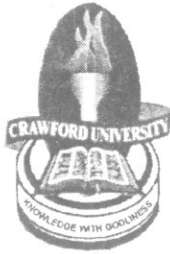


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## OF BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

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## Effects of Strategic Human Resources Management on Commercial Banks Performance in Lagos State, Nigeria

By

Ashamu, S. O. & A. A. Oyende

### Abstract:

*The aim of this study is to examine, the effect of strategic human resources management on the performance of banking industry in Nigeria. The purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which banking industry in Nigeria adopt human resources management as means of enhancing their performance. The data for the study were collected through questionnaire. The data were generated from the randomly administered questionnaire to 69 respondents drawn from management staff and supervisors of two purposely selected banks in Lagos State Nigeria and were analyzed using Spearman rank order correlation coefficient and Z-test to evaluate the formulated hypothesis.*

*The findings of the study show that there is statistical significant relationship between strategic human resources management, banks performance and behaviour of employees' measured in terms of their skills. The study concludes that strategic human resources practices and application improves bank productivity, employee skills, attitude, and behaviours. Thus, effectively implemented human resources management results to increase in the performance of banks. the study recommended that all relevant officers and management team of banks should be involved in strategic human resources management, i.e. all concerned should be made to participate and contribute to strategic human resources management policies and strategies.*

**Keywords:** Human Resources: Human Resources Management; Strategic Human Resources Management;

### Introduction

Availability of resources is a vital need for the survival of any human venture. These include human, material and financial resources, which are very useful

in the production chain. Out of all these resources, the human component appears to be the most vital. This is because human beings articulate and activate other resources, In the economy of nations, human beings constitute a very essential aspect of growth and development. Generally speaking, the importance of human resources in organization of which banking industry are no exceptions cannot be over emphasized because human beings are responsible for the overall management and image of the organization.

All organizations, whether public or private, are made up of people or human resources who work together in group to attain the organizational objective. These objectives such as profit maximization, share of market and social responsibilities cannot be achieved without proper management and application of the human resources through guided adequate policies and practices. Human resources management policies provide guidelines on what should be done within the organization and define rules of behaviour. Policies are therefore, very important in establishing the ground rules on how members of the organization conduct themselves. Policies also help ensure consistency and fairness of treatment for all. They form a framework within which all members of the organization operate.

The performance of an organization is a function of its human resources ability, will and situation factors. Strategic human resources means accepting the human resources (HR) function as a strategic partner in the formulation of the company's strategies as well as in the implementation of those strategies through human resources (HR) activities, such as recruiting, selecting, training and rewarding personnel. Whereas strategic human resources (HR) recognizes HR's partnership role in the strategizing process, the term HR strategies refers to specific HR courses of action the company plans to pursue to achieve its aims (Siddharth, 2002).

By design, the perspective demands that human resources (HR) managers become strategic partners in business operations playing prospective roles rather than are being passive administrators reacting to the requirements of other business functions. Human resources (HR) professionals become strategic partners when they participate in the process of defining business strategy, when they ask questions that move strategy to action and when they design human resources (HR) practices that align with the business strategy. By fulfilling this role, human resources (HR) professionals increase the capacity of a business to execute its strategies.

According to Thompson et al (1996), crafting and implementing strategy are core management functions. Strategy is grounded in the array of competitive moves and business approaches management depends on to produce successful performance. Strategy in effect, is management game plan for strengthening the organization's position, pleasing customers and achieving performance targets. Managers devise strategies to guide how the company's business will be conducted and to help them make seasoned, cohesive choices among alternative courses of action. It is pertinent to note that the ultimate end of strategy is to make a firm survive in the face of competition and change. Strategic human resources (HR) managers need a change in their mindset from seeing themselves as relationship managers to resource managers knowing how to utilize the full potential of their human resources. This is why this study becomes imminent as to investigate the extent Nigerian banks have been effective and efficient in adoption of both strategies and policies in their human resources management for the achievement of the expected organizational performance and other corporate objectives.

The human resources of every organization must be well managed or guided through adequate strategies and policies. By human resources, we simply mean the personnel, people or manpower of the organization (Adeyeye, 2009). While strategic human Resources management is concerned with the contributions human resource strategies make to organizational effectiveness, and the ways in which these contributions are achieved (Okpara and Wynn, 2009). To Siddharth (2002) strategic human resources management is the linking of human resources with strategic goals and objectives in order to improve business performance and develop organizational culture that foster innovation and flexibility. Therefore, the aim of strategic human resources management is to ensure that the culture, style and structure of the organization and the quality, commitment and motivation of its employees, contribute fully to the achievements of business objectives.

While human resources management refers to the maximization of corporate profits through the better management and utilization of people. The question is then, how effectively,

efficiently and adequately do commercial banks in Nigeria applied strategic human resources management? Strategic human resources management enables organization to evolve strategies to guide how the company's business will be conducted and to help them make seasoned, cohesive choices among alternative courses of action.

All organization should then formulate strategies and ensure that Human Resources policies created to implement it. As stated by Siddharth (2002), human resources management policies provide guidelines on what should be done within the organization and define rules of behaviour. Policies are therefore, very Important in establishing the ground rules on how members of the organization conduct themselves, Policies also help ensure consistency and fairness of treatment for all- They form a framework within which all members of the organization operate. Hence, the objectives of this paper are:

- i. To appraise how strategic human resources management activities contribute to the achievement of business objectives as well as assessing the extent at which it is being recognized in the banking industry.
- ii. To determine the extent at which the applied strategic human resources management has yielded or is yielding result in respect of its purpose of application.
- iii. To ascertain whether the application of strategic human resources management has in any way made impact on employee skills, attitude and behaviour.

### Hypotheses:

#### Hypothesis 1

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between strategic human resources management and banks performance.

$H_1$ : There is significant relationship between strategic human resources management and banks performance.

#### Hypothesis 2

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between strategic human resources management and employees' behaviours.

$H_1$ : There is significant relationship between strategic

*human resources management and employees' behaviours.*

## **Conceptual/ Theoretical Framework And Literature Review**

### **Conceptual Framework**

The concept of human resource management (HRM) is of recent phenomenon. It is believed by many to have evolved from the traditionally personnel management. While many scholars still use the two words interchangeably, others believed they are not the same, Dessler (1991) for instance says HRM is a modern expanded version of traditional personnel management due to technological the same thing. Torrington and Hall (1998) however, say personnel management is different to HRM. While personnel management is workforce centered, HRM is resource centered. Guest (1987) sees HRM as a particular form of personnel management which stressed the strategic issues of employee commitment, flexibility, quality and integration. As a result of this non universality of opinions on what means, it does attract various definition from various scholars Cole (2002) defined HRM as decision about the deployment and treatment of personnel taken by line unit as well as personnel specialists.

While Beer et al (1984) defined HRM as involving all management decisions that affect the relationship between the organization and employee the human resource. Storey (1995) defined HRM as a distinctive approach to employment management which seek to obtain competitive advantage through the deployment of high committed and skilled workforce, using an array of techniques. Armstrong (2004), defined HRM as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of organizations most valued assets-the employees who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the organization.

The general definition of HRM adopted in the study is provided by Edmund and Noon (2001), because it is comprehensive and exhaustive of the components of HRM elements. Edmund and Noon (2001) see HRM from ten perspectives

(i) HRM is regarded as a label, i.e. another name for personnel management.

(ii) HRM as a convenient short hand term which simply means

a way of grouping together the range of activities associated with managing people that are variously categorized under relations, industrial/labour relations, personnel management, and organizational behaviour,

(iii) HRM is seen as a map that can help guide students and practitioners through: concepts and ideas associated with management of people and in so doing reveal to them a choice of routes and destinations,

(iv) HRM is a co-ordinated approach to managing people that seeks to integrate the various personnel activities so that they are compatible with each other,

(v) HRM is also seen as a method of ensuring internal fit i.e the one that considers how the policies will fit the other aspect of organization.

(vi) It is also seen as a method of ensuring external fit. HRM is a fully integrated approach that seeks to match the policies. and activities of people management with the demands of external environment (vii) HRM is the means through which an organization can gain a competitive advantage,

(viii) HRM is an approach to people management based on assumptions of unitarism and an emphasis on individuals, consistent with a neo-liberal political perspective,

(ix) HRM is the means through which managers, as agents of capitalism. conceal the exploitation inherent in the labour process, control employees, and encourage them to consent to techniques of work intensification.

(x) HRM is a hologram, a projection that shifts its appearance, developing on where we are standing.

HRM practices evolved overtime and it is used differently by different scholars. Among such definitions that have been reported in the literature are high commitment management (Wood and Menezes, 1998, Wood and Albanese, 1995), high performance work practices (Huselid, 1995), and high involvement management, transformed work places and flexible production system (Wood, 1995). All these terms were used to describe the organizational form

frequently held to be most appropriate for modern competitive conditions' in contrast to the Tayloristic form of organization (Wood, 1999). Delery and Doty (1996) identify seven major type of HRMP that organization usually adopt, namely: inter career leaders, formal training system, result-oriented performance, employment security, employee voice participation, broadly defined jobs, and performance based competition.

Performance is the execution or accomplishment of work, task or goals to a certain level of desired satisfaction (Aluko, 2004). According to Edokpa (1989), performance is the ability of an organization to organize its work and control and/or adapt to its environment sufficiently for the achievement of said goals or target within a given time span and with available resources.

### Literature Review

Human resources management (HRM) is playing an important role helping organizations gain and keep an advantage over competitors by becoming high performance work systems (Appelbaum et al., 2000). An efficient and effective human resource will produce quality, productive individuals that will eventually minimize the problems that are related to human resource such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, or turnover of employees. Many studies have been carried out in the recent past on the relationship between human resource management practices and organizational performance. The result established a wider agreement that HRM practices improve firm performance by increasing employees skills and abilities, promoting positive attitudes and 'increasing motivation; providing employees with expanded responsibilities so as that they can make full use of their skills and abilities (Adeyeye. 2009; Lepak et al., 2006; Bartel, 2004; Paauwe, 2004; Guthrie, 2001; Kathri, 2000, Cooke, 2000, and Huselid, 1995).

In a study of human capital and organizational effectiveness in Nigerian banks, Adeyeye (2009) found that Nigerian banks are actively involved in human capital development practices and have significantly enhanced the bank effectiveness. Another study by Bartel (2004) on HRM and retail banking performance in Ontario using

OLS technique found a positive relationship between branch performance and employees' satisfaction with the quality of performance evaluation; feedback, and recognition at the branch. Guthrie (2001) examined the impact of HR practices on turnover and firm productivity among a sample of firms in New Zealand, found that HR practices impacted positively on turnover and productivity especially when firms implemented high involvement HR practices. Kathri (2000) using a sample of 200 of the largest companies in Singapore, found that HRM practices have a stronger direct effect on profitability, sales growth and non-financial measures.

Although, most of the literature on the relationship between HRM and organizational performance suggest a positive relationship between HRM and firm performance, most previous studies focus on manufacturing sector with few exceptions on banking sector, despite the fact that most employees work in the service-producing industries in Nigeria. Also, despite the increasing popularity of the HR functions in organization, corporate executives in most public and private sector in Nigeria do not give it necessary attention, instead the corporate managers often regard material and functional resources as the most important assets, in their organization while HRM function is found at the periphery of enterprise management. In addition, the HRM practices Cost is prohibitive as it eat deep into the profit of the organization (Anakwe, 2002). This is in line with previous studies that it is the highly performing firms that can afford costly HRM policies (Huselid, 1995; Ichnowski et al., 1997; Gerhart, 1999). Other contextual factors that mediate on the impact of HR practices on organization performance include technology, government legislation, and competition from the multinational corporations(MNCs).

Organization in the western world and most part of the Asian countries have understood and embraced the strategy of gaining competitive advantage through strategic human resource management, hence there are variety of responses among industrial organization in that part of the world putting in place appropriate human resources management practices to enhance their competitive

stance. However, generalization is difficult to be made in Nigeria and mostly in developing countries on the extent of adoption of HRM practices and the actual impact on the organization performance in both the service and manufacturing due to factors enumerated.

### Theoretical Framework

The last two and half decades have witnessed various efforts by HRM theorists trying to establish a causal link between SHRM and organization performance. This has led to a growing number of studies which examine the potential contribution that good human resources policy can lead to improved organizational performance. The previous studies on the relationship between strategic human resources management and establishment performance have all agreed that human capital is valuable and unique resource to competitiveness, but differs on terms and how SHRM practices enhance a firm's performance (Guest, 1997; Bamberger and Meshoulam, 2000, Gerhart, 2000; Wright et al., 2005; Boselie et al., 2005). The theoretical frameworks used for explaining HRM-performance relationships did not provide a structure that defines the precise mechanism through which HRM policies influence business performance (Wright and Gardner, 2003). The precise mechanisms could be considered to outline what is taking place in the black box between HRM policies and business performance.

Boselie et al. (2005) indicated three theoretical frameworks that dominate the field of HR: the "contingent framework", argued that HRM influences performance in relation to contextual factors from the external environment such as business strategies; the "resources base view", argued that HRM influences performance according to the human and social capital held by the organization; and the "AMO theory", which argued that HRM influences performance in relation to employees' 'ability', 'motivation' and 'opportunity' to participate. This conforms to the studies by Paauwe (2004) and Lepak et al. (2006) that HRM-outcomes set of mediating variables are employee skills (employee competences and

cooperation), employee attitudes (motivation, commitment, and satisfaction) and employee behaviour (retention and presence).

Similarly, Becker et al. ;(1997) suggested employee skills, employee attitudes and employee behaviours to form discretionary effort, which in turn affects business performance. Hutchinson (2007) conclude that the influence of HRM policies on business performance directly or indirectly through HRM outcomes (employee skills, employee attitudes and employee behaviours) are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but on the contrary, they can be complementary. This means HRM outcomes can individually and/or jointly influenced business performance depending on the organization business strategies, human and social capital held by the organization, and employees' 'ability', 'motivation' and opportunity' to participate within the organization.

However, the widely accepted theoretical basis for the relationship between human resources management (HRM) and organizational performance is the high-performance work system framework provided by Appelbaum et al. (2000) The focal-point of high-performance work system is an organization that enables non-managerial employees to participate in substantive decision within organization. In addition, the high-performance work system requires supportive human resource practices that enhance workers skills and that provide incentives for workers to use their skills and participate in decisions. These three elements - opportunity to participate skills, and incentives, contribute to business performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000). The "black box" in the banking industry means the human resources management policies and practices adopted by the managers in the banking sector.

### Methodology

The study used survey research design. The data for this study were gathered through the administration of questionnaire on the 80 respondents of two selected banks, First Bank Plc and Zenith Bank Plc based in Lagos State, Nigeria out of which 69 were collected back for analysis. Stratified random sampling method was adopted



The questionnaire has two sections; the First section is related to demographics (age, sex, academic qualification, staff category and years in service). The second section comprises a list of proposition (six statement) related to human resources management and its effects on organizational performance in banking industry.

Using a Likert scale of 1-5 (5= strongly agree, 4 = agree 3= undecided, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree', the respondents were asked to rate the relationship between the HRM practices and organization performance. The results obtained from the ratings were analyzed using Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (r) and Z--test to test the hypothesis of the study because the data generated is measured on ordinal scale and the significance of the relationship. Excel software helped us to transform the variables into a format suitable for analysis after which the Predictive Analytical Software (PASW) version 19.0 for windows was utilized for data analysis. Spearman rank order correlation (denoted  $r_s$ ) is given by:

$$\text{Spearman's } 'r_s' = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_i^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

Where:

$(\sum d_i^2)$  = Sum of the squared differences in the rankings of the subject on the Two variables.

$n$  = Number of subjects being ranked

$r_s$  - Ranges from -1 to + 1

Z-test was used to determine the level of significance by using the formula:  $Z = r_s \sqrt{n-1}$

Reject  $H_0$  at 99% level of confidence ( $\alpha=0.01$ ) if the computed value of  $r_s$  is greater than the critical value of  $r_s$ , other wise accept  $H_0$ , at 95% level of confidence.

## Results And Discussion

This section discusses the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient on the effect of strategic human resources management practices on performance of banks in Nigeria. The results obtained from the analysis to test the hypothesis of the study which is stated in the null form are as follows.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between strategic human resources management and banks performance. Table " shows the results of Spearman rank order correlation coefficient on the effects of strategic human resources management on the banks performance. Table 1 shows Spearman correlation coefficient for strategic human, resources management and bank performance to be 0.401 with a  $p= 0.000$ , implying that SHRM is statistically significantly correlated. This results conforms to the studies of Katou and Budhwar (2009), Bartel (2008), Fret, Harker and Hunter (2000) and Delany and Doty (1996) that bank performance is improved application of strategic human resources management. Frei, Harker and Hunter (2000) observed that X--efficiency. or how well management aligns human resources, technology, and other assets to produce a given level of output, plays an important role in the banking industry.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between strategic human resources management and employees' behaviours. Table 2 shows the results of Spearman rank order correlation coefficient on the effects of strategic human resources management on employees' behaviour in Nigerian banking industry. Table shows Spearman correlation coefficient for strategic human resources management and employees' behaviours to be 0.396 with a  $p= 0.000$ , implying that strategic human resources management is statistically significantly correlated. This results is in tandem to the organizational behaviour theory that the behaviour and performance of human resource is a function of five variables (i) human resources management (ii) ability (iii) motivation role perception (v) situation contingency (Mcshane, 1995).

**Table 1: Strategic human resources management practices (SHRM) and bank performance Correlations**

	Strategic Human Resources	Bank performance
Spearman's rho Strategic Human Resources Management Sig. (2 -tailed)	1.000	.401
N	69	69
Bank Performance Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2 -tailed)	.401	1.000
N	69	69

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 -tailed). Generated by the researchers from data PASW (Version 19.0)

**Table 2: Strategic human resources management practices (SHRM) and employees' behaviours Correlations**

	Strategic Human Resources Management	Employees' Behaviours
Spearman's rho Strategic Human Resources Management Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.396
N	18s0	69
Employees' Behaviours Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.396"	1.000
N	69	69

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Generated by the researchers from data collected using PASW (Version 19.0)

**Summary Of Findings And Recommendations**

The results of the analysis revealed that:

i. There is a relationship between strategic human resources management and the performance of banks. The implication is that banking organizations are performing well with the practice and adoption of strategic human resources management. Thus, effectively implemented HR practices will cause higher performance. but the problem is that human resource department is cost centre in many organizations.

ii. There is a relationship between strategic human resources management and employees' behaviour which goes to agree with the finding number 1 above. Wrigth and Snell (1998) posit that human resources management HRM policies improve employee skills that affect employees' behaviours, which in turn. have impact on business performance. They conclude that employee skills, employee attitude, and employee behaviours formed discretionary, which in turn affects organization's performance.

The study differs from similar studies whose concentrated on the effects of strategic human resources management on manufacturing organization performance; however the present study look at the effects of strategic human resources management on banks performance as well as employees behaviour in the banking industry. Banks management will no doubt find the study imperative in their strategic management decisions.

Having carried out an exhaustive analysis of this work and considering the results of the analysis undertaken, the following are thus recommended.

i. All the relevant officers/management team of the bank should be involved in strategic human resources management, i.e., all concerned should be made to participate and contribute to Strategic human resources management policies and strategies.

ii. Strategic human resources management should be efficiently, effectively and adequately applied In other words, there should be strict/timely adherence to the formulated strategies.

iii. Since strategic management is an on-going process, efforts

should be made to constantly review, revise and evaluate strategies formulated to reflect current trends. In other words strategic human resource management (SHRM) should not be viewed as static.

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