancies. It involves posting job advertisements online, accepting applications through online portals, and conducting initial screening and assessments electronically.

In the study of Ashok and Priyanka (2014), online recruitment is the process of using internet to identify and attract potential employees to the organization. Also, Taylor (2001), opined that online recruitment is the online process of attracting suitable candidates via electronic means. It also, provides convenience in selection process where it instantly matches candidate's qualification, skills, experience with job description, consequently informing the prospective candidate for its selection prospects. Cole (2002), added that the principal purpose of electronic recruitment is to attract sufficient and suitable employees to apply for vacancies in the organization.

An online recruitment system is a back-office system for administrating the recruitment process which is normally designed to allow applicants to submit their data electronically. Online recruitment can thus be perceived as an umbrella term covering recruitment activities performed using various electronic means and the internet, including online recruitment and electronic recruitment system (Anna, 2010). Hausdorf and Duncan (2004) stated that online recruitment involves the use of the internet as a channel through which jobs are posted and information is provided with respect to the application process. In the same vein, Kuhn (2003) defines online recruitment as taking advantage of internet technology to fill job vacancies of an organization. Harris (2005), described the definition of online recruitment as any method of attracting applicants to apply for a job that relies heavily on the internet.

Online recruitment as a technological innovation, online recruitment improves the process of recruiting knowledge through the internet, Dysart, (2006). It also allows organizations save costs, update job offers and status at any point in time, shortens the recruitment cycle time, identifies and selects the best knowledge potentials out of a wider range of candidates while giving the organizations opportunities to improve their profiles and images (Buhari et al., 2021). Furthermore, better and faster recruiting constitutes a competitive advantage against organizations businesses within the same banking industry. Most job seekers are comfortable with applying for jobs online compared to the traditional methods due to cost minimization and time saving with the possibility of browsing through a wider range of job offers.

A) Application Tracking System (ATS)

Lievens and Harris (2003), affirm that applicant tracking system is a software tool that helps organizations streamlines their recruitment processes. It enables companies to manage job applications electronically, track the progress of candidates throughout the hiring process, and store applicant information in a centralized database. Applicant Tracking System often include features such as resume parsing, keyword matching, and automated communication with applicants. An applicant tracking system (ATS) is a type of software used by HR departments to store job applicant resumes. This database serves as a convenient tool for recruiters and hiring managers by sorting and filtering data from resumes to effectively narrow candidate lists (Lievens & Harris, 2003). Companies may receive hundreds of applications at once, so this automated process saves them time. They can also send customized acceptance and rejection emails through the Applicant Tracking System.

How do applicant tracking systems work?

Working with an Application Tracking System and what each feature does.

1. **Job Posting:** Application Tracking System is used to post open positions on website and job boards.
2. **Spreadsheet Importing:** Application Tracking System can move all your spreadsheets with contacts, candidate statuses, and recruiting status into the applicant tracking solution and can easily import the spreadsheets at your convenience.
3. **Resume Importing:** An applicant tracking system imports resumes received from different sources so that you can view them within the software.
4. **Resume parsing:** Every candidate sets up their resume employing a distinctive format. Resume parsing extracts data from resumes and enters it into a typical type. Once a resume is parsed, the system organizes the applicants and matches them to a job description. The software shows you the right candidates, saving you hours of work.
5. **Email Marketing:** Online marketing may be a versatile tool for attracting new candidates and growing your network. With this system, you will be able to modify your email campaigns.
6. **Candidate Tracking:** An Application Tracking System tracks once a candidate receives information on interview, is offered a job, and is placed.
7. **Collaboration:** If you are employed amongst a hiring team, you need to be able to share recruiting information with your co-workers. This allows hiring team to use the software on several devices. Every member of the hiring team can stay on the same page by viewing up-to-date information about candidates.

B) Online Application Submission

Furtmueller, et. al. (2010), assert that online application submission refers to the process of submitting job applications electronically via the internet or a dedicated online platform. Instead of physically delivering a printed application or resume, applicants fill out an online form or upload their documents through a company's website or job portal. This allows for faster and more efficient application processing and enables recruiters to access and review applications digitally.

Means of Online Application Submission

Web-Based Application Portals: Many institutions have their own web-based application portals where prospective students can create accounts, complete application forms, upload documents, and track their application status (Furtmueller et al., 2010).

Common Application System: Some regions or countries have a centralized application system where students can apply to multiple institutions using a single application. Examples include the

Common Application in the United States or UCAS in the United Kingdom (Furtmueller et al., 2010).

Third-Party Platforms: Some institutions use third-party platforms that specialize in online application management.

Furtmueller, et. al., (2010), in opinion that, online application submission in tertiary institutions offers numerous benefits in terms of convenience, efficiency, and cost savings, but it's essential to address the potential disadvantages to ensure that all prospective students/applicants have equal opportunities to apply. Institutions should consider a user-friendly interface, provide support for technical issues, and maintain clear communication to create a positive experience for applicants.

C) Online Assessment and Test

Amelung et al., (2011); Earl, (2013), states that online assessment and test refers to the evaluation of candidates' skills, knowledge, aptitude, or abilities conducted through digital platforms or software. These assessments can include various formats such as multiple-choice questions, coding exercises, situational judgment tests, psychometric assessments, and more. Online assessments are typically administered remotely, allowing candidates to complete them at their convenience while providing employers with standardized evaluation methods and efficient candidate screening. These definitions are basic understanding of these terms within the context of recruitment and hiring processes conducted online,(Abubakar & Adeshola, 2019).

Features of Online Assessment and Tests in Tertiary Institutions:

1. **Accessibility:** Online assessments can be accessed by applicants from anywhere with an internet connection, providing flexibility in terms of time and location.
2. **Variety of Question Types:** Online assessments support various question formats, including multiple-choice, short answer, essay questions, and interactive multimedia elements, enabling diverse assessment methods.
3. **Automated Grading:** Many online assessment platforms offer automated grading, reducing the burden on instructors and providing faster feedback to applicants.
4. **Security Measures:** Advanced security features help prevent cheating, ensuring the integrity of the assessment process.
5. **Analytics and Data Insights:** Online assessments provide data-driven insights into applicant performance, which can be used to identify trends, adjust teaching methods, and address areas where applicants need additional support.
6. **Adaptive Testing:** Some platforms use adaptive testing, where the difficulty of questions adjusts based on the applicant's previous responses, creating a personalized assessment experience.
7. **Immediate Feedback:** Instant feedback allows applicants to learn from their mistakes and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Concept of Organizational Performance

The concept of organizational performance is needed to be differentiated from the broader concept of organizational effectiveness (Santos & Brito, 2012). Business or organizational performance in this study covers financial and operational outcomes. Though the conceptual idea of Venkatraman and Ramanujan (1986) is widely accepted by strategic management scholars (Carton & Hofer, 2006; Richard et al., 2009), the analysis of operations of organizational performance used in empirical studies showed a variety of approaches covering the domain of partially and in an imbalanced way. Combs et al. (2005) analyzed all the articles published in Strategic Management Journal from 1980 to 2004 identified 238 empirical studies that used 56 different indicators (Santos and Brito, 2012). In most cases, financial performance was used (82%) with accounting related measures of profitability being the most common choice (52%). Carton and Hofer (2006) and Richard et al. (2009) also showed a similar picture (Santos & Brito, 2012).

The concept of organizational performance by (Santos & Brito, 2012), refers to the overall effectiveness and efficiency with which an organization achieves its goals and objectives. It is a measure of how well an organization utilizes its resources, implements its strategies, and delivers desired outcomes. Organizational performance can be evaluated using various metrics such as financial performance, market share, customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and innovation. Organizational performance as a concept suffers from problems of conceptual clarifications. The term performance is often used indiscriminately to describe everything from efficiency, effectiveness to improvement. Organizational performance is related to defining and achieving specific goals (Kimhi, & Oliel, 2019). Organization performance is a multidimensional construct operationalized by a variety of financial measures (which include sales, value of net assets and profit) and non-financial measures which include number of workers, market share and overall customer satisfaction (Adubasim & Odunayo 2019).

Lencho, (2020) defines organization performance as an indicator and progressive achievement of tangible, specific, measurable, worthwhile and personally meaningful goals. According to Ocampo et al., (2018), the term performance has to do with those behaviours or actions which are regarded relevant to those goals of the said organization in question. They further argue that performance itself cannot be said to be the outcome itself, consequences or the result of behaviors or action, rather can be said to be the action itself.

Organizational performance involves the recurring activities to establish organizational goals, monitor progress towards the goals, and make adjustments to achieve those goals more effectively and efficiently (Adubasim et al., 2018). Organizational performance is an important construct in leadership that determines how to manage organizations. Previous literature reviews reveal that organizational performance is a multidimensional concept that reflects the heterogeneous nature, circumstances and objectives of organizations at a given period. This compelled Kirby (2005) to maintain that the definition and meaning of organizational performance is an open subject for further inquiry.

A) Expansion

A firm's expansion may be defined as the means by which the organization plans to achieve its objective to increase in size, volume and turnover, Westerlund & Leminen (2011). Expansion includes market expansion strategies, product innovation, and diversification, regional and international expansion. Santomero and Eckles (2000) discussed expansion by financial institutions. They focus on size, the likely effect of size organization, operating costs, that is, the alleged benefit of economies of scale and scope and the best method of expansion acquisition or entry (Santomero & Eckles, 2000). They argue that economies of scale and scope are related to increased cost efficiency. The basic idea according to them is that the emergence of broad financial firms enables costs to be lowered if scale or scope economies are relevant and if the range of expansion is within the band whereby they can be achieved. If economies of scale and scope prevail, increased size will help create systemic financial efficiency and shareholder value to the firm. However, if diseconomies prevail, both were destroyed. In information and distribution-intensive industry with high fixed costs such as financial services, there should be ample potential for scale and scope economies (Santomero & Eckles, 2000).

Expansion, in the context of business, refers to the growth or enlargement of an organization's operations, scope, or market presence. It typically involves increasing the scale of operations, entering new markets, launching new products or services, or opening new branches or locations. Expansion is often pursued to capitalize on opportunities, increase market share, or achieve economies of scale. According to Mutuma (2013), expansion are used to expand firms' operations by adding markets, products, services, or stages of production to the existing business. The purpose of the expansion is to allow the company to enter lines of business that are different from current operations. When the new venture is strategically related to the existing lines of business, it is called concentric diversification (Gitman, 2007). Conglomerate expansion occurs when there is

no common thread of strategic fit or relationship between the new and old lines of business; the new and old businesses are unrelated. Any company's strategic emphasis is increasing sales volumes, boosting market share and cultivating a loyal clientele. Profits are then re-invested to grow the business. Price, quality, and promotion are tailored to meet customer needs. It's then that opportunities for geographical market expansion are pursued next. The natural sequence for geographical expansion is local to regional to national to international. The degree of penetration will, however, differ from area to area depending on the profit potentials (Fang & Hill, 2003).
Cameron and Whetton, (2009), there are three theories associated with expansion. These are Concentric, Horizontal and Conglomerate expansion. In the concentric expansion, the organization adds new products or services which have technological or commercial synergies with current products and which will appeal to new customer groups. The objective is, therefore, to benefit from synergy effects due to the complementarities of activities, and thus to expand the firm's market by attracting new groups of buyers. In the horizontal expansion, the organization adds new products or services that are technologically or commercially unrelated to current products, but which may appeal to current customers. In a competitive environment, this form of expansion is desirable if the present customers are loyal to the current products and if the new products are of good quality and are well promoted and priced. Moreover, the new products are marketed to the same economic environment as the existing products, which may lead to rigidity and instability.
In other words, this strategy tends to increase the firm's dependence on certain market segments (Dismas, 2013). The strategies of expansion may seek internal development of new products or markets, acquisition of a firm, alliance with a complementary company, licensing of new technologies, and distributing or importing a products line manufactured by another firm (Collis, 1991). Generally, the final strategy involves a combination of these options. This combination is determined in function of available opportunities and consistency with the objectives and the resources of the company (CanKim & Mauborgne, 2005). Expansion strategies of institutions are meant to add value to the firm in terms of customer satisfaction and performance.

B) **Customer Satisfaction**

Customers are justifications for organization's continuous existence and by extension responsible for achieving profitable performance. To this end, the challenge to tertiary institutions would be to deliver value and satisfaction to the target employees (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Adirika, Ebue and Nnolim (2001) explained that customer satisfaction means solving customers' problems by giving the customers those goods and services or things of value they need at the right price, in the right place, at the right time and in the right combination. Satisfaction as explained by Kotler and Keller (2016) reflects a person's comparative judgments, resulting from a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied and disappointed. If the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted. Customer satisfaction, therefore, refers to the pleasure, rest of mind or re-assurance an individual gets when he or she purchases and/or consumes a product that meets his/her needs. Thus, customer satisfaction becomes an important factor that tends to determine customer retention overtime. Customer satisfaction are usually aimed or sought to be achieved through the following customer service factors such as convenience, customer care, transaction methods and system, pricing, products and service (KPMG, 2014). In other words, customer service factors have direct link with customer satisfaction as intervening variable for organizational performance improvement.

Customer satisfaction is a customer's feeling of pleasure resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance or outcomes in relation to the person's expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the consumer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the consumer is satisfied. If on the other hand, the performance exceeds perceived expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted. In other words, for a buyer to be satisfied depends on the service offering's performance in relation to the buyer's perceived expectations, Kotler and Keller (2016).

C) Employee Competence

During the past few decades, employee competencies have received a great deal of attention from researchers, practitioners and academicians across the globe for being the major determinant of employee performance (Elbaz, et. al., 2018; McClelland, 1973) as well as the performance of the organization (Otoo, 2019; Otoo & Mishra, 2018; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016). The term competence was coined by White (1959), an eminent American psychologist, in his paper 'Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence'. He refers to competence as 'an organism's capacity to interact effectively with its environment'. However, McClelland (1973), an American social scientist, popularized and significantly developed the concept through his influential work 'Testing for competence rather than for intelligence'. He opines that an individual's behavioural traits and characteristics rather than traditional knowledge and aptitude tests largely determine his/her performance and success in a particular situation/ job (for a detailed discussion on the historical development of competence concept, competence vs competency debate and classification of competencies, (Salman et al., 2020).

Parry (1996), states that employee competence refers to 'a cluster of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affect a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards and that can be improved via training and development'. Employee competencies may also be defined as the personality attributes or characteristics such as knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, motives and self-concept demonstrated by employees that result in effective and superior performance (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; McClelland, 1973).

Employee competence refers to the knowledge, skills, abilities, and expertise that employees possess and utilize in their roles or jobs within an organization. It encompasses both technical skills specific to the job as well as broader competencies such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and leadership. Employee competence is essential for performing tasks effectively, achieving organizational goals, and driving overall productivity and success.

Diverse Means of Employee Competence

Along the same lines, McKelvey (1983) opines that competencies are found in the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees. Employee competencies such as self-competence, team competence, communicative competence, change competence and ethical competence have been found positively related to organizational performance (Otoo & Mishra, 2018; Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016). Additionally, Ramo et al. (2009) contend that the emotional and social competence of employees significantly influences their performance as well as the effectiveness of organizations.

Self-Competence: Siriwaiprapan (2004), refers to the 'ability to adjust to change, readiness to learn, readiness to develop oneself, readiness and ability to initiate action, trust, endurance, receptiveness, broad-mindedness, self-discipline, self-esteem, individuality, and self-determination'.

Team Competence: Potnuru and Sahoo (2016) defined 'team competence' as the 'knowledge, skills and abilities of an individual to develop, support and lead a team to achieve goals'. It is the manifestation of required behaviours and optimistic attitude by the individuals within a team necessary for the achievement of both individual and organizational goals. Eby and Dobbins (1997) argued that team competence conveys shared efforts and information and better resource allocation which improve performance.

Communication Competence: Communication competence refers to 'the ability to choose among available communicative behaviours to accomplish one's own interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation' (Potnuru & Sahoo, 2016). Communication competence incorporates characteristics encompassing knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of individuals to be effective in sharing information, ideas, thoughts and feelings with others.

Social Competence: In a general sense, social competence refers to the ability of an individual to handle social interactions effectively. It involves developing and maintaining close relationships with others and being able to get along well with others. Given the complexity of social interactions, social competence is the product of a wide range of cognitive abilities, emotional processes, behavioral skills, social awareness, and personal and cultural values related to interpersonal relationships' (Orpinas, 2010). Additionally, Orpinas and Horne (2006) define 'social competence' as 'a person's age-appropriate knowledge and skills for functioning peacefully and creatively in his or her community or social environment'.

Theoretical Framework

This study is rooted to Resource Based View (RBV) theory which was originally proposed by Birger Wernerfelt in 198, and later developed and refined by Jay B. Barney in 1991, who suggested that sustainable competitive advantage is attainable when firms have a human resource pool which cannot be imitated or substituted by rivals. According to the Resource-Based view, firms should constantly evaluate their workforce to ensure that they have the right people with the right skills in the right places to ensure sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 2001) and when this is not the case, firms should make-up for the shortfall by employing appropriate recruitment and selection criteria. The theory maintained that the major part of any firm's strength or weakness stem from the calibre of the people employed and the quality of their working relationships. To this end, Boxall (1998) revealed that firms which recruit and retain exceptional individuals have the capability of generating human capital advantage. According to Sparrow, et. al., (2002), technology and capital can be acquired by most firms any time, for a price, but it is not easy to acquire a ready pool of highly qualified and motivated employees. Thus, in order to be differentiated, the companies need to be very careful with the recruitment and selection process.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted in this study. The total population of the study was 558 which consists of (VCs/Rectors/Provosts, Registrars, ICT directors, Deans, HODs and Secretaries) from the various Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. A sampling for this study was done using purposive sampling so as to reach out to those institutions where data can be easily assessed. Two hundred and thirty-three (233) respondents as a sample was selected across the selected tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Data were collected through primary source (questionnaire). A structured questionnaire titled "Online Recruitment Elements And Organizational Performance Index (OREOPI)". The questionnaire was designed in a modified four point Likert scale with response options Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (DA) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point, The instrument was validated by two Office and Information Management experts. The reliability coefficient of the instrument (0.80) was elicited using Crombach Alpha. Two hundred and thirty-three (233) copies of questionnaire administered were all retrieved. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was used for the test of hypotheses using SPSS Version 23 at O.05 level of significance.

Results

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between application tracking system and expansion of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Table 1: Relationship between Application Tracking System and Expansion

Correlations

		ATS	EXPANSION
ATS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.440
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	233	233
EXPANSION	Pearson Correlation	.440	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	233	233

***Correlations significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Source: SPSS Output Data, 2023

The result on table 4.1 above showed the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient on relationship between application tracking system and expansion of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. It shows r value of .440 at a significance level of 0.000 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) which states that, there is no significant relationship between application tracking system and expansion of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between application tracking system and expansion of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4.2: Relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction

Correlations

		OAS	CS
OAS	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	233	233
CS	Pearson Correlation	.592**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	233	233

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

Source: SPSS Output Data, 2023

The result on table 4.2 above showed the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient on relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. It shows r value of .592 at a significance level of 0.000 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) which states that, there is no significant relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between online assessment and test and employee competence in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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Table 4.3: Relationship between online assessment and test and employee competence

Correlations

		OAT	EC
OAT	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	233	233
EC	Pearson Correlation	.640**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	233	233

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

Source: SPSS Output Data, 2023

The result on table 4.3 above showed the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient on relationship between online assessment and test and employee competence of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. It shows r value of .640 at a significance level of 0.000 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05. Since the significance value 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho_3) which states that, there is no significant relationship between online assessment and test and employee competence of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between online assessment and test and employee competence of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

Discussion of findings

Application tracking systems and expansion of **Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State**

The test of analyses in table 4.1 revealed that there is a significant relationship between Application tracking systems and expansion of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. This result is similar with the findings of Lieven and Harris (2003), which indicates that, it is helpful for directors to manage job applications electronically, track the progress of candidates throughout the hiring process, and store applicant information in a centralized database. While Constable and McCormick (2009), indicates that to expand the firm's market is by attracting new groups of buyers. Therefore, this study found that there is significant relationship between application tracking systems and expansion.

Online Application Submission and customer satisfaction of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

The test of analyses in table 4.2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between Online Application Submission and customer satisfaction of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State. This result is similar with the findings of Parry and Tyson (2008), which suggested that institutions have their own web-based application portals where prospective applicants can create accounts, complete application forms, upload documents, and track their application status. While Kotler and Keller (2016) indicates that customer satisfaction is generally important to an institution since a highly satisfied customer is generally expected to remain loyal for longer period, buys more as much as the institution introduces new products and modify existing ones, talks favourably about the institution and its products (good mouthing), pays less attention to competing brands as well as being less sensitive to price changes, offers product (goods and services) ideas to the institution, and most importantly costs less to serve and retain than new customers due to the routine nature of relationship (transactions) between them. Therefore, this study found that there is significant relationship between online application submission and customer satisfaction.

Online Assessment/Test and employee competence of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

The test of analyses in table 4.3 revealed that there is a significant relationship between Online Assessment/Test and employee competence of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

This result is similar with the findings of Amelung et al., (2011); Earl, (2013), which states that online assessment and test refers to the evaluation of candidates' skills, knowledge, aptitude, or abilities conducted through digital platforms or software. These assessments can include various formats such as multiple-choice questions, coding exercises, situational judgment tests, psychometric assessments, and more. Online assessments are typically administered remotely, allowing candidates to complete them at their convenience while providing employers with standardized evaluation methods and efficient candidate screening. While Siriwaiprapan (2004) indicates that employee competence ability to adjust to change, readiness to learn, readiness to develop oneself, readiness and ability to initiate action, trust, endurance, receptiveness, broad-mindedness, self-discipline, self-esteem, individuality, and self-determination. Therefore, this study found that there is significant relationship between online assessment/test and employee competence.

CONCLUSION

Online recruitment elements have always been a special interest to many organizations for the fact that recruitment affects the organizational performance. The study concluded that online recruitment element which includes application tracking system enhances expansion, online application submission enhances customer's satisfaction and online assessment/test enhances employee competence as a matter of fact leads to increase in organizational performance of Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Management team of tertiary Institutions should create applicant tracking system software tool that will enable tertiary institutions streamlines their recruitment processes which will enable them manage job applications electrically, track the progress of candidates throughout the hiring processes and store applicant information in a centralized database as well enhance the performance of the institution.
2. Management team of tertiary Institutions should create the process of submitting job applications electronically via the internet or a dedicated online platform instead of physically delivering a printed application or resume, applicants fill out an online form or upload their documents through a company's website or job portal as well enhance the performance of the institution.
3. Management team of tertiary Institutions should create online assessment and test which will evaluate candidate's skills, knowledge, aptitude or abilities conducted through digital platforms or software as well enhance the performance of the institution.

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