RECRUITMENT SYSTEM AND TALENT RETENTION OF OIL FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the relationship between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Port Harcourt. The objectives of the study were to determine how recruitment system, relate with talent retention. The study adopted the explanatory cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of Twenty-Three (23) registered and licensed Oil Firms operating in Port Harcourt metropolis only. The sample size of the study consisted of the entire population since the population is small. Thus, the study adopted the census method of sampling. The study adopted the primary source of data. After validation by the supervisor and two other experts in Management and Test/Measurement, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to test the reliability of the instrument. A total of One Hundred and Eighteen (118) copies of the validated questionnaires were distributed to the targeted audience. The researcher was able to retrieve One Hundred and Three (103) copies and was used for the analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis; Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for the bivariate analysis, while the multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation with the aid of SPSS version 23.00. The findings revealed that a significant positive relationship exists between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that investing in a robust employee information system is a strategic move for oil firms aiming to enhance their workforce's ability to withstand and recover from unforeseen challenges. Therefore, it was recommended amongst others that management of Oil Firms should ensure that their onboarding process include comprehensive training on safety protocols, company culture and job specific skills to help new employee integrate smoothly and perform effectively; Management of Oil Firms should create a customizable dashboard for different stakeholders that display relevant human resource metrics and insight in a format that meet their specific needs.

Key words: Recruitment System, Talent Retention, Application Tracking, Retention Rate

INTRODUCTION

The oil and gas industry operates in one of the most complex and challenging environments, characterized by volatile markets, stringent regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, and significant environmental and safety concerns. In this high-stakes context, the ability of an organization to remain resilience to adapt, withstand, and recover from disruptions is not only desirable but essential for survival. Central to this resilience is the workforce, whose agility, adaptability, and overall well-being determine the organization's capacity to navigate uncertainty and maintain operational continuity (Chewning *et al.*, 2023; Cumming *et al.,* 2020).

Workforce resilience refers to the collective capacity of an organization's employees to effectively respond to and recover from adversities, such as economic downturns, technological shifts, or unforeseen crises. In oil firms, where operations are often global and involve high-risk environments, workforce resilience is critical. A resilient workforce ensures that the firm can sustain productivity, innovation, and competitive advantage even in the face of significant disruptions. Thus, talent retention, experienced team and staff flexibility are used here as measures of workforce resilience.
 In the oil and gas industry, where specialized skills, technical expertise, and deep industry knowledge are paramount, the ability to attract, develop, and retain top talent is a key driver of organizational success. Keeping skilled and high-performing employees within the organization over the long term has become increasingly critical as the industry faces a range of challenges, including

fluctuating oil prices, rapid technological advancements, and a shrinking pool of experienced professionals due to demographic shifts and retirement trends (Harathova, 2019). The value of an experienced team cannot be overstated in the oil and gas industry, where operations are often complex, high-risk, and geographically dispersed. Experienced teams comprising individuals with extensive knowledge, technical skills, and industry-specific expertise are the backbone of successful oil firms. These teams possess the deep understanding required to navigate the intricacies of exploration, production, and distribution, ensuring that projects are executed safely, efficiently, and in compliance with regulatory standards (Ismael, 2023). In the fast-paced and highly dynamic oil and gas industry, the ability to adapt quickly to changing conditions is crucial for maintaining operational efficiency and competitiveness. The capacity of employees to adjust to different roles, responsibilities, and working conditions is a critical asset for oil firms facing a volatile market, technological advancements, and complex regulatory environments (Luc, 2022).

Recruitment systems in oil firms are specialized tools and processes designed to attract, assess, and onboard the skilled professionals required to meet the sector's unique demands. These systems are integral to ensuring that the right individuals are selected for critical roles, from technical experts and engineers to field operators and support staff (AlHamad, *et al.,* 2022). Recruitment systems play a strategic role in shaping the workforce's future by enabling oil firms to build a talent pipeline that aligns with their long-term goals and operational requirements. With advanced features such as automated job postings, applicant tracking, and data analytics, these systems facilitate efficient and data-driven hiring decisions, helping firms stay competitive and responsive in a rapidly evolving industry (Shamout, *et al.,* 2022). **Manager/employee self-service portals** are increasingly becoming a cornerstone of modern human resource management systems in oil firms. These portals empower both managers and employees by providing them with direct access to essential HR functions and information, thereby streamlining administrative processes and enhancing overall organizational effectiveness. Self-service portals enable employees to handle various HR tasks independently, such as accessing pay slips, managing benefits, updating personal information, and requesting time off (Cho, *et al.,* 2020; Haider, *et al.,* 2021). This autonomy not only improves efficiency by reducing the administrative burden on HR departments but also increases employee satisfaction by providing a user-friendly platform for managing their work-related needs. In the context of the oil industry, where employees may work in remote or challenging environments, the ability to access and manage HR information online is particularly valuable.

Research Hypothesis
Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Rivers State.

Recruitment System
Recruitment function of HRM process has become most exposed to the internet and information technology and many firms now use recruitment system rather than the conventional method of employee recruitment. The use of these systems has drive the process to be electronic. Thus, electronic recruitment allows organization to reach a broader audience of potential candidates. By utilizing online job boards, social media platforms, and their own websites, organization can attract applicants from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations (Adewoye & Olugbenga, 2018). This expanded reach is crucial in the competitive oil sector, where attracting top talent is essential for maintaining a competitive edge. Traditional recruitment methods often involve significant costs related to advertising in print media, hiring recruitment agencies, and conducting in-person interviews (Ajayi & Ahmed, 2022). E-recruitment significantly reduces these expenses by leveraging digital platforms that are often free or low-cost. This cost-effectiveness allows firms to allocate resources more efficiently, focusing on other critical areas such as training and development.

Electronic recruitment facilitates targeted outreach efforts aimed at promoting diversity within the workforce (Ahmed, 2019).

A recruitment system serves as an all-in-one platform that enhances efficiency in recruiting while improving the experience for both candidates and HR professionals. A Recruitment System is a comprehensive software solution designed to streamline and enhance the hiring process within an organization (AlHamad, *et al.,* 2022). It encompasses various functionalities that assist human resources (HR) teams in managing the recruitment lifecycle, from job posting to candidate selection and onboarding. A robust recruitment system helps oil firms identify, attract, and retain skilled workers who are essential for maintaining operational efficiency and meeting production demands. By streamlining the hiring process, companies can fill critical roles more quickly and effectively. A well-implemented recruitment system automates various stages of the hiring process, such as candidate sourcing, screening, and selection. This automation reduces the time spent on administrative tasks, allowing HR teams to focus on strategic initiatives that enhance workforce quality. For instance, utilizing applicant tracking systems (ATS) can help manage applications efficiently and ensure that qualified candidates are not overlooked (Patel & Dhal in AlHamad, *et al.,* 2022).

A recruitment system is a digital platform or software designed to streamline and automate the hiring process for organizations. It facilitates the end-to-end recruitment process, from job posting to onboarding, helping companies find, evaluate, and hire the best candidates efficiently. A comprehensive recruitment system enables oil firms to actively seek diverse candidates from various backgrounds, thereby fostering an inclusive workplace culture. This approach not only enhances team dynamics but also aligns with broader societal expectations regarding corporate responsibility. Effective recruitment systems allow oil firms to engage in strategic workforce planning by analyzing labor market trends and forecasting future hiring needs (Vahdat, 2021). This proactive approach ensures that companies are prepared for shifts in demand or changes in operational requirements, ultimately leading to better resource allocation. A strong recruitment system contributes to building a positive employer brand by enhancing the candidate experience throughout the hiring process. Companies that prioritize effective communication, transparency, and engagement during recruitment are more likely to attract top talent who resonate with their organizational values. Application tracking and source of hire area seen as manifestations of recruitment system.

Talent Retention

We are in a world where industrialization and commercialization are the order of the day; and every organization is in the quest for promoting efficiency and effectiveness that could lead to organizational performance (Gebelein, 2016). In competitive market place, talent retention is a primary driver for organizational success. However, Stockley (2013) defines talent retention as the mindful, thoughtful approach embarks on to fascinate, improve, attract and retain people with the skills and abilities to meet current and future contingencies of the organizations. Talent retention is concerned with staffing, identification of skills and abilities, retention, supervision and management, development of employees to increase performance. Thus, talent retention as a wider concept focuses on how best an organization can entice, preserve, attract, improve, manage, retain and maintain necessary talent (D'Annunzio-Green, 2018). Talent retention strategy tries to ensure that existing talented, worthy, and committed people are contributing in achieving the existing and future needs of organization, and this procedure is the talent pool (Harathova, 2019). Talent retention has been considered as the fundamental tool that triggers organizational growth, survival and performance. A lot of work has been put into various researches across the globe on issues concerning talent management as companies are beginning to see every day the importance of human resource in an organization as the cost of recruiting, training and developing is increasing every year due to globalization and vast economic change and also hunt for talent (Cheng & Ho, 2011).

Conceptually, talent retention refers to the strategic efforts and practices that organizations in the oil and gas industry implement to keep their skilled and experienced employees engaged, satisfied, and committed to staying with the company for the long term. Given the highly specialized nature of work in the oil industry, retaining top talent is crucial for maintaining operational efficiency, innovation, and competitive advantage. It is also organizational practices of keeping high skilled (talented) employees with the company or organization as long as possible. This leads to increased productivity and successful completion of strategic goals. A talented employee is someone who is able to surpass others and does not need to try his best to use it, they excel easily, thus, organizational ability to ensure that these talents possessed employees are always put in use to solve organizational challenges determined how effective they are (Govaerts, 2015). Talented people have outstanding qualities and capabilities to be able to undertake a difficult or complex job or field of operation and achieve results. They have effectively, very high quality, sometimes highest in a certain range. Talents are people with broad knowledge, high intelligence, skilled career (Irshad, 2014). They have the purpose of living in accordance with the development trend of society. Besides, they are people with political ideals and have motives to live in a bright society. Talents are people who have high professional qualifications and professional ethical qualities as well as good human dignity that are respected by the intelligence and scientific working methods. They have good ideas to business executives, have the ability to create innovate, initiate or solve timely problems if any in the business activities (Schuler, *et al.,* 2011). Retaining talent requires managers to consider ensuring that talented people always want to be dedicated and committed to sticking to their organization, promoting all their capabilities to the organization (Kossivi, 2016). Retaining talent needs to create opportunities for them to develop ideas for their own initiative to work, ensure working conditions for them, affect their loyalty and commitment.

Mohammed (2015) equally asserts that talent retention consists of a set of practices and policies adopted by organizations to ensure that their above-average professionals remain among them. Retention of a positive and motivated employee is very important for the organization's success; this is because it increases morale of employees to work greatly in attaining greater goals. Employees who enjoy what they do and the atmosphere in which they work are more likely to remain employed with their organization over a longer period of time. Establishing a talent retention program in a company is demanding. Attracting and retaining talent is one of the constant pursuits that every organization faces. But amidst so many retention methods developed by modern organizations, there are still those who do not understand the importance of retaining talent. Talent retention helps the organization in several ways. In addition to helping to keep people who stand out, it helps in prospecting for new employees and motivating employees (Mohammed, 2015). Umamaheswari and Krishnan (2016) postulates that talent retention consist of a set of practices and policies adopted by companies to ensure that their above-average professionals remain in it for much longer. With that, it is possible to build a great competitive differential. It is these talents that take the results of an organization to high levels. Therefore, retention is of great importance. However, talent retention deals with construction of a more pleasant working environment; guarantee of greater engagement; productivity increase; fluidity in decision making; helps in the country's economy; it guarantees the intellectual capital of the organization. Overall turnover rate and retention rate are indicators of talent retention in his study.

Theoretical Review
This work is anchored on Roger's (1962) Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Roger's Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains the processes involved in the adoption of innovations such as new technologies, techniques, and procedures and well as the resultant effects of such steps on organizational processes. The diffusion of innovation theory assumes that:

i)   In a social system, there will always be a disparity in the level and time at which individuals within a given social system adopt new ideas, techniques, and technology.

ii)   Individuals and arms of institutions that adopt innovations early will naturally outperform late adopters and the laggards.

The implication of this theory is that as individual land institutions advance in the use of sophisticated devices, there will naturally be a disparity on how productivity is enhanced by both category of people in the society. While some individual are digitally compliant and digitally literate enough to carry out online operations, there are still those who still find it difficult to operate simple smart phones. The fact is that while those with digital skills interface with better productivity, others are bedeviled with low productivity while those who embrace and adopt emerging digital work environment enjoy speed, efficiency and high level effectiveness in coping with socio-personal functions others are battling with job stress.

METHODOLOGY

The explanatory cross sectional survey research design was adopted for this study. The accessible population of the study consisted of Twenty-Three (23) registered and licensed Oil Firms operating in Rivers State metropolis only. The researcher visited the Port Harcourt office of Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NURC) (formerly known as Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) to obtain this information. However, when the researcher embarked on a tour of Port Harcourt Metropolis for preliminary interaction with their managers, the researcher discovered that most of the registered Oil Firms are not operating. The sample size of the study consisted of the entire population since the population is small. Thus, the study adopted the census method of sampling. Structured questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. A total of One Hundred and Eighteen (118) copies of the validated questionnaires were distributed to the targeted audience. The researcher was able to retrieve One Hundred and Three (103) copies and was used for the analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used for the univariate analysis while the bivariate analysis was done using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS Version 23.0. Multivariate analysis was done using Partial Correlation.

RESULTS

Ho$_1$:   There is no significant relationship between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Rivers State.

Correlations between Recruitment System and Talent Retention

			Recruitment System	Talent Retention
Spearman's rho	Recruitment System	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	**.667****
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	103	103
	Talent Retention	Correlation Coefficient	**.667****	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	103	103
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 1 above shows r value of 0.667 at a significance level of 0.00 which is less than the chosen alpha level of 0.05 for the hypothesis relating recruitment system and talent retention. Since the significance value is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho$_1$) which states that there is no significant relationship between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Rivers State was rejected and the alternate hypothesis (Ha$_1$) was accepted. This implies that there is a strong positive relationship between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analyses and discussion of findings, the study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between recruitment system and talent retention of Oil Firms in Port Harcourt. Investing in a robust retention system is a strategic move for oil firms aiming to enhance their workforce's ability to withstand and recover from unforeseen challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of Oil Firms should regularly monitor and analyze recruitment metrics such as time-to-hire, cost-per-hire, and employee turnover rate to identify area for improvement in the recruitment process.
2. Management of Oil Firms should ensure that their onboarding process include comprehensive training on safety protocols, company culture and job specific skills to help new employee integrate smoothly and perform effectively.
3. Management of Oil Firms should deign portals with a user-friendly interface that allow easy navigation.

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