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STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND ITS ROLE IN SUSTAINING TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between human resource planning and organisational sustainability. Crosssectional research survey was employed as a research design. Target populated comprises of selected telecommunication firms operating in Port Harcourt. Accessible population consists of five telecom firms in Port Harcourt using a simple random sampling technique. 125 supervisors, human resource managers and general managers were surveyed. Sample size is 95 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). 95 copies of questionnaire were distributed. 82 copies of the questionnaire were completely filled and returned for data analysis. Required number of people, skill of individual, age, and culture were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 5-Great extent, 4-Moderate extent, 3-low extent, 2very low extent, 1Not all. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used for data analysis with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 22.0). The study found that human resource planning has a significant relationship with organisational sustainability. The study concludes that human resource planning measured in terms of competence, age and culture enhances organisational sustainability. One of the recommendations is that human resource professionals should consider the competence of each applicant very seriously for organization to be sustainable.

Keywords: Human resource, human resource planning, human resource planning dimension , age, competence, culture, sustainability, organisational sustainability.

Introduction

Human resource planning is the bedrock of every organisational foundation. Organisational objectives can only be ascertained if the people who make up the enterprise are strategically positioned in their respective departments. If this is done, then there will be quality service delivery, production of good products (for manufacturing industries), and disbursement of profit to shareholders, creation of more business branches and more employment opportunities for new entrants. Human resource planning therefore represents the requirements of people needed in the organization to carry out or drive its vision to its desired state. Noe, et al. (2004) contended that human resource planning compares the present state of the organization with its goals for the future. This implies that firms ought to know their strength and weaknesses to be able to survive in the global dynamic business environment.

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Nevertheless, both service and production oriented firms requires people that will assist them in the transportation of finished goods, service delivery to its customers as well as managers who are experienced in that market. Be it as it may, the aim of the private enterprise is to make profit, deliver quality service to its customers and remain in business; while that of public enterprise is anchored on effectiveness. It therefore falls within the ambient of human resource planning for such enterprise to achieve the above mentioned goals and sustained its legacy quite apart from societal reputation (Edeh and Eketu, 2015).

In the light of the above, firms can be sustainable over time when its employees or talents were rightly sourced and placed at the right positions in the organization. Organisational sustainability remains the paramount objectives of most ventures today. Most telecommunication firms especially in Nigeria has been dominated with one group of people thereby making it so difficult for human resource planning process to be applied. This menace is because of tribalism and nepotism that has characterized employment for only those who are very close to top level management of these telecoms. Human resource personnel rely heavily on chiefs, community heads, commissioners, governors, and the likes for lists of people to be hired in these telecom giants due to where their mast were located. As a result of these institutional politics, some of these telecoms lack adequate manpower to compete with their peers within and outside Nigeria.

In line with the foregoing, organisational sustainability is a paste in the tooth brush as several people has benefited from the existence of firms as employees, pensioners, shareholders and partners. Sustaining businesses has helped many firms to adopt international strategy by opening more branches around the globe. Organisational sustainability creates enable environment for the upcoming entrepreneurs to learn from the existence firms on how they started and subdue challenges in the business world. Sustainability of firms has also encouraged aspiring entrepreneurs to believe in themselves that if these existing organizations can remain in business for a long time, they can also establish one that will last longer.

In line with the above significance of organisational sustainability, several authors have carried out research on the concept and hence this study presents few of them with their corresponding findings. Nnabuife and Onwuzuligbo (2015) examined turnaround and sustainability of business firms in Nigeria. The result of analysis shows that firms turnaround programs are positively related to the sustainability of the firms.

From the trend of study presented above, it appears that the authors did not examined human resource planning as a predictor of organisational sustainability hence; a vacuum has been created. This study therefore examines human resource planning as a panacea to organisational sustainability of selected telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The authors came up with three dimensions of human resource planning to include competency, skill, age and culture.

Aim/Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between human resource planning and organisational sustainability of telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

1.   Examine the relationship between competence and organisational sustainability
2.   Examine the relationship between age and organisational sustainability
3.   Examine the relationship between culture and organisational sustainability

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Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to enable the researchers achieve the above stated objectives.

HO1: There is no significant relationship competence and organisational sustainability

HO2: There is no significant relationship between age and organisational sustainability

HO3: There is no significant relationship between culture and organisational sustainability

Review of Related Literature

The concept of Human Resource Planning

Human resource planning have been a major issues amongst scholars and practitioners in the field of human resource management quite apart from managers in other fields of studies. This study will visit the submissions made by other scholars with regards to human resource planning as thus. Jones and George (2006) perceived human resource planning to include all activities managers engage in to forecast their current and future human resource needs. Digressing from Jones and George view, French (1986) argued that human resource planning is the process of anticipating and preparing for the movement of individual workers into, within and out of the organization. In the same vein, Amah (2006) contended that human resource planning refers to assessing the human resource needs of the organization with reference to its goals and making plans to ensure that it has the competent and stable workforce it requires. Another researcher perceived it as a rational approach to the effective recruitment, retention, and deployment of people within an organization, including, when necessary, arrangements for dismissing staff (Cole, 2004). Nwachukwu on his part argued that human resource planning is the process by which management attempts to provide for its human resources to accomplish its task (Nwachukwu, 1998).

In line with the above, www.managementstudyguide.com viewed human resource planning as the process of forecasting the future human resource requirements of the organization and determining as to how the existing human resource capacity of the organization can be utilized to fulfill these requirements. For investopedia.com, human resource planning is the ongoing, continuous process of systematic planning to achieve optimum use of an organization's most valuable asset - its human resources (www.investopedia.com).Finally, Wikipedia.org sees human resources planning as a process that identifies current and future human resources needs for an organization to achieve its goals (www.wikipedia.org).Bouldrean and Malkovich (1991) on their part perceived human resource planning as a process of gathering and using information to support decisions about investing resources in Human resources activities. Finally, Bulla and Scott (1994) submitted that human resource planning is „the process for ensuring that the human resource requirements of an organization are identified and plans are made for satisfying those requirements. Lastly, Vetter (1967) viewed human resources planning as the process by which the management determines how the organization should move from its manpower position to its desired position.

However, some few empirical studies on human resource planning were also captured in this study. Talukder and Khan (2013) examined various determinants of human resource planning affecting competitive advantage in a manufacturing firm. Results of their study showed that goal orientation, labor market condition, performance management and training were significantly related to competitive advantage. Secondly, Maina and Kwasira (2015) examined the role of human resource planning practices on employee performance in county governments in Kenya. Their findings revealed that employee attraction and retention positively and moderately affect employee performance.

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Human Resource Planning Process

Several authors have outlined the processes involved in human resource planning based on the situation and industry. Figure 1.1 below is a pictorial representation of human resource

planning process by Cole (2004).

Figure 1.1: Human Resource Planning Process
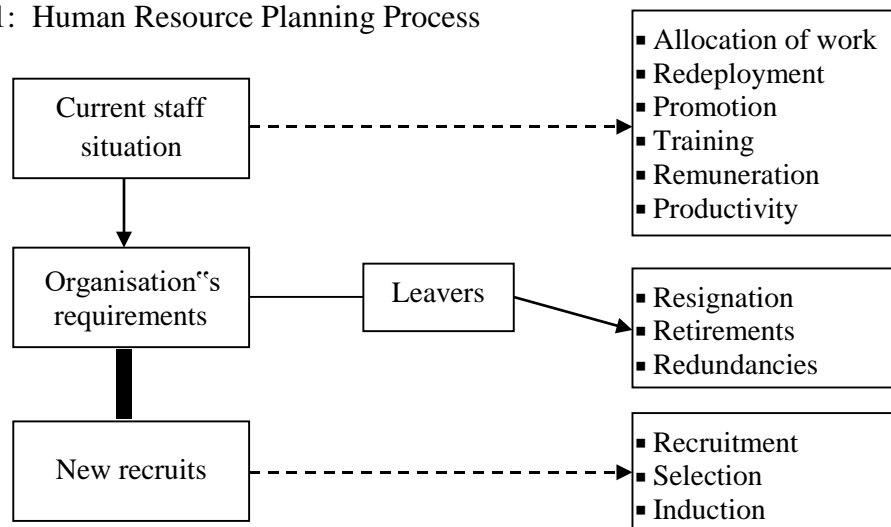
Source: Cole (2004). Management Theory and Practice

Figure 1.1 above is concerned with four major activities as outlined by Cole (2004) which includes; (1) analyzing the existing human resource situation; (2) forecasting future demands for people; (3) assessing the external labour market and forecasting the supply situation; and (4) establishing and implementing human resource plans.

As submitted earlier, human resource planning process varies from industry to industry based on the processes, operations, geographical location terrain. Using different binoculars, Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2004) presented a pictorial view of human resource process in figure 1.2 below.

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Figure 1.2: Human Resource Planning Process
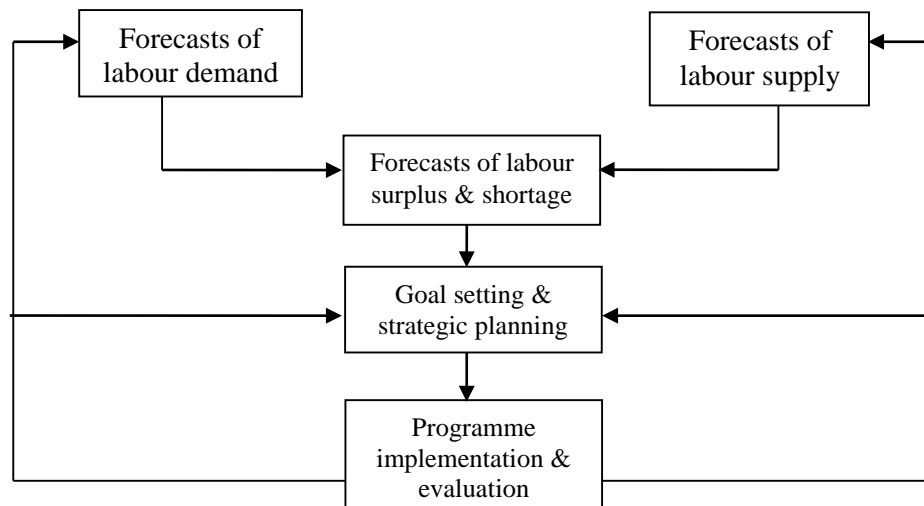
Source: Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2004).

Human resource experts use forecasting to predict supply and demand of human resource needed in different section of the organization. In figure 1.2 above, human resource expert forecasts within the organization to know if there is need for those with special skills or experience to fill a particular position or if they exist; how many are they? Will they retire soon? Second stage is to forecast for labour supply which represent how many people are occupying how many jobs. When are they going to be retiring, promoted, transferred, terminated or what it there is voluntary turnover? Having forecasted for demand and supply, human resource expert will then determine labour surplus and shortage. At this stage, available personnel that will occupy certain positions as a result of vacancy will be made known to organisational members.

Dimensions of Human Resource Planning

This study developed the following four indicators that must be considered by human resource practitioner before embarking on planning for current and future human resource requirements in both private and public enterprise include the following.

Competence: This refers to ability of an individual to carry out his/her job properly. Some persons may be qualified to carry out a particular job but may not be competent to handle the task in the job. Some can be skilful but lack the competence. Therefore competence encompasses academic qualification, technical skills, conceptual skills, social and emotional intelligence skills.

Age: This refers to number of years one has existed on planet earth which is used to ascertain his/her capacity or capability of handling certain job position in the organisation. Some jobs requires able-bodied to carry out some functions while others does not. Taken for instance, human resource professionals in the Nigeria military prefer applicants from 27 to 30 years of age. This may vary in other countries. Service attendants in some eateries are between the ages of 22 to 27 in some countries.

Culture: This refers to a belief or assumptions of people from different ethnic background. When planning for human resource, the culture of people that will be needed must be considered otherwise, organisational activities will not go down well as expected. For instance, some people will not like to work in a brewery company because

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of what they believe. Culture as a dimension of human resource is a serious issue that should be considered in any industry to avoid excessive turnover.

The concept of organisational sustainability

Organisational sustainability appears to be the life-wire of every firm in the world. This is because; no business wants to go on extinction rather always wanted to remain in the apex of leadership. In the course of labeling and translating the meaning of this concept, Munck& Souza (2009) posit that sustainability is a state in which an organization or a society exhibits a relation to economical environmental and social aspects. Colbert and Kurucz (2007) as cited in Wales (2013) viewed sustainability as being to "keep the business going". In this study, sustainability refers to the ability to maintain something very tangible and useful.

In the bid to understanding the concept of organisational sustainability, Coblentz (2002) viewed it "as an ongoing process rather than a state of perfection". Coblentz also went further shed more light by contending that "a sustainable organization needs to be strong institutionally, financially and morally". Other scholars have submitted that organisational sustainability is a collection of methodologies, business models and best practices to enable organisations establishing long-term business operations and funding (Chang, Mills and Newhouse, 2007). Meanwhile, Pojasek (2007) viewed it as a means for achieving an organization"s vision and mission. Pojasek (2007) went further to accentuate that organisational sustainability accomplishes the following nine tasks in the workplace:

1.   Provide context within which the organization addresses its activities, products, and services.

2.   Identify critical objectives and targets (stemming from the organization's vision and mission) that must be achieved.

3.   Remove impediments or interruptions that could deter the achievement of organizational objectives and targets.

4.   Allow the organization to understand the probable outcome of controls and other mitigation strategies for dealing with impediments or interruptions.

5.   Allow the organization to understand how it can continue to achieve its critical objectives and targets should interruptions occur.

6.   Create criteria and/or triggers for implementing crisis and emergency response, continuity response, and recovery response procedures.

7.   Ensure that staff and management understand their roles and responsibilities both during normal operations and when a major disruption may occur.

8.   Ensure that there is a clear understanding throughout the organization of what accountabilities and responsibilities are in place when there is an emergency or a major stakeholder issue, and ensure that this understanding remains current.

9.   Build consensus and commitment to the requirements, implementation, and deployment of business sustainability and continuity, which are integrated as part of the routine way the organization conducts its business.

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Figure 1.3. Conceptual framework of human resource planning and organisational sustainability
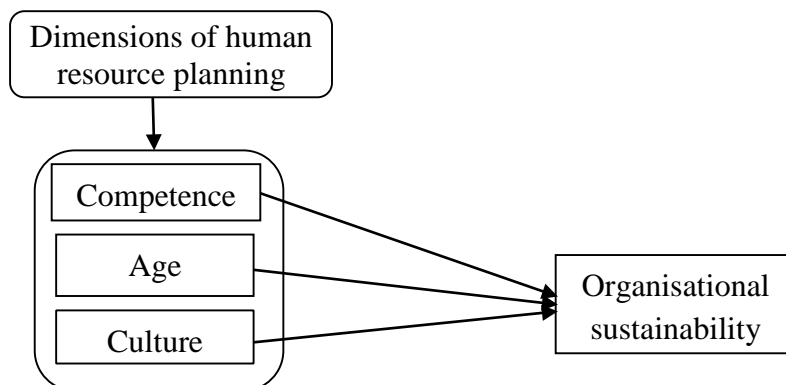
Source: Authors conceptualization

Research Methodology

Cross-sectional research survey was employed as a research design. Target populated comprises of selected telecommunication firms operating in Rivers State, Nigeria. Accessible population consists of five telecom firms in Port Harcourt using a simple random sampling technique.125 supervisors, human resource managers and general managers were surveyed. Sample size is 95 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). 95 copies of questionnaire were distributed. 82 copies of the questionnaire were completely filled and returned for data analysis. Required number of people, skill of individual, age, and culture were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 5-Great extent, 4-Moderate extent, 3-low extent, 2-very low extent, 1-Not all. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used for data analysis with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 22.0).

Data Analysis

Both univariate and bivariate analysis were employed in this study. The univariate analysis comprises the descriptive statistics for the respondents demographic which include gender, age brackets and their academic qualifications.

Table 1.1 Gender of Respondents

Gender		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	M	66	80
	F	16	20
	Total	82	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

The above table shows the gender of 82 respondents from five telecoms firms in Port Harcourt. 66 out of 82 were males which represent 80% of the population while 16 out of 82 respondents were females which represent 20% of the total population. This implies that; 80% of respondents were mostly males.

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Table 1.2 Age bracket

Age		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	20-35	20	24
	35-50	50	61
	55-above	12	15
	Total	82	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

The above table shows the age bracket of 82 respondents in the five telecom firms in Port Harcourt. 20out of 82 respondents representing 24% were between the ages of 20-35 years. 50 out of 82 respondents representing 61% were between the ages of 35-50 years. 12 out of 82 respondents representing 15% of the total population fall between the ages of 55 years and above. This shows that 50 respondents out of 82 total populations were between the ages of 35-50 years.

Table 1.3 Academic Qualifications

Qualification		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	NECO/WAEC	10	12
B.Sc/B.Eng		62	76
Masters		8	10
	Others	2	2
	Total	82	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

The above table shows the academic qualifications of 82 respondents in the five telecomfirms in Port Harcourt. 10 respondents representing 12% holds NECO/WAEC certificates. 62 respondents representing 76% holds B.Sc/B.Eng degrees. 8 respondents representing 10% holds M.Sc/M.Eng degrees. 2 respondents representing 2% holds other educational certificates which did not fall within the respondent‟s choice. This shows that 62 out of 82 respondents in the telecom firms hold B.Sc/B.Eng degrees.

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis for this study was done using spearman‟s rank order correlation coefficient (rho) with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 22.0). To accept or reject null hypotheses depends on the p-values. If p-values are less than 0.05; reject the null hypotheses; if p-values were greater than 0.05 accept alternate hypotheses.

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HO1: There is no significant relationship between competence and organisational sustainability

Correlations		Competence	Organisational sustainability
Competence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.710**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
N		82	82
Spearman‟s rho		.	
Organisational Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.710**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	82	82

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The above correlation between competence and organisational sustainability indicates a positive significant relationship. Since the p-values are less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted. It therefore means that; competence has a positive significant relationship with organisational sustainability of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between age and organisational sustainability

Correlations		Age	Organisational sustainability
Age	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
N		82	82
Spearman‟s rho		.	
Organisational Sustainability	Correlation Coefficient	.783**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	82	82

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The above correlation between age and organisational sustainability shows a positive relationship. P-values are less than the level of significance (0.05). This means that null hypothesis will be rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted. The study therefore states that; age has a significant relationship with organisational sustainability of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

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HO3: There is no significant relationship between culture and organisational sustainability

Correlations		Culture	Organisational sustainability
Culture	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.822**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
N		82	82
Spearman"s	rho	.	
Organisational	Correlation Coefficient	.822**	1.000
Sustainability	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	82	82

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The correlation between culture and organisational sustainability above shows a positive significant relationship. Since the p-values are less than the level of significance, the null hypothesis will be rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between culture and organisational sustainability of telecom firms in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of findings

Based on the results above, the following findings were drawn and supported with empirical evidence. Result of hypothesis one show that competence has a positive significant relationship with organisational sustainability. This is in line with Talukder and Khan (2013) findings. Results of their study showed that goal orientation, labor market condition, performance management and training were significantly related to competitive advantage. Secondly, hypothesis two results revealed that age has a positive significant relationship with organisational sustainability. This corresponds with Nnabuife and Onwuzuligbo (2015) results. The finding of their study shows that firms turnaround programs are positively related to the sustainability of the firms. Lastly, hypothesis three results indicate that culture has a positive significant relationship with organisational sustainability. This is in line with Maina and Kwasira (2015) results. Their findings revealed that employee attraction and retention positively and moderately affect employee performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that human resource planning measured in terms of competence, age and culture enhances organisational sustainability.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion above, the following recommendations were made.

1.   Human resource professionals should consider the competence of each applicant very seriously for organization to be sustainable.

2.   Age of applicants should not be compromise especially in sensitive industry like telecommunications

3.   The culture of applicants should be examined to avoid voluntary and involuntary turnover which will affect production

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