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Human Resource Management Practices and Productivity- A Case of Selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT : *Multinational Corporations (MNCs) are greatly expanding and growing beyond their geographical borders and into many countries of the world. This expansion of MNCs, the alarming upsurge in widely publicized and notable corporate issues in emerging markets have begun to draw both academic and managerial attention, they now look beyond traditional home market practices to the pressing concern of host markets practices and policies. The study examined the impact of human resource management practices and productivity of selected MNCs in Nigeria.*

A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 13,856 targeted staff of eight Manufacturing Multinational Corporation listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. Stratified sampling technique was employed to select the respondents from each stratum (lower, middle and top level management). The sample of 400 was arrived at using Yamane's formula. The sample size was expanded by 30% to make room for non-response rate. A validated questionnaire which was adopted and titled "Human resources management practices and productivity of selected MNC's operating in Nigeria" was used as the research instrument. The reliability test yielded the following Cronbach's alpha co-efficients for the constructs: Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices = 0.72 and Productivity = 0.83. A total of 520 copies of the questionnaire were administered with a response rate of 92.3%. Simple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis.

The findings revealed that human resource management practices had a significant relationship with productivity of the selected MNCs in Nigeria ($r = .043$, $R^2 = .162$, $p < 0.05$).

This study concluded that human resource management practices had a significant impact on productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. It therefore recommended that MNCsshould adopt an integrated approach toward formulation and implementation of human resource management practices in their firms.

Keywords: *Human Resource Management Practices,Human Resource Management, Productivity, Multinational Corporations.*

I. Introduction

In recent years, Multinational Corporations (MNCs) have extended their presence all over the world, conducting various activities for different purposes. These enterprises have had to manage the various complex cultures, demographic differences, product, market and technological forces in the expansion process that interact and become more complex. The MNCs have emerged as powerful actors of the international business environment and their emergence inevitably emphasizes that an important way to go global is to develop strategies to effectively manage and control business organizations, and manage practices amidst others in the different countries that they exist (Ramsey& Bahia, 2013).

The World Investment Report 2009 published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), states that "there are a total of 889,416 multinational companies (MNCs) around the world, 82,053 parent corporations and 807,363 affiliates. These companies play a major and growing role in the world economy (Shikhare, 2015). Exports by foreign affiliates of MNCs are estimated to account for about a one third of total world exports of goods and services, and the number of people employed by these MNCs is about 77 million in 2008, more than double the total labour force of Germany. Anderson and Cavanaugh (2000) in their study observed that "among the largest 100 economies in the world, 51 are multinational corporations (MNCs) whereas only 49 are countries. To put this in perspective, General Motors is bigger than Denmark; Daimler Chrysler is bigger than Poland; Royal Dutch/Shell is bigger than Venezuela; IBM is bigger than Singapore; and Sony is bigger than Pakistan." The study further shows that, "out of the 200 largest economies of the world, 144 are MNCs. The income of MNCs is 18 times higher than the combined annual income of the 1.2 billion people, 24 percent of the total world population. The growth of sales of top 200 corporations is faster than overall global economic activity. Between 1983 and 1999, their profits grew by 362 percent whereas their combined sales grew from 25 percent to 27.5 percent of the world GDP. The production of goods and services outside their home countries grew more rapidly in 2006 and beyond. As per the UNCTAD report 2007, "The sales, value added and exports of some 78,000 MNCs and their 780,000 foreign affiliates are estimated to have increased by 18%, 16% and 12% respectively. Multinational Corporations accounts for 10% of world GDP and one third of world exports" (Rosman et. al, 2012; Shikhare, 2015).

Multinational Corporations for the past twenty years have had the upper hand in controlling the world's primary resources and consequently affecting the economic stability around the globe. Multinational Corporations are distinguished from other firms by having two major sets of business and management phenomena that other organizations do not have: (1) internalization strategies, as overall concepts and patterns of extending operations from domestic base to other countries and (2) practices of corporate control geared to facing specific problem that their subsidiaries in different societies are embedded in different societal contexts (Harzing&Sorge, 2003). Various researchers and scholars have also argued that an important source of competitive advantage for multinational corporations is the utilization of their organization capabilities on a worldwide basis through the leveraging of their management policies and practices across their corporations (Forte, 2013).

1b. Statement of the Problem

With the expansion of Multinational Corporations (MNCs), the alarming upsurge in widely publicized and notable corporate issues involving MNCs in emerging markets has begun to draw both academic and managerial attention to look beyond home market practices to the pressing concern of host markets practices and policies (Donaldson, 1989; McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Porter & Kramer, 2006; Husted & Allen, 2007).

There are many and varied reasons why managers are continually under distress in organization. Resources, human and material, technology are but a few issues confronting managers daily. More importantly the human aspect has questions that have perplexed and fascinated managers for a long time.

It has been argued that studies of human resource management have been too focused on policies that are set in the HRM department, and have underplayed the importance of the way these policies are translated into practice by line managers and perceived by the employees who are the targets of these policies (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008; Wright & Nishii, 2013). This makes the policies not achievable, wrongly interpreted, misuse and poor productivity on the part of line managers and employees (Combs,Liu, Hall, &Ketchen, 2006; Paauwe, Wright, & Guest, 2013). Therefore, there are no easy ways to solve all these challenges, yet they plague managers in their day-to-day running of organizations. The research objective is to investigate the impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Productivity of Multinational Corporations in Nigeria.

II. Conceptual

Human Resource Management Practices

Human resource management is that part of the management process that specializes in the management of people in work organizations. It emphasizes that employees are critical to achieving sustainable competitive advantage, that human resources practices need to be incorporated with the corporate strategy and that human resource specialists help organizational controllers to meet both efficiency and equity objectives (Vyas, 2009; Bibi, Lanrong, Haseeb, & Ahmad, 2012). Vanhala and Ahteela (2011) opined that human resource management is planning and controlling activities of an organization to build and maintain the relation between employees and the organization in order to meet both business objectives and employees expectations.Yahiaoui, Anser, Lahouel (2015) are of the view that human resources management is a process for staffing the organization and sustaining high employee performance.Human resources management is the practices, systems and procedures implemented to attract, acquire, develop and manage human resources to achieve the goals and objectives of an organization (Sowunmi, Eleyowo, Salako&Oketokun, 2015).

Guest (1997 & 2013) views HRM as a set of policies that are designed to maximiseorganisational integrations, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work.Greater mobility in the global labour market, globalisation and the internationalisation of businesses, has caused more and more organisations to be confronted with the challenge of managing an increasingly diverse workforce. The complexities of international business are no longer confined to small-to-medium sized enterprises, international joint ventures, public and private sector organisations, and non-profit organisations but now affect multinational corporations (Nayyab, Hamid, Naseer& Iqbal, 2011). All of these organisations may find themselves managing people with a range of different work values, altitudes and behavior patterns.

A review of the existing literature indicates that western countries have experienced a transition from traditional personnel management to HRM since the 1980s. HRM is frequently seen as encompassing new methods and philosophies for managing employees (Karunesh& Pankaj, 2009). HRM is seen as a strategic function concerned with consequences of all organisational decisions for human productivity and for the well-being of the entire workforce (Aguinis, Gottfredson&Joo, 2012). However, HRM still encompasses personnel management issues such as recruitment, selection, training, remuneration but with a strategic slant (Nayyab, et al 2011; Aguinis, et al 2012; Chan &Mak, 2012). All these have a bearing on the overall management strategies of the firm and HRM can contribute to those strategies in various ways. HRM is believed to be an essentially US invention (Chan et al, 2012). HRM in the USA evolved from psychology and was a direct response to challenges posed by foreign competitors to the USA. The prime concern was to improve worker motivation and thereby reduce the need for unions in collective bargaining and negotiations with management (Okpara& Wynn, 2008; Joseph & Dai, 2009). When examining the emergence of HRM, one can see the direct influence of socio-economic and political factors. In Europe, HRM has evolved from a sociological perspective, with more attention to the social system, the economic and political context and the relationship between key actors, such as government, unions and management. The primary concern has been who has the power to decide, leading to efforts to promote industrial democracy (workers decide) and industrial policy (government decides). This has resulted in legislation for worker representation on the board of directors (work councils), in Germany and the Netherlands, quality of work-life councils in Sweden and the code du travaiiin France (Joseph & Dai, 2009).

Okapara and Wynn (2008) opined that there are two different perspectives on HRM: hard and soft (Bibi, Lanrong, Haseeb& Ahmad, 2012). The hard approach considers HRM as a driver for the strategic objectives of the firm (Joseph & Dai, 2009) and human resources are seen as the object of formal manpower planning, alongside other factors of production, and as an expense of doing business, rather than the only resource capable of turning inanimate factors of production into wealth (Okpara& Wynn, 2008). On the other hand, the soft model has a developmental, humanistic view of HRM. Although there is still emphasis on integrating human resource policies and practices with business objectives, employees are treated as valued assets, a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and high quality (Chan &Mak, 2012). Human resource management involves seven main areas: (1) staffing, (2) workplace policies, (3) benefits and compensation, (4) retention, (5) training, (6) employment laws, and (7) employee protection (Tripathy&Tripathy, 2008; Alfes, Shantz, Truss & Soane, 2013a).

Human resources management practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resources and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals and objectives (Oludayo&Omonijo, 2013; Bakker, Demerouti, &Sanz-Vergel, 2014; Butt,&Katuse1, 2017).

Productivity

Productivity is about the effective and efficient use of all resources. Resources include time, people, knowledge, information, finance, equipment, space, energy, materials. Productivity is the ratio of output to input. It is a measure of how efficiently and effectively a business or an economy uses inputs such as labour and capital to produce outputs such as goods and services. An increase in productivity means that more goods and services are produced with the sameamount of labour and capital. It is not about cutting costs but “doing things right” and “doing the right things” to achieve maximum efficiency and value. Productivity is the ratio of what is produced to what is required to produce it. It measures the relationship between output and inputs. Also, productivity means how much and how well we produce from the resources used (Grönroos&Ojasalo, 2004; Calabrese, 2012).

Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs, such as labour and capital, are being used in an economy to produce a given level of output. Productivity is considered a key source of economic growth and competitiveness and, as such, is basic statistical information for many international comparisons and country performance assessments. For example, productivity data are used to investigate the impact of product and labour market regulations on economic performance. Productivity growth constitutes an important element for modelling the productive capacity of economies. It also allows analysts to determine capacity utilisation, which in turn allows one to gauge the position of economies in the business cycle and to forecast economic growth. In addition, production capacity is used to assess demand and inflationary pressures (Armando Calabrese & Alessandro Spadoni, 2013, El-Ghalayini, 2017).

III. Methodology

A survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 13,856 targeted staff of eight Manufacturing Multinational Corporation listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. Stratified sampling technique was employed to select the respondents from each stratum (lower, middle and top level management). The sample of 400 was arrived at using Taro Yamane’s formula. The sample size was expanded by 30% to make room for non-response rate. A validated questionnaire which was adopted and titled “Human Resources Management Practices and Productivity of selected MNC’s operating in Nigeria” was used as the research instrument. The reliability test yielded the following Cronbach’s alpha co-efficients for the constructs: Human Resources Management (HRM) Practices = 0.72, and Productivity = 0.83. A total of 520 copies of the questionnaire were administered with a response rate of 92.3%. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis.

IV. Result and Discussion

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of respondents’ opinion on the impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria.

Human Resources Management Practices and Productivity	**SD (%)**	**D (%)**	**PD (%)**	**PA (%)**	**A (%)**	**SA (%)**	$\overline{X}$	**Sd**
Multinational Corporations conducts extensive training programs for its employees.	41 8.5	33 6.9	118 24.6	58 12.1	105 21.9	125 26.0	4.10	1.595
Performance of the employees is measured on the basis of objective quantifiable results.	14 2.9	23 4.8	85 17.7	170 35.4	131 27.3	57 11.9	4.15	1.166
Multinational Corporations plans for the career and development of their employees.	5 1.0	9 1.9	30 6.3	121 25.2	117 24.4	198 41.3	4.94	1.117
Multinational Corporations allows their employees to participate in operations related decisions.	12 2.5	39 8.1	63 13.1	158 32.9	136 28.3	72 15.0	4.21	1.234
Multinational Corporations clearly define every employee’s job.	4 0.8	4 0.8	14 2.9	48 10.0	167 34.8	243 50.6	5.29	0.921
Multinational Corporations job performance is an important factor in determining the incentive compensation of employees.	4 0.8	7 1.5	119 24.8	72 15.0	150 31.3	128 26.7	4.54	1.212
Multinational Corporations selection system selects those having the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.	6 1.3	4 0.8	30 6.3	53 11.0	132 27.5	255 53.1	5.22	1.058

Note: $\overline{X}$ **= mean, Sd = Standard Deviation, SD = Strongly Disagreed, D = Disagreed, Partially Disagreed, PA = Partially Agreed, A = Agreed, SA = Strongly Agreed,**
Source: Researcher’s Field Survey Result, 2016

Results in Table 4.1 shows that Multinational Corporations conducts extensive training programmes for its employees (60%). The table shows that a significant number of respondents 358 (74.5%) indicated that performance of the employees is measured on the basis of objective quantifiable results and that Multinational Corporations plans for the career and development of their employees (90.8%). Furthermore, the result reveals that Multinational Corporations allows their employees to participate in operations related decisions (76.3%), 458 (95.4%) indicated that Multinational Corporations clearly define every employee’s job, 350 (72.9%) claimed that Multinational Corporations job performance is an important factor in determining the incentive and 340 (70.8%) agreed to the fact that Multinational Corporations selection system selects those having the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.

It is evident from the results above that Multinational Corporations conducts extensive training programs for its employees, plans for the career and development of their employees, and allows their employees to participate in operations related decisions. The results further reveals that Multinational Corporations clearly define every employee’s job to promote higher productivity.

Research Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria.
To test hypothesis, simple regression analysis was employed. Table 4.2 presents the summary result of the regression analysis.

Table 4.2: Regression results for the impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero - order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	19.729	1.334		14.787	.000			
Human Resources Management Practices	.272	.028	.403	9.625	.000	.403	.403	.403

R =.403; R^2 = .162; Adj. R^2 = .161; SER = 3.89450; F= 92.647, Sig.: 0.000
Source: Researcher's Field Survey Result, 2016.
Estimated Simple Linear Regression Model 1:

$y_1 = f(x_1)$
y_1= Productivity (PR)
x_1 = Human Resources Management Practices (HRMP)
PR = 19.729 + .272HRMP ………………………………………………………… (1)

Interpretation

Table 4.2 presents regression analysis of impact human resources management practices on productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. Table also shows the Unstandardized coefficient ofHuman Resources Management Practices to be 0.272 meaning that a 1-unit change in Human Resources Management Practices will bring about 27.2 unit increment in productivity. The regression coefficient of 0.272 is statistically significant indicating that Human Resources Management Practices have positive impact on productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. The estimated value of correlation coefficient (R) of 0.403 signifies that there is positive and moderate relationship between Human Resources Management Practices and productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. Furthermore, the overall significance of the entire model as measured by the F-statistic shows that the calculated F-statistic is 92.647 ($p=0.000$) is statistically significant at $p<0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis one (Ho_1) which states that there is no significant impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria is hereby rejected.

Discussion

The findings of research question one and hypothesis one revealed that Human Resources Management Practices has significant impact on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. The results support prior researches such as Kumar and Sushma (2015), Cozzarinand Jeffrey (2014), Sun, Aryee and Law (2007), and Huselid (1995). Kumar and Sushma (2015) found that new trends have taken place in the field of Human resource management; these trends are changing the outlook and approaches towards management of human resources. At the level of the organization success of the organization is increasingly depend on innovative human resource practices which leads to economic growth and development. Findings of Cozzarinand Jeffrey (2014) on human resource management practices and longitudinal workplace performance show that the greatest contributor to labour productivity is the employee's wage and is congruent with the literature. The result is corroborated by the study of Sun, Aryee and Law (2007) who established positive and significant correlation between high performance human resource practices and productivity. The result is not in support of Ichniowski and Shaw (2009), which states that HRM practices in isolation may increase productivity or may reduce productivity because they have an inefficient side to them. This study shows that when aggregated, HRM practices reduce productivity.

From the study, 77.7% of the respondents indicated that Multinational Corporations places the right person in the right job, 88.5% of the respondents viewed that Multinational Corporations gives adequate and relevant information about the organization and job to the candidate at the time of recruitment, and 95.2% asserted that Multinational Corporations access training needs of the employees on the basis of their performance appraisal. Furthermore, 74.5% indicated that performance of the employees is measured on the basis of objective quantifiable results and 90.8% of the respondents affirmed that Multinational Corporations plans for the career and development of their employees. The high response rate on the subscales for measuring Human Resources Management Practices and Productivity shows that Human Resources Management Practices have significant impact on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. Based on the findings and its supporting literature the study therefore reject the null hypothesis (Ho1) which states that *there is no* *significant impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Productivity of selected Multinational Corporations in Nigeria*.

V. Conclusion

The extant literature shows that human resource management practices contribute to productivity of Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. It has been argued that studies of human resource management have been too focused on policies that are set in the HRM department, and have underplayed the importance of the way these policies are translated into practice by line managers and perceived by the employees who are the targets of these policies. Besides, management is absolutely critical to nurturing a successful culture of quality. It was established from the study that human resources management practices has significant impact on productivity of selected multinational Corporations in Nigeria. The findings derived suggest that in order to promote high organization performance, effort should be made to implement and apply the various management practices by Multinational Corporations and manufacturing organizations.

a. Recommendations

In the area of human resources management, Multinational Corporationsshould adopt an integrated approach toward formulation and implementation of HRM practices in their firms. This will provide a wholistic approach of the implementation of HRM among the firms in the industry. The Multinational Corporations should proactively pursue a strategic approach to HRM practices and invest in such practices to achieve sustainable competitive advantage in tangible and intangible dimensions.

b. Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge about the multinational corporations in a number of ways.

There are several contributions this study had made to the theories employed. One, this study had used the stakeholders theory, but it has also expanded the use of the theory by value associated with good stakeholder performance. The contribution of this study to the institutional theory is premised on the use of institutional legitimacy, coercive isomorphism, normative isomorphism and mimetic isomorphism. In terms of contribution of the internationalization theory, the study posits that the theory could be used in the estimation of entry into new countries and establishing their corporations.

To the academia, this study serves as a point of reference for all other researches in international business to base their research on and a basis for any academic working on multinational corporations. To the government, this study will serve as a document to see how policies can be transformed into practice and not just making policies that are not achievable. To Practitioners, this study serves as a reference point to people in the industry.

5.3 Suggestion for Further Research

Further research directions could therefore include, amongst others a replication of the study in public sector organizations and Multinational Corporationsin telecommunication and other sectors. The telecommunications sector has become an important key in the development of the economy. The telecommunications sector has contributed to the socio- economic development of the country. Also, the inclusion of more firms that were not necessarily listed in the Nigerian Stock Exchange may equally expand the scope of this research.

There are a number of limitations that maybe encountered during the course of this study. The study was conducted at a critical time in the nation's economic history. Due to this development, the employees and even the top management people were not predisposed too much comment. It took lot of persuasion before many of the respondents agreed to complete the questionnaires. The employees were very suspicious of the researcher's intentions and feared for the security of their jobs. The researcher remained focused on explaining to the employees that this study was merely an academic exercise that has no impact on the individual career. The research instrument was administered only to employees in Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin. This may affect the objectivity of the study.

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