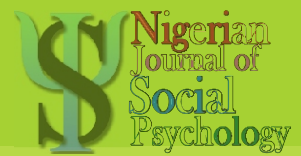


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Employee Responsiveness to Human Resources Management Practices at the Workplace

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Abstract

This study examined the responsiveness of employee attitudes to human resources management at the workplace. It specifically sought to determine the extent to which workers trust and workers commitment are influenced by human resources management practices. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised management and junior staff of three organisations in the hospitality industry in Enugu metropolis, numbering 250 (40 management staff and 210 junior staff). The entire population was used for the study. A structured questionnaire validated by three experts was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used for calculating the reliability of the instrument and an index of 0.82 was obtained, which proved the instrument reliable. Mean statistics was used to analyse responses to the research questions with a cut off average of 3.0 for determining the acceptance or rejection of an item. Hypotheses were tested using t-test at ± 1.96 ranges. It was revealed among others that both workers trust and commitment are significantly influenced by human resources management practices. It was further revealed that workers trust is influenced by the belief that organization's recruitment and selection processes, performance evaluation practices, employee welfare systems are fair and transparent; workers commitment is influenced by training and development programmes, recognition and rewards, and effective management communication channels. It was recommended, among others that organizations should clearly communicate their criteria for decision-making and providing employees with regular feedback as well as prioritize continuous training and development opportunities that align with employees' career goals – all of which can foster a sense of value and belonging among employees.

Keywords: *effective management, employment, communication, trainings, value system*

Introduction

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a critical role in the success of any organization, particularly in how it shapes employee attitudes and behaviours. HRM involves managing people effectively through processes like recruitment, performance appraisal, and employee development to ensure the achievement of organizational goals. Employee attitudes—how workers feel about their jobs, management, and the workplace—are essential to organizational performance (Anthonisamy, 2013). Among these attitudes, trust and commitment stand out as key indicators of employee engagement and organizational health.

Trust refers to the confidence employees have in management's competence and fairness, which helps foster a positive work environment, boost job satisfaction, and improve overall productivity (Shaukat, Namrah & Ghafoor, 2015). Commitment, on the other hand, reflects an employee's dedication and loyalty to their duties and the organization (Alzyoud, 2018). Both trust and commitment are vital for long-term organizational success, and HRM practices are essential in influencing these attitudes.

Scholars have long explored the relationship between HRM practices and employee attitudes, with evidence suggesting that well-structured HRM systems can improve employee engagement and enhance organizational performance (Terpstra & Rozell, 1993 ; Olajide, 2014; Sari, Mulyani, Sari & Harahap, 2019). However, as Wright and Nishii (2004) point out, there remains limited understanding of how human resource (HR) practices impact employee attitudes such as trust and commitment. Further research is needed to examine the complex variables that mediate the relationship between HR systems and performance, especially in contexts like Nigeria, where this relationship remains underexplored.

In many organizations, HRM practices such as recruitment, compensation, and performance management are vital for shaping employee trust and commitment. When these practices are viewed as fair, transparent, and supportive, they can generate high levels of trust in management and strengthen employees' commitment to their roles. On the contrary, poorly managed HR processes can erode trust, leading to disengagement and diminished performance.

Most research on HRM practices has been conducted within Western contexts, with relatively few studies focusing on African settings (Olofin & Folawewo, 2006; Fajana et al., 2011). In Nigeria, effective HRM is essential not only for improving employee performance but also for building the trust and commitment necessary for organizational success. Employees' perceptions of fairness, transparency, and reward distribution play a central role in shaping their trust in management and their commitment to the organization.

This article aims to examine how HRM practices influence employee attitudes, particularly focusing on trust and commitment in Nigerian workplaces. Specifically, it seeks to determine the extent to which HRM practices affect workers' trust in management and their commitment to their duties. The study will provide insights into how HRM can be optimized to enhance employee attitudes and, by extension, organizational performance in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices play in shaping employee attitudes and organizational performance, there is a significant gap in research on how

these practices influence workers' trust and commitment in Nigeria. While numerous studies have explored the impact of HRM on organizational outcomes in Western contexts, relatively few have examined this relationship in African countries, including Nigeria. Specifically, the extent to which HRM practices foster employee trust in management and commitment to duties remains underexplored. This lack of empirical data hinders organizations from understanding how to effectively implement HRM strategies that can positively influence these critical employee attitudes. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how HRM practices affect workers' trust and commitment in Nigerian workplaces, providing valuable insights for improved organizational performance.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. determine the extent to which workers trust is influenced by human resources management practices
2. ascertain the extent to which workers commitment is influenced by human resources management practices.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is workers trust influenced by human resources management practices?
2. To what extent is workers commitment influenced by human resources management practices?

Hypotheses

1. Workers trust is not significantly influenced by human resources management practices at the work place.
2. Workers commitment is not significantly influenced by human resources management practices.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

HRM Practices

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices refer to the strategic activities and policies implemented by an organization to effectively manage its workforce and enhance employee performance. These practices encompass various functions, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, and employee relations (Shaukat, Ashraf & Ghafoor, 2015). HRM practices are designed to align the organization's goals with the needs of employees, ensuring that the right people are hired, adequately trained, fairly evaluated, and motivated through appropriate compensation and career development opportunities. By fostering a positive work environment and addressing employee needs, effective HRM practices contribute to higher job satisfaction, employee engagement, and overall organizational performance (Alzyoud, 2018).

Workers Attitude

Workers' attitude refers to the feelings, beliefs, and behaviours that employees hold toward their jobs, colleagues, and the organization as a whole. It encompasses factors like job satisfaction, motivation, and loyalty, which significantly influence how employees perform their duties and engage with their work environment. Trust and commitment are closely related to workers' attitudes: trust refers to employees' confidence in the fairness and competence of management, while commitment reflects their dedication and loyalty to the organization and its goals. When workers trust management, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward their job, leading to stronger commitment and a greater willingness to contribute to organizational success. Conversely, a lack of trust can erode commitment, negatively impacting performance and morale (Shaukat, Ashraf & Ghafoor, 2015).

Trust

Trust, in the context of workers' attitudes, refers to the confidence employees have in their organization's management and systems, believing that decisions made are fair, transparent, and in their best interests. It reflects the psychological safety employees feel in their work environment, fostering openness, collaboration, and a willingness to take on responsibilities. Trust significantly influences job satisfaction, engagement, and retention; when workers trust their leaders and organizational processes, they are more likely to display positive attitudes, perform better, and remain committed to their roles. Conversely, a lack of trust can lead to disengagement, high turnover, and poor performance (Dirks & Ferrin, 2011). Thus, trust serves as a cornerstone of positive employee attitudes and organizational success.

Commitment

Commitment, from the perspective of workers' attitude, refers to the level of emotional and psychological attachment employees have toward their organization and its goals. It reflects the degree to which workers are dedicated to their roles and willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization. A high level of commitment is typically associated with positive work behaviors, such as increased productivity, lower turnover, and enhanced job satisfaction. According to Meyer and Allen (2012), commitment can be categorized into three forms: affective commitment, where employees remain because they want to; continuance commitment, where they stay due to the perceived costs of leaving; and normative commitment, which stems from a sense of obligation. These forms of commitment are influenced by factors such as organizational support, trust in management, and fairness in HRM practices, all of which shape workers' attitudes and loyalty to the organization.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) was primarily developed by sociologist George Homans in 1958, though it was further expanded by scholars like Peter Blau and Richard Emerson. The theory suggests that social interactions are based on the principles of reciprocity, where individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their relationships. A key weakness of SET is its assumption that all human interactions are purely rational and transactional, neglecting the role of emotions, intrinsic motivations, and altruism in social behavior. Additionally, the theory often overlooks power dynamics that can affect exchanges, particularly

in hierarchical relationships like those found in workplaces, where employees may not feel equally empowered to negotiate or receive reciprocal benefits.

In the context of the current study, SET is highly relevant as it explains how HRM practices can influence employee attitudes, particularly trust and commitment. When organizations provide fair, transparent, and supportive HR practices, employees perceive these actions as positive exchanges and respond with trust in management and stronger commitment to their roles. Conversely, if HRM practices are perceived as unjust or exploitative, workers may reciprocate with negative attitudes such as disengagement or reduced loyalty. Therefore, SET helps to illustrate the reciprocal relationship between how employees interpret HR practices and their resulting attitudes and behaviours in Nigeria workplaces.

Empirical Review

Nmadu, Abu, Dennis and Isah (2021) did a study on the effects of training on employee performance in an organization. This study use Victor Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation to explain the relationship between training and employee performance in organizations. The study relies basically on secondary sources of data consisting of textbooks, periodicals, journal publications, and other documentary sources such as internet and published empirical research reports. Findings from the study revealed that increase in training and development correspondingly increases 72.6% in employee's performance. This implies that, when managers/administrators embark on effective training and development, the dwindling performance of employees and poor organizational performance could be remedied.

Okafor (2016) did a study on the analysis of human resources management in Nigerian Public Sectors. This study investigates the major problem facing the Nigerian public sectors. A descriptive research method was used in this research. A questionnaire was distributed to over 250 employees of some prominent Nigerian public organisations such as; Nigerian public schools, the Nigerian police force, and the local Government Area as a case study. All the respondents are people working under the government with a bachelor's degree up to PhD level. It was statistically seen that the chances of graduates getting employed in the Nigerian public sectors are purely based on whom they know. The research findings also revealed that employees' safety is a major issue as nearly 44% concur with the affirmation that workplace in Nigerian public organisations are very unsafe. Also, training offered by the Nigerian public organisations to its staff is very low. Above all, a correlation analysis conducted also made it clear that relationship exist between HRM functions and the productivity but there is less human resources management practice in the Nigerian public sectors because the nation ignore to espouse a common standard of HRM in most of its sectors.

Alzyoud (2018) did a study to investigate the influence of Human Resources Management (HRM) practices (employee communications, employee development and rewards and recognitions) on employee engagement. Employee communication, employee development, rewards, and recognitions were selected as independent variables. Sample for the study consists of 151 staff from manufacturing firms. Data were collected with the help of questionnaire and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Throughout the statistical analysis, it is found that there is a significant relationship between the two independent variables with the dependent variable. In conclusion, it is observed that HRM practices have an influence on the employee work engagement.

Gap in Literature

A review of the above empirical studies reveals a significant gap in the literature regarding the influence of HRM practices on employee trust and commitment, despite their established impact on other performance-related variables. Nmadu et al. (2021) focused on training and its effect on employee performance, highlighting how proper development can enhance productivity, but did not explore how these practices influence trust or commitment. Okafor (2016) examined HRM in Nigerian public sectors, identifying problems like unsafe working conditions and inadequate training, yet also fell short of addressing how these conditions impact employee trust and loyalty. Similarly, Alzyoud (2018) explored HRM practices like communication and development, but the study was limited to employee engagement, leaving the relationship between HRM practices and trust/commitment unexamined. Consequently, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how HRM practices specifically foster employee trust and commitment, which this study aims to address.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design. A descriptive survey design is a research method used to collect data from a sample of individuals to describe and analyse their opinions, behaviours, or characteristics without manipulating any variables (Jalil, 2016). The population of the study comprised management and junior staff of three organisations in the hospitality business (Golden Royale Hotels and Resort; Modotel; and Nondon Hotels) in Enugu metropolis, numbering 250 (40 management staff and 210 junior staff). The entire population was used for the study. A structured questionnaire validated by three experts was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used for calculating the reliability of the instrument and an index of 0.82 was obtained, which proved the instrument reliable. Mean statistics was used to analyse responses to the research questions with a cut off average of 3.0 for determining the acceptance or rejection of an item. Hypotheses were tested using t-test at ± 1.96 range.

Results and Discussion

4.1 Responsiveness of workers trust to human resources management practices

Table 4.1: Mean Rating of Responses to the extent workers trust is influenced by HRM practices

| S/N | Items | Management Staff n = 40 | | | Junior Staff n = 210 | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------|------|----------|-------------------------|------|----------|
| | | \bar{X} | SD | Decision | \bar{X} | SD | Decision |
| 1 | The belief that organization's recruitment and selection processes are fair and transparent builds worker trust | 3.98 | 0.60 | Accepted | 3.81 | 0.90 | Accepted |
| 2 | Confidence that management makes decisions with employee welfare in mind | 4.00 | 0.82 | Accepted | 3.97 | 0.76 | Accepted |
| 3 | Organization's communication practices that provide accurate and timely information | 3.96 | 0.85 | Accepted | 3.76 | 0.76 | Accepted |
| 4 | Performance evaluation practices that is perceived to be fair | 3.22 | 0.59 | Accepted | 3.77 | 0.33 | Accepted |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 5 | Training and development opportunities that support career growth | 3.02 | 0.88 | Accepted | 3.01 | 0.65 | Accepted |
| Average | | 3.99 | 0.73 | Accepted | 3.90 | 0.69 | Accepted |

The data in table 4.1 showed that all the items have mean scores above 3.0, which means that they were all accepted. In other words, it is accepted that workers trust is influenced by the belief that organization's recruitment and selection processes are fair and transparent; confidence that management makes decisions with employee welfare in mind; organization's communication practices that provide accurate and timely information; performance evaluation practices that is perceived to be fair; training and development opportunities that support career growth.

4.2 Responsiveness of Workers Commitment to Human Resource Management Practices

Table 4.2: Mean rating of responses to the extent workers commitment is influenced by HRM practices

| S/N | Items | Management Staff n = 40 | | | Junior Staff n = 210 | | |
|----------------|--|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | | \bar{X} | SD | Decision | \bar{X} | SD | Decision |
| 6 | Training and development programs offered by organization enhance workers commitment | 4.08 | 0.72 | Accepted | 3.07 | 0.96 | Accepted |
| 7 | Fair and transparent performance appraisals increase workers' sense of loyalty and dedication to job | 4.10 | 0.91 | Accepted | 3.22 | 0.85 | Accepted |
| 8 | Recognition and rewards contribute to workers commitment to stay with an organization | 3.88 | 0.95 | Accepted | 4.01 | 0.95 | Accepted |
| 9 | effective employees/management communication channels impact workers' willingness to go above and beyond in their role | 3.92 | 1.02 | Accepted | 4.17 | 0.88 | Accepted |
| 10 | Management's focus on employee welfare and work-life balance affect workers' long-term commitment to the company | 3.37 | 0.97 | Accepted | 3.33 | 0.81 | Accepted |
| Average | | 3.87 | 0.91 | Accepted | 3.56 | 0.89 | Accepted |

The data in table 4.2 showed that all the items have mean scores above 3.0, which means that they were all accepted. In other words, it is accepted that workers commitment is influenced by the training and development programs offered by organization; fair and transparent performance

appraisals; recognition and rewards; effective employees/management communication channels; and management's focus on employee welfare.

4.3 Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Workers trust is not significantly influenced by human resources management practices at the work place.

Table 3: T-test for hypothesis one

| Staff | N | \bar{X} | SD | df | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|------------|-----|-------------|-------------|-----|--------|------------|-------------|
| Management | 40 | 3.99 | 0.73 | 248 | 2.0067 | ± 1.96 | Significant |
| Junior | 210 | 3.90 | 0.69 | | | | |

The analysis in Table 3 shows that the calculated value (t-cal) is 2.0067, which is not greater than 1.96 nor less than -1.96. The hypothesis is therefore rejected meaning that workers trust is significantly influenced by human resources management practices.

H₀₂: Workers commitment is not significantly influenced by human resources management practices.

Table 4: t-test for hypothesis two

| Staff | N | \bar{X} | SD | df | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|------------|-----|-----------|------|-----|-------|------------|-------------|
| Management | 40 | 3.87 | 0.91 | 248 | 2.001 | ± 1.96 | Significant |
| Junior | 210 | 3.56 | 0.89 | | | | |

The analysis in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is 1.391. This value is not greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted meaning that workers commitment is significantly influenced by human resources management practices

Discussion of Results

It was shown that workers trust is significantly influenced by human resources management practices $t(\text{cal}) = 2.0067$. It was specifically revealed that workers trust is influenced by the belief that organization's recruitment and selection processes are fair and transparent; confidence that management makes decisions with employee welfare in mind; organization's communication practices that provide accurate and timely information; performance evaluation practices that is perceived to be fair; training and development opportunities that support career growth. This finding is in line with those of Nmadu, Abu, Dennis and Isah (2021) and Okafor (2016) who identified training and development, and employee safety measures put in place by management as factors that boost employees trust on management.

The study also revealed that workers commitment is significantly influenced by human resources management practices, $t(cal)= 2.001$. Similarly, Alzyoud (2018) found that significant relationship exist between HRM practices and employee engagement. Other findings are that workers commitment is influenced by the training and development programs offered by organization; fair and transparent performance appraisals; recognition and rewards; effective employees/management communication channels; and management's focus on employee welfare, which are corroborated by the study of Nmadu, Abu, Dennis and Isah (2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reveals that employee responsiveness to human resources management (HRM) practices is significantly shaped by the levels of trust and commitment within the workplace. Trust is enhanced when HRM practices are perceived as fair, transparent, and employee-centric, particularly in areas such as recruitment, decision-making, communication, and performance evaluations. Similarly, employee commitment is strengthened by effective HRM practices, including opportunities for training and development, recognition and rewards, transparent performance appraisals, and open communication channels between management and staff. The findings underscore the critical role of HRM in fostering a positive organizational climate, where trust and commitment drive employee engagement and overall performance. Therefore, organizations should prioritize fair, transparent, and supportive HRM practices to optimize employee responsiveness and satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Organizations should ensure that recruitment, selection, and performance evaluation processes are fair and transparent. This can be achieved by clearly communicating the criteria for decision-making and providing employees with regular feedback. Transparent HRM practices will strengthen employee trust and promote a culture of openness and fairness.
2. To improve employee commitment, organizations should prioritize continuous training and development opportunities that align with employees' career goals. Additionally, recognition and reward systems should be designed to acknowledge both individual and team contributions, thereby fostering a sense of value and belonging among employees.

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Indexing

