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DIGITAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY OF RIVERS STATE-OWNED TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between Digital Human Resource Management and Institutional Productivity of Rivers State owned-tertiary institution.. The population was 40 Human Resource Managers of the Rivers State Owned-Tertiary Institutions. A census study was adopted. The Cross-Sectional Survey research design was adopted to gather data from respondents. The Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was adopted to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument at 0.70 statistically, the finding revealed that, there is a significant relationship between Digital Human Resource Management and Institutional Productivity of Rivers State Owned-Tertiary Institutions. The study concluded that there is a positive association between predictor and the criterion variables. Also, the leadership style as a moderating variable meaningfully moderated the relationship between the Digital Human Resource Management and Institutional Productivity of Rivers State Owned-Tertiary Institutions. The study recommended that Management of the institutions should implement a robust e-recruitment system that can revolutionize the hiring process, making it more efficient and transparent. By leveraging digital platforms, institutions can reach a wider pool of qualified candidates, reducing time and resources spent on traditional recruitment methods.

Keywords: Digital Human Resource Management, Institutional Productivity, Leadership Style

INTRODUCTION

The importance of employees in organizations goes a long way to determine the success of a business enterprise. This is because employees determine the flow and usage of organizational resources. In the words of Moulik and Mazumdar (2012) they are regarded as the active resources that an organization can possess as they are responsible for the usage of other resources of an organization in order to help organization achieve its goal and objectives. The business environment of an organization of today requires that organizations retain their knowledge capital (employees) such that they will be able to compete successfully in a dynamic and ever-changing business environment. The universities system requires the services of employees who are competent, motivated, well-trained and can successfully support the university academician to carry out research in an effective manner in order to achieve the goal and objective of the university both in the local and global environment (Obeidat, Masa'deh and Abdallah, 2014).

Inefficiency has been a major issue battling the service delivery of non-teaching staff in most public universities in Nigeria and this has greatly affected the academic and research outlook of Nigerian universities. The non-teaching department in a university system consists of works, bursary, librarian, medical personnel, exams and records, confidential secretaries, cleaners/messengers, administrative staff, account, security personnel among others. Many of these departments are greatly inefficient at their capacity to function effectively and support the university system to

achieve its stated objectives and goals especially in state and federal universities in Nigeria (Iwuoha, 2018).

Similarly, most non-teaching in universities have no knowledge and capacity to handle computers or successfully preside over meetings such that they can take and read minutes of meetings. This issue of inefficiency among non-academic staff has become a menace and has damaged the university image both in the domestic and global level. It has even brought a set back to the academic activities in the universities (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). The inefficiency due to lack of innovativeness that is practically prevalent among the non-teaching staff of most federal and state universities in Nigeria especially when it comes to effective and efficient administrative handling of academic activities with regard to issues concerning students, academic staff, financial planning, budgetary system/ allocation, manpower coordination, and planning system is glaring. The lack of effective structure and the rigid bureaucratic system being practiced by these public universities coupled with managerial incompetence of non-teaching staff contributes to the dissatisfaction experienced by students and stakeholders.

Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: Leadership styles do not significantly moderate the relationship between digital human resource management and institutional productivity of Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

Digital Human Resource Management

Digital human resource management system is a soft-ware or online solution that is used for data entry, data tracking and the data information requirements of an organization's human resources (HR) management, payroll and bookkeeping operations. An efficient digital human resource management system provides: administration of all staff data, reporting and evaluation of staff data, company-related records, including staff handbooks, disaster evacuation methods and security recommendations, rewards management, such as enrollment, status modifications and updating of personal data. It is an information system or managed service that provides a single, centralized view of the data that a human resource management (HRM) or human capital management (HCM) group requires for completing human resource (HR) processes such as recruitment, placement, payroll management and other human resource practices (Rouse, 2014). Human resource information systems may also be viewed as a way, through software, for businesses big and small to take care of a number of activities including solutions in recruiting, training and payroll. A human resource information system allows a company to plan its HR costs more effectively, as well as to manage them and control them without needing to allocate too many resources toward them. In most situations, human resource information systems may also lead to increases in efficiency when it comes to making decisions in HR and as a result enabling the HR practitioner to obtain many hours of his or her day back instead of spending these hours dealing with non-strategic, mundane tasks required to run the administrative-side of HR. The decisions made should also increase in quality and as a result, the productivity of both employees and managers should increase and become more effective (Ball, 2011). To put it another way, a digital human resource management system may be viewed as a way, through software, for businesses big and small to take care of a

number of activities including solutions in training, payroll, and recruiting. A human resource information system can enable a company to plan its HR costs more effectively, as well as to manage them and control them without needing to allocate too many resources towards them.

Various many authors have reproduced various description of HRM and therefore there was no universal definition (Ngai, Law, Chan, & Wat, 2007). For example, HRM has been explained as a system of strategies and activities that focused on managing workers at all levels of a firm to attain organizational goals effectively (Byars & Rue, 2006) (Redman & Wilkinson, 2009) were able to define HRM as the management of the issues of employment within a firm. (Boxall & Purcell, 2008) further explained HRM in the western world as all those integrated activities involving the management of human resources and its functionality for the fulfilment of the organization's mission, vision and policies. Specifically, the definition of HRM presented by (Boxall & Purcell, 2008) sought to achieve the following key goals: performance, staffing, administration and change management. Mostly, human resources and HR professionals deliver this selection, recruitment, employee relations, the management of employees' health and safety, and talent development in organizations. Thereby, HRM is mainly not only restricted to hiring and firing, but it is also related to the improvement of talent by examining the training and development requirements of workers within an organization. According to Bourdreau and Ramstad (2005), the main organizational managers attention and HR investments were being moved to the management and retention of important talent which were considered vital determinants for the improved performance of firms. For instance, in the case of Westcoast Energy, a potential vital talent relates to an employee who persistently has production which is significantly of high level. Confidence within the firm enabled an individual to move to the next job band within three years within the organization chart structure (Chug and Bhatnagar 2006).

Institutional Productivity

Institutional productivity can be simply defined as a company's results and achievements compared to goals and objectives (Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson, 2009). Cho and Dansereau (2010) define institutional productivity about the organisation's goals and objectives. Tomal and Jones (2015) refer to institutional productivity as the actual results or outputs of an organisation as measured against that organisation's intended outputs. Institutional productivity reflects the way an organisation takes advantage of tangible and intangible resources to achieve its goals (Hunger & Wheelen, 2012) and the culmination of an organisation's working process and activities. Nnabuife (2009) defines institutional productivity as setting up a structure or mending an already existing one to suit the organisational environment and the demands of technology. Moullin (2007) identified institutional productivity as, a measure which is used by organisations so that they can manage their efficiency well, and deliver their worth to shareholders and clients. Since institutional productivity is a multidimensional concept, it seeks to measure companies' achievement of the objectives proposed for different stakeholders in a given period (Richard *et al.,* 2009).

Performance is the end result of activities (Bayo & Hamilton, 2022). It includes the actual outcome of the strategic management process. The practice of strategic management is justified in terms of its ability to improve an organization performance measured in terms of profit and return on investment. For evaluation and control to be effective, managers must obtain clear prompt and unbiased information from the people below them in the organization hierarchy.

Firm performance is one of the most relevant constructs in the field of strategic management; a construct commonly used as the final dependent variable in various fields (Cho & Pucik, 2005; Richard, Derinney, Yip, & Johnson 2009). It is believed that the essence of performance is the creation of value, therefore, value creation, as defined by the resource provider, is the essential overall performance criteria for any organization (Monday, *et al,,* 2015). Continuous performance is the focus of any organization because only through performance are organizations able to grow and

survive (Gavrea, *et al*., 2011). A business organization could measure its performance using the financial and non-financial measures.

The concept of firm productivity has been viewed by different authors from various perspectives, and consequently there is no consensus on a particular definition. Hence, it has been variously defined by various authors. According to Olabisi, Olagbemi and Atere (2013) firm's performance is complex, and is characterized by the firm's ability to create acceptable outcomes and actions. According to Adeleke, Ogundele and Oyenuga, (2008), a firm is said to achieve an effective performance if it makes use of its resources to attain high level of performance. They also affirm that a business firm is effective if it attains its sales or market share goals which depend on efficiency. Moullin (2003) as cited in Wu (2009) defines firm performance in terms of how well an organization is managed and the value the organization delivers to customers and other stakeholders. In the view of Laitinen (2002), as cited in O'Regan and Ghobadian (2007:14) firm performance is "the ability of an object to produce results in a dimension determined a priori, in relation to a target".

Leadership Styles

The study of leadership has been the essential ingredient of management and organization behavior. According to Yukl's (1989), a good number leadership research advocates that leadership is an essential predictor of organizational effectiveness. This throws its weight to say that leaders can significantly affect individual, group, and organizational performance (Ilies, Nahrgang, and Morgeson, 2007). Even though the theoretical mechanisms linking leaders to performance are different in leadership theories, they are based on the assumption that effective leaders influence individuals and groups so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels required by the organization (Ilies et al., 2007; Podsakoff *et al*., 1990).

There is not a consensus about the definition of leadership, scholars most often define it in line their own view point and the aspect of the phenomenon of interest to them (Yukl, 1989). Leadership is seen generally as the ability to influence task objectives and strategies, influence commitment and compliance in task behavior to achieve these objectives, influence group maintenance and identification, and influence the culture of an organization (Yukl,1989) . There are different theories trying to conceptualize leadership in the literature. The path-goal theory is one of the major approaches to leadership in organizational behavior area (Schriesheim, Castro, Zhou and De Church, 2006).

Wammy and Swammy (2014) sees leadership as a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organization goals and therefore a leader is a person who delegates or influences others to act so as to carry out specified objectives. Memon (2014) defines leadership as process by which an individual influences the thoughts, attitudes and behaviors of others by taking responsibility for setting direction for the firm, others to see and visualize what lies ahead and figure out how to archive it.

Leslie et al (2013) asserts that leadership is the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's guidance or adhere to one's decisions. On the other hand whoa leader is; one who obtains followers and influence them in setting and achieving objectives. In Sundi (2013), "Leadership is the ability to convince and mobilize others to work together as a team under his leadership to achieve a certain goal" (p.50). Leadership is the influencing process of leaders and followers to achieve organizational objectives through change Lussier and Achua (2009).

According to Hill (2008) Leadership is the process of motivating, influencing and directing others in the organization to work productively in the pursuit of organization goals. Armstrong (2003),

leadership is simply the ability to persuade others willingly to behave differently for achieving the task set for them with the help of the group. Leadership, according to Levine and Crom (1994), "is about listening to people, supporting and encouraging them and involving them in the decision-making and problem-solving processing. It is about building teams and developing their ability to make skillful decisions".

Relationship between Digital HRM and Institutional Productivity

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations are increasingly turning to digital Human Resource Management (HRM) practices to enhance their productivity and competitiveness. This comprehensive literature review delves into the nexus between digital HRM and institutional productivity, offering insights into the transformative potential of technology-driven HR practices.

Digital HRM refers to the application of technology, including software, data analytics, and automation, to traditional HR functions and processes. It encompasses various aspects such as cloud-based HR software, artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and mobile HR applications (Davenport, 2018). The evolution of Digital HRM can be traced to the growing need for organizations to streamline HR operations and leverage data for strategic decision-making.

Benefits of Digital HRM

Numerous studies highlight the advantages of Digital HRM in enhancing institutional productivity. First and foremost, automation and efficiency gains are prominently featured. Cloud-based HR software and AI-driven tools reduce administrative burdens and allow HR professionals to focus on more strategic tasks (Marler & Boudreau, 2017). Additionally, digital HR systems offer employee self-service portals, improving the overall employee experience and reducing HR workload.

Measuring organizational productivity in the context of digital HRM involves examining various factors, such as efficiency gains, employee engagement, and decision-making capabilities. Research indicates that organizations embracing digital HRM practices experience improved efficiency and cost savings (Rasmussen & Ulrich, 2015). Enhanced employee engagement is another notable outcome, as digital HR tools facilitate better communication, feedback, and performance management (Strohmeier & Piazza, 2015). Moreover, the ability to analyze vast HR data sets through digital HRM enables organizations to make data-driven decisions. The integration of analytics in HR functions provides insights into workforce trends, allowing organizations to align their strategies with their human capital (Van Den Heuvel et al., 2018).

While digital HRM offers numerous benefits, it is not without challenges. Data privacy and security concerns are at the forefront, as the handling of sensitive HR data necessitates stringent safeguards. Resistance to technology adoption, particularly among older employees, can hinder successful implementation (Davenport, 2018). Organizations must also address the skills gap in HR, ensuring their HR professionals are equipped to leverage digital tools effectively.

The future of Digital HRM holds promising trends. Predictive HR analytics, which use machine learning algorithms to forecast workforce trends, are gaining traction. Employee Experience (EX) platforms are emerging to enhance employee engagement and satisfaction. Blockchain technology is being explored for secure HR data management, while the rise of remote work is shaping new digital HRM practices (Davenport, 2018).

Digital HRM is a transformative force that holds the potential to significantly impact institutional productivity. It offers efficiency gains, improved employee engagement, data-driven decision-making, and numerous other benefits. However, organizations must navigate challenges related to data security, technology adoption, and skill development to fully leverage digital HRM's potential.

Theoretical Foundation

Technology Acceptance Model

Davis (1989) developed the technology acceptance model (TAM) in studying the determinants of information technology (IT) usage for instance, use of IT in recruitment and selection. The goal of TAM was to provide an explanation of the determination of computer acceptance that is generally capable of explaining user behavior across a broad range of end user computing technology user population while at the same time being both persuasive and theoretically justified (Davis, 1989). TAM can be seen as an adaptation of the generic Fishbein and Ajzeris theory of reasoned action (TRA) and was developed to explain individual system used in the workplace to enhance service delivery such as in recruitment and selection of staff in organizations. TAM posts that perceived ease of use (PECU) and perceived usefulness (PU) are important factors that determine the user attitude toward his/her intention to use and actual usage of IS. According to technology acceptance model, usage behavior is a direct function of behavioral intention which in turn a function of attitude towards usage reflect feeling of favorableness or un-favorableness towards using the technology and PU which reflect the benefit that using the technology will enhance performance. Attitude is determined jointly by PU and PECU. Furthermore, a key purpose of TAM is to provide a basis for discovering the impact of external variables on internal beliefs, attitudes, intentions and usage.

TAM is to predict information system acceptance and diagnose design problems before users have any significant experience with a system (Davis, 1989). Davis has developed scales to measure perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward using, and behavioral intentions to use. These scales have been validated in previous research and were adapted for use in this study. These tools allow researchers and practitioners the ability to apply scales which have already been developed and empirically validated in previous research, thereby avoiding the potentially time-consuming and costly effort required to develop a new measurement instrument. Thus, the variables presented in TAM (as measured by the aforementioned scales) offer practitioners a practical, cost-effective method for evaluating new technology and predicting the degree to which end-users will actually use that technology before the system is actually implemented.

TAM has been found to be extremely robust and has been replicated using different tasks and tools (Adams, Nelson, & Todd, 1992; Mathieson, 1991). In a comparison of several models, Mathieson (1991) found that TAM predicted intention to use a spreadsheet package better than alternative models. The paths suggested by TAM each explained a high degree of variance. Similarly, in another comparison of theoretical models, Taylor and Todd (1995) found out in their study of information systems that TAM provided a good fit to data, explaining the variance in behavior, intention, and attitude. TAM's value lies in its parsimony, specifically; the model is strongly grounded in existing psychological theory, yet is easy and as a result, cost-effective to apply. Furthermore, it makes explicit links to the concept of usability by means of the ease-of use construct.

The reason technology acceptance model was chosen by this researcher is because technology acceptance model has been tested empirically and supported through validations, applications and replications (Schaup *et.al.* 2010, Lee 2010). Technology acceptance model is one of the most powerful, robust and parsimonious model for predicting user acceptance especially in information systems (IS) which is the key subject of this study.. According to Venkatesh & Davis (2000), the parsimony of TAM combined with its predictive power makes it easy to apply to different situations. These perceptions influence the way HRIS is used and hence mediate its effect on organization performance. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use including attitude towards using the technology were used to analyze the research questions of e –recruitment and e- training and to explain how e-recruitment and e – training packages enhance the ease of use and usefulness of the HRIS sub systems of e-recruitment, e-training, e-payroll and e-performance management by the employees to enhance public universities performance.

Moderating Role Leadership Styles
Leadership styles play a pivotal role in shaping organizational outcomes, and their effectiveness can be influenced by various contextual factors. This comprehensive empirical review examines the moderating role of leadership styles in different organizational settings, shedding light on how leadership behaviors interact with other variables to impact organizational performance and employee outcomes.

Research suggests that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction and performance, especially in organizations with a culture that values innovation and individual growth (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). Transactional leadership, characterized by a focus on rewards and punishments, may be more effective in contexts where employees have clear role expectations and tasks are well-structured (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The Situational Leadership Model proposed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) highlights the importance of adapting leadership styles to the maturity level of employees. Empirical studies have supported the idea that matching leadership styles to follower readiness can enhance performance and satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design
The cross-sectional survey design was adopted and used for this study because it enables the researcher to take a snapshot of respondents analyse and as well as generalization, it also was used because of its requirements to collect data from a wide range of subjects to elicit acceptable generalization.

Population of the Study
The population for this study consists of the four-government owned tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The institutions are as follows; Rivers State University, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Kenule Benson Polytechnic Bori and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Rumuola.

Sample of the Study
In this study the researcher adopts a census sampling technique to study all the 4 Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions because the population was small.

Method of Data Collection Techniques
The data for this study will be collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data involve collection of fresh data that are non-existing.

Method of Data Analysis
To examine the strength of the relationship between variables, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics was employed. Analysis and tests for hypothetical statements was based on the adoption of a 95% confidence interval at a 0.05 level of significance.

Multivariate Analysis of the Contextual Variable- Leadership Styles
The multivariate analysis in this section examines the assumed role of leadership styles as a moderator in the relationship between digital human resource management and Institutional productivity of Rivers State-Owned Tertiary Institutions. The Decision rule is that if the difference between the zero-order correlation and the controlled correlation < 0.01, then there is no significant difference, and the null hypothesis is accepted. But if not the alternate is upheld.

Partial Correlations for the Effect of leadership styles on the Study Variables

Control Variables			Digital Human Resource Management	Institutional Productivity	Leadership Styles
-none-[a]	Digital Human Resource Management	Correlation	1.000	.860	.731
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.005	.010
		df	0	33	33
	Institutional Productivity	Correlation	.860	1.000	.185
		Significance (2-tailed)	.005	.	.288
		df	33	0	33
	Leadership Styles	Correlation	.731	.185	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.010	.288	.
		df	33	33	0
Leadership Styles	Digital Human Resource Management	Correlation	1.000	.729	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.011	
		df	0	32	
	Institutional Productivity	Correlation	.729	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.011	.	
		df	32	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

RQ1: What is the moderating effect of leadership styles on the relationship between digital human resource management and institutional productivity of Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions?

With respect to research question 4, table 4.19 depicts the zero-order correlation between digital human resource management and Institutional productivity and shows the correlation coefficient when leadership styles is not moderating the variables; and this is positive and very strong at 0.860. The partial correlation controlling for leadership styles, however, is also strong with rho value of 0.729. The observed positive "relationship" between digital human resource management and institutional productivity is due to the underlying relationships between each of their variables and leadership styles. Therefore, leadership styles have a positive and strong effect on the relationship between digital human resource management and Institutional productivity of Rivers State-Owned Tertiary Institutions.

Ho_1: Leadership styles do not significantly moderate the relationship between digital human resource management and institutional productivity of Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

From a critical look at the zero partial correlation, we found that the relationship between digital human resource management and Institutional productivity are positively correlated with leadership styles, as the control variable. Removing the effect of this control variable reduced the correlation between the other two variables to be 0.729 and significant at $\alpha = 0.05$. Since the difference between the zero-order correlation and the controlled correlation (0.860 - 0.729) = 0.131 > 0.01; hence from the decision rule, there is a significant difference and thus the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate upheld. Therefore, it is concluded that leadership styles has significant moderating

effect on the relationship between digital human resource management and institutional productivity of Rivers State-Owned Tertiary Institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that digital human resource management positively influence institutional productivity of Rivers State-Owned Tertiary Institutions.
Specifically, also and in line with the objectives of this study, the study concludes that e-recruitment positively influences institutional productivity of Rivers State-Owned Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria. Also, e-training positively influences institutional productivity of Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions. Finally, e-performance management positively influences institutional productivity of Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Management of the institutions should implement a robust e-recruitment system that can revolutionize the hiring process, making it more efficient and transparent. By leveraging digital platforms, institutions can reach a wider pool of qualified candidates, reducing time and resources spent on traditional recruitment methods.
2. Management of the institutions should invest in a learning management system (LMS) that offers a diverse range of courses, enables personalized learning paths, and provides analytics to track progress. This approach not only enhances the knowledge base of the workforce but also fosters a culture of continuous learning, positively impacting institutional performance.
3. Management of the institutions should provide a robust e-performance management system that is essential for setting clear expectations, monitoring progress, and providing constructive feedback. This approach promotes accountability, recognizes achievements, and facilitates regular performance discussions, contributing to a more engaged and motivated workforce

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