TALENT MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Talent management is one of the most critical of all resources at the disposal of any organisation, whether, public or private. The right quality and quantity of talents employed is a measure of employee productivity and organizational performance. However, most public sector organizations perform below expectation with problems of inefficiency, redundancy and employee bloating. The main thrust of this paper is to critically evaluate the impact of talent management on employee productivity in the Nigerian public sector. A hypothesis in line with this objective is drawn and tested based on data generated through a questionnaire. The survey investigation method was used in collecting data for the study from a sample of 349 top, middle and lower level management staff of five public sector organizations in Nigeria. The Kruskal- Wallis test statistic was used to analyze the data. The findings indicate that the implementation of proper talent management processes significantly impact employee productivity. It was thus concluded that talent management practices in Nigeria public organizations (where they exist), significantly impact on employee productivity. The paper recommends that all actors in talent management should be educated and trained in scientific methods of managing organizational talents; and adopt advocacy to influence detrimental laws and legislations that have direct bearing on the talent management processes of their organizations.

INTRODUCTION
The world is suddenly faced with the need to make a sharp break from old habits and deliberately learn new ways of doing things. Imparato et al (1994:82) rightly observe that technologies that were startling innovations yesterday, such as personal computers and phone-fax answering machines, are rapidly becoming low-margin commodities. Processes are altered, factory designs are often outdated in fewer than five years and paralleling the compression of product and process life cycles is the rapid - cycle shrinkage of the organisations themselves. As a result, productive and innovative energy is apparent in every domain of business life today. Obviously, cost-sensitive operations are important to any organization's survival. However, in chaotic times and crowded marketplaces, employee productivity and innovation forms the essence of sustainable competitive advantage. In the unfolding epoch, successful organizations will be those that hinge on the ability to attract, develop, retain, motivate, and lead a diverse array of appropriately skilled people in private and government organizations. The human factor drives everything. However, the workforce serving in the Nigerian public service at all tiers of government is mostly bloated, unwieldy and ineffective. The service, which used to be the engine room of progressive policy formulation and implementation and the sole provider of basic social amenities that sustained livelihood and propelled economic development of the country has since degenerated into a

creaky apparatus of political patronage that ignores merit and puts round pegs in square holds (Abdullahi et al, 2001:72). Despite various interventions to revamp the public sector undertakings, the sector has remained in a tailspin. Confirming this, Ayida (1997:2) laments that in spite of several reviews and commissions of investigation, the public service of today remains a shadow of what it should be. According to him, some of the lofty ideals of efficiency, professionalism and accountability have not been achieved. Corroborating on this unfortunate situation, Adeyemo et al (2008: 401-418) stress that the superstructure has remained defective and the several public service review exercises ended up with the civil service being put in a straight jacket. Resultantly, the sector operates far below expectation with escalating personnel costs, problems of productivity and redundancy among its workers to the extent that some of the organizations have been shut down. If public sector organizations must meet the aforementioned global challenges, the talents that serve within them should be organized for productive and innovative service delivery.

THE PROBLEM

The current global business environment has become dynamic and there is a vital need for flexible, innovative and rational approach to the management of human capital, particularly with regard to the high talent professional employees. The assumption underpinning the practice of talent management in the public sector is that people are the organization's key resource, and organizational performance and productivity largely depends on them. If therefore, an appropriate range of talent management processes and policies are planned, developed and implemented effectively, employees' productivity will make a substantial impact on firm performance. The realization of a productive human capital in public organizations to a greater or lesser extent depends on how a diverse array of appropriately skilled people are attracted, developed, retained, motivated and led. However, the Nigerian public sector is a superstructure that has remained defective and the several review exercises ended up with the civil service being put in a straight jacket. What is the impact of talent management on employee productivity? Can well managed talents increase employee productivity in the Nigerian public service? If yes, to what extent? Several talent management programs and techniques currently exist. What is not yet very clear is whether or not these techniques are potent tools in improving employee productivity and further still which particular techniques better suit the Nigerian public sector? The principal objective of the paper therefore, is to assess the potency of talent management in increasing employee productivity. Specifically, the paper seeks to investigate the presence or otherwise of specific talent management techniques that best suit Nigerian public sector organizations and the extent to which these techniques impact employee productivity.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used for the study is the survey research method. Primary data for the study were sourced from five public sector organisations namely: National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), Plateau State Water Board (PSWB), Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF) and Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The population of the study includes all the 10,127 top, middle and lower

management staff of the five organisations. Given that the population of the study is finite, the Taro Yamane (1964) statistical formula for selecting a sample was applied. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size; N = Population; e = level of significance (or limit of tolerance error) in this case 0.05; 1 = Constant value. This gives a sample size of 385. For its data collection, a suitable Likert Scale (5 point) questionnaire was designed and developed. Respondents were requested to determine the idea of agreement or disagreement on the 18 statements under the two sections contained in the instrument. The data so collected was then analyzed using the Kruskal Wallis test statistic. The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks named after William Kruskal and W. Allen Wallis is a non-parametric method for testing equality of population medians among groups. It is identical to a one-way analysis of variance with the data replaced by their ranks. It is an extension of the Mann-Whitney U test to 3 or more groups (Kruskal et al, 1952: 583-621). The test statistic is given by:

$$K = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{i=1}^{g} n_i \left(\bar{r}_{i.} - \frac{N+1}{2} \right)^2$$

$$= \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{i=1}^{g} n_i \bar{r}_{i.}^2 - 3(N+1)$$

where: n_i is the number of observations in group i ; r_{ij} is the rank (among all observations) of observation j from group I; N is the total number of observations across all groups and $\bar{r} = \frac{1}{2}(N+1)$ is the average of all the r_{ij}. However, the Kruskal-Wallis computer-statistical package for social sciences (SPSS)-16.O version was used to test the hypothesis.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once an organization's human capital demand and supply are forecast, and the two reconciled or balanced, in order to fill existing vacancies, the next step in the human capital planning process is human capital programming and implementation. Implementation requires converting a human capital plan into action. A series of action programs are initiated as part of human capital plan implementation (Aswathappa, 2005:84). The sum of all the activities and processes involved in this third stage of the human capital planning is called talent management**. Talent Management is the process of ensuring that the organisation attracts, retains, motivates and develops the talented people it needs. In the opinion of Stockley (2007:1), talent management is a conscious and deliberate approach undertaken to attract, develop and retain people with the aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organizational needs. Armstrong (2003:387) observes that the key talent management processes are:

- Developing the organisation as an 'employer of choice' – a great place of work.
- Using selection and recruitment procedures that ensure that good quality people are recruited who are likely to thrive in the organisation and stay with it for a reasonable length of time (but not necessarily for life).

- Designing jobs and developing roles which give people opportunities to apply and grow their skills and provide them with autonomy, interest and challenge.
- Providing talented staff with opportunities for career development and growth.
- Creating a working environment in which work processes and facilities enable rewarding (in the broadest sense) jobs and roles to be designed and developed.
- Developing a positive psychological contract.
- Developing the leadership qualities of line managers.
- Recognizing those with talent by rewarding excellence, enterprise and achievement.
- Succession planning – ensuring that the organisation has suitable people to fill vacancies arising from promotion, retirement or death.
- Conducting talent audits which identify those with potential and those who might leave the organisation.

Armstrong (2003:395-881), Mathis & Jackson (2003:201-539), Aswathappa (2005:131-554) and Schuler (1989: 99-201) all agree that the above mentioned processes are achievable through human capital programs like recruitment, selection and placement; training and development; compensation; performance Appraisal; turnover management; and employee – employer – labor relationships. Others include health, safety and welfare; downsizing; succession planning; and promotion. These programs are discussed hereunder.

Recruitment, Selection and Placement

In simple terms, recruitment is understood as the process of searching for and obtaining applicants for jobs, from among whom the right people can be selected. Werther & Davis (1993:195), define recruitment as the process of finding and attracting capable applicants for employment. In the opinion of Bennis et al (2002:430), the first part of the recruitment process, before conducting interview, is concerned with verifying that you have a vacancy. Next, identify the sort of person you are looking for and in what capacity, finally, seek candidates and make a short –list of those who qualify. In other words, the process begins when new recruits are sought and ends when their applications are submitted. The result is a pool of applicants from which new employees are selected. Perhaps no method has ever had as revolutionary an effect on recruitment practices as the e-recruiting or the internet. According to the Development Dimensions International –DDI (2002) as reported in the Linkages Workshop series (2007:11), a HR Benchmark Group survey of 573 member organizations worldwide reveals that, by far the most effective channel for netting quality candidates externally is the use of the Internet. The research goes on to show that the most fruitful channels are as follows (with the percentage of companies using each in parentheses): The Internet (used by 90%), employee referrals (90%), company Web site (88%), Internal Job postings (78%), college recruiting (59%), school – to work partnerships or internships (42%) professional organizations (60%), employment agencies (60%), professional conferences (52%) and temporary employment agencies (52%). Note that after the Internet, the three most effective channels are internal sources. On the other hand, selection is the process of gathering information about applicants for a position and then using that information to choose the most appropriate applicant. Stone (1989:173), defines

selection as the process of differentiating between applicants in order to identify (and hire) those with a greater likelihood of success in a job. Within an organisation, selection can be used for promotion and fillers into vacant positions. However, selection carries more weight when the selection process is done outside the organisation. Recruitment and selection are two crucial steps in the human capital process and are often used interchangeably. There is, however, a fine distinction between the two. While recruitment refers to the process of identifying and encouraging prospective employees to apply for jobs, selection is concerned with picking the right candidates from a pool of applicants. The discrete selection process typically follows a standard pattern, beginning with an initial screening interview and concluding with the final employment decision (DeCenzo, et al 1998:148).

Orientation and Placement
New starters will be concerned about who they are going to work for (their immediate managers or team leader), who they are going to work with, what they are going to do on their first day, and the geographical layout of their place of work (location of entrances, exits, lavatories, restrooms, the canteen, etc.). Orientation, also called induction is designed to provide a new employee with the information he or she needs to function comfortably and effectively in the organisation. Mathis & Jackson (1982:225) see orientation as a planned introduction of employees to their jobs, their co-worker(s) and the organisation. It is important to ensure that care is taken over introducing people to the organisation through effective induction arrangements. The ultimate purpose of selection is placement, or fitting a person to the right job. In the words of Aswathappa (2005:185), after an employee has been hired and oriented, he or she must be placed in his/her right job. Placement is understood as the allocation of people to jobs. It is the assignment or reassignment of an employee to a new or different job. More than anything else, placement of human capital should be seen as a matching process. How well an employee is matched to a job affects the amount and quality of the employee's work. The matching also directly affects training and operating costs. Individuals who are unable to produce the expected amount and quality of work can cost an organisation a great deal of money and time.

Person-Job Fit: Selection and placement entails much more than just choosing the best available person. Selecting the appropriate capabilities and talents – which come packaged in a human being attempts to "fit" what the applicant can and wants to do with what the organisation needs. Selection and placement activities typically focus on applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). The person – job fit is a simple but important process that involves matching the KSAs of the person and the demands of the job.

Person-Organisation Fit: In addition to matching individuals to jobs, employers also increasingly try to determine the congruence between individual and organizational factors to achieve person-organisation fit. Person-organisation fit is important when general factors of job success are as important as specific KSAs. For example, if an employer hires at the entry level and promotes from within for most jobs, specific KSAs might be less important than general cognitive and problem – solving abilities and work ethic (Mathis & Jackson,

2003:236). It is important therefore for the new employee to be acquainted with the person(s) he is going to work with and the environment in which he will be working in. Also, the new worker must be fitted to his work otherwise his performance on the job will be grossly hampered with reduction in his productivity.

Training and Development: Training is a learning experience in that it seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve his or her ability to perform on the job. Learning is the process by which a person acquires new knowledge, skills, capabilities, etc. Training is the use of systematic and planned instruction and development activities to promote learning (Armstrong, 2003:549). In order words, good learning is a prerequisite to training. In the opinion of Schuler (1989:385), training and development is any attempt to improve current or future employee performance by increasing an employee's ability to perform through learning, usually by changing the employee's attitude or increasing his or her skills and knowledge. Schuler goes on to observe that the need for training and development is determined by the employee's performance deficiency, computed as follows: "Training and development need= Standard Performance- Actual Performance". A distinction can be made among, training, education and development. In general, employee education is mind preparation and is carried out remote from the actual work area, training is the systematic development of the attitude, knowledge, skill pattern, etc required by a person to perform a given task or job adequately and development is the growth of the individual in terms of ability, understanding and awareness.

According to Chapman (2009:1), the most effective way to develop people is to enable learning and personal development to take place. To identify learning and training needs of the organisation, a learning needs analysis should be carried out. The areas and methods include analysis of business and human capital plans; surveys; performance and development reviews; job, role and competency analysis; describing the content of jobs and roles by reference to key activities and outcomes; defining the performance standards required in terms of quantity and output; and defining the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to perform the job in order to meet the performance standards.

Performance Management and Appraisal: A performance management system consists of the processes used to identify, encourage, measure, evaluate, improve, and reward employee performance. Armstrong & Baron (1998:68), define performance management as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors. Since organisations exist to achieve goals, the degree of success that individual employees have in reaching their individual goals, therefore, becomes a critical stage in the human capital planning process. But what is performance? It has been pointed by Bates and Holton (1995:267-88) that: Performance is a multi-dimensional construct, the measurement of which varies depending on a variety of factors. It is important to determine whether the measurement objective is to assess performance outcomes or behaviour. There are different views on what performance is. It can be regarded as simply the record of outcomes achieved. On an individual basis, it is a

record of the person's accomplishments. Kane (1996:123-45) argues that performance is something that the person leaves behind and that exists apart from the purpose. The Oxford English Dictionary defines performance as: 'the accomplishment, execution, carrying out, working out of anything ordered or undertaken'. This refers to outputs/outcomes (accomplishment) but also states that performance is about doing the work as well as being about the results achieved. In summary, employee performance common to most jobs include elements like quantity, quality and timeliness of output, presence at work and cooperativeness. An organization's goals can be achieved only when people put in their best efforts. How do we ascertain whether an employee has shown his or her best performance on a given job? The answer is performance appraisal. In simple terms, performance appraisal may be understood as the assessment of an individual's performance being measured against such factors as job knowledge, quality and quantity of output, initiative, leadership abilities, supervision, dependability, co-operation, judgement, versatility, health and the like (Aswathappa, 2005:226-227). Numerous methods have been devised to measure the quantity and quality of employee's job performance. They include rating Scales, checklist, forced choice method and critical incidents method.

Compensation: Compensation is an important factor affecting how and why people choose to work at one organisation over others. It is a total package of wages/salaries, allowances and other fringe benefits against the back-ground of the devices for measuring and rewarding high productivity and the sanction which are applied when performance falls below expectations (Onosode, 1982:21). One of the key reasons of salary administration is that proper wages differentials are established and maintained within organisations on the basis of relative worth of jobs. Also, another important consideration is that a wage/salary structure should be based in such a way that it will be attractive enough to retain capable and efficient workers. Compensation, therefore is the activity by which organisations evaluate the contributions or performance of employees with the aim of distributing fairly direct and indirect, monetary and non-monetary rewards within the organization's ability to pay as it may legally be required. Total compensation for employees includes monetary and non-monetary rewards and direct and indirect rewards. Mathis & Jackson (2003:372) point out that rewards can be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic rewards often include praise for completing project or meeting performance objectives. Other psychological and social effects of compensation according to Mulvey (2000:6) reflect the intrinsic type of rewards. Extrinsic rewards are tangible and take both monetary and non-monetary forms. Tangible components of a compensation programme are of two general types. With direct compensation, the employer exchanges monetary rewards for work done.

Occupational Safety and Health in Organisations: Another area that needs special attention in talent management is the consideration of safety and health of workers. Today, employees expect their employers to provide work environments that are safe, secure, and healthy. A number of laws and regulations have been enacted that establish requirements for employers. The terms health, and safety are closely related. Safety, as explained by Heinrich (1959:16), means freedom from the occurrence or risk of injury or loss. Industrial safety or

employee safety refers to the protection of workers from the danger of industrial accidents. An accident, then, is an unplanned and uncontrolled event in which an action or reaction of an object, a substance, a person, or a radiation results in personal injury. Occupation safety and health, in general terms refers to the physiological and socio-psychological conditions of an organisation's workforce resulting from the work environment. An organisation that is mindful of its safety and health for employees would have fewer accidents and less harmful diseases affecting its workers. Common harmful physiological and physical conditions resulting from occupational diseases and accidents, include actual loss of a part of one's body, cardiovascular diseases, death, various forms of cancer, asthma etc. Common harmful socio psychological conditions as a result of occupational stress and low quality of work life, are dissatisfaction, withdrawal;, projection, forgetfulness, inner confusion about roles or duties, mistrust of others, procrastinations, etc. Some organisations in this regard have quite adequate medical facilities available to their employees, others have nurses on hand, with physicians available on call, but majority of businesses, particularly small ones have little or nothing, along this line. For such companies, they need to arise to the challenges of providing standard occupational safety and health environment in an effort of being cost-effective as well as increasing workers productivity. The importance of occupational safety cannot be overemphasized. It is well known that a good working environment in terms of safety and health of workers help in cutting down costs of occupational diseases, accident victims, deaths, etc. Also, higher productivity can be achieved by reducing organizational stress and a low quality of work life. Lack of proper handling in such harmful conditions can lead to lack of organizational effectiveness which is usually as a result of loss of productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and workers compensation claims.

Human Capital Planning and Downsizing: Over the past decade, downsizing has been in full swing and reductions in the workforce became a fact of life in the world of work. For many organisations, these actions were necessary to improve profitability, eliminate obsolete functions and reduce over-staffed areas – Human Capital Planning Process. As organisations move towards more strategic workforce management, downsizing will remain part of the workforce landscape, but the catalyst for it will change. Downsizing began as the strategy of sick companies shedding workers in the face of weak demand, but soon strong firms seeking to boost shareholder value also adopted the policy. Downsizing sometimes called "rightsizing" refers to the planned elimination of positions, operations or jobs. This programme is often used to implement retrenchment strategies. Downsizing or rightsizing as separation strategy can take the form of layoffs, resignations, dismissal (discharge), retrenchment, closure and voluntary retirement scheme (VRS).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS
The questionnaire was distributed to 385 top, middle and lower levels staff of the five selected public sector organizations and 349 copies representing 92% were completed and returned as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Rate of Response to Questionnaire Administered

Organisation	Questionnaire Administered	%	No. Returned /responded	%	No. not returned /responded	%
National Directorate of Employment.	64	16	60	16	4	1
Power Holding Company of Nigeria.	116	30	106	28	10	2
Plateau State Water Board.	14	4	14	4	-	-
Federal Ministry of Finance.	79	21	70	18	9	2
Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.	112	29	99	26	13	3
Total	385	100%	349	92%	36	8%

Source: Field survey, 2012

This questionnaire contains 12 questions relating to the level of talent management practices in the organisations under study. The questions covered talent management practices like recruitment, selection and placement, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, turnover, career development and promotion. The responses reveal a total expected response frequency 4, 188. Of this, the observed response frequencies of strongly agree = 615 or 15%, agree = 1,480 or 35%, undecided = 747 or 18%, strongly disagree = 993 or 24% and strongly disagree =353(8%). This information is used to test hypothesis 1 with the result as shown in Table1.2

The Kruskal-Wallis computer-statistical package for social sciences (SPSS)-16.O version was used to test the relationship between Talent management and employee productivity. For these and other purposes, we formulated hypothesis 1 as follows:

H_1 : Talent Management significantly impact on employee productivity.

Table 1.2 Result of the Kruskal-Wallis Test Showing the Relationship between Talent Management and Employee Productivity

	Talent management
Chi-Square	0.220
Df	1
Asymp. Sig. – employee productivity respectively	0.639

Source: Field Survey, 2012

The result of the Kruskal-Wallis test showing the relationship between talent management and employee productivity (as shown on Table 1.2) reveal that talent management impacts employee productivity by 0.639.

Statistical Decision

Level of significance = 0.05; Sample size (n) = 349. Test statistics = Kruskal-Wallis; Decision criterion = Reject H_o if K_c Calculated > k_t = 0.5. Weak relationship is taken to be between –0.5 and 0.05. Relationship outside this range is taken to be strong ($\therefore$ Critical values = −0.5 to 0.5). Since K_c = 0.639 > k_t = 0.5, we reject H_o and accept H_1. It was concluded that talent management significantly impact employee productivity in public sector organizations of Nigeria. The result of the test of hypothesis agrees with the Matching theory (Fombrun theory) which states that talent management culminates in performance and that where talent management is undertaken even at minimal levels, the results are increases in employee productivity and organizational effectiveness. According to the Matching theory, HCP outcomes lead to commitment in terms of increases in employee commitment and productivity (Bratton, 1999:11-26). The result also agrees with the Harvard theory (Harvard Framework) which states that long term consequences of HCP include the attainment of organizational effectiveness (Boxal, 1992:65). Guest (1987: 503-21; 1989a) confirms the result of this hypothesis testing by asserting that talent management leads to high commitment: behavioural commitment to pursue agreed goals, and attitudinal commitment reflected in a strong identification with the enterprise. Guest also asserts that talent management leads to high quality. This refers to all aspects of managerial behaviour that bear directly on the quality of goods and services provided, including the management of employees and investment in high quality employees. This also positively confirms the result of the test. Guest, still in confirmation of the test of hypothesis, believes that the driving force behind talent management is 'the pursuit of competitive advantage in the market place through provision of high-quality goods and services, through competitive pricing linked to high productivity and through the capacity to swiftly innovate and manage change in response to changes in the market place or to breakthroughs in research and development.' He considers that talent management values are unitarist to the extent that they assume no underlying and inevitable differences of interest between management and workers, and individualistic in that they emphasize the individual-organisation linkage in preference to operating through group and representative systems. Also, the result agrees with the findings

of Brumbach (1988: 387– 402) in a research on the measures of successes recorded when proactive talent management practices were applied on the employees of Cargil, an International provider of Food and Agricultural Services based in Chicago, USA, it was discovered that talent management single handedly contributed to more than 70% increase in employee productivity. There was a sudden increase in the quantity and quality of output; timeliness of output; presence at work; and cooperativeness. Aswathappa (2005: 226 – 227) also claims that research studies have found a strong relationship existing between coherent talent management processes on one hand and employee job, knowledge, quality and quantity of output, initiative, leadership abilities, supervision, dependability, co-operation, judgement, versatility and health on the other hand. In order words, deliberate efforts to improve on talent management processes like recruitment, selection and placement, training and development, compensation, performance appraisal, turnover management; employer-labour relationship; health, safety and welfare, succession planning and promotion bring about specific improvements in employee productivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The processes that add up to talent management are not new. However, the development of a more coherent view as to how these processes mesh together with an overall objective- to acquire and nurture talent, wherever it is and wherever it is needed, by using a number of interdependent policies and practices lead to very high returns on employee productivity. As a result, managers of human capital in the public sector of Nigeria should be educated and trained in scientific methods of managing organizational talent with the aim of replacing the guess work and intuition currently in use. Also, in order to increase employee productivity, human capital planners should be educated on how the various processes of talent management mesh together with the overall objective of the organisations. Public organisations should as a matter of urgency undertake deliberate training programs to equip workers with updated technologies that would increase the competitiveness of Nigerian organisations with those of multinationals. This is the only way to overcome the force of globalization and international competition. Lastly, various actors in talent management, especially the human resource departments of public sector organisations should adopt advocacy with the aim of influencing detrimental laws and legislations that have direct bearing on the operations of their organisations.

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