

**HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE COMPETENCY AMONG
ACADEMIC STAFF OF NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS.**

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Abstract

This study empirically examines the contribution of human capital development effort towards ensuring employees' competency in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. In carrying out this study, three hypotheses were formulated and a questionnaire tagged Human Capital and Employees' Competency Scale was used to conduct the survey. Systematic random sampling method was employed to select 300 academic staff of Federal Polytechnics in the south-west states being the institutions from the study area (South-West, Nigeria). Data collected was analyzed with multiple linear regression with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result revealed a strong correlation among employees' competency and the variables used as proxy for Human Capital Development (HCD) efforts - human capital development, human capital investments and elimination of hindrances to human capital development. It was concluded that human capital development activities contribute significantly to the competence of academic personnel as the variation in employees' competency is influenced by the combination of human capital development policies, investment on human capital development and elimination of hindrances to human capital development. It was recommended that government, management of educational institutions, employers of labour should adopt policies and practices that will improve the competencies of their employees'

Keywords: Employee competency, Human capital development.

INTRODUCTION

Human capital development and training and development are basically the same. It takes human capital to organize and rationalize the contributions of other factors of production before a result oriented productive goal can be achieved in any industrial setting. Therefore human capital development is about supporting and investing in human capital, coaching, training, internship and human capital management. The concept is conveyed as the skills, general or specific, acquired by an individual in the cause of vocational and technical education, training and the industrial work place training (Enyekit, E. O, Amaehule, S & Teerah, L. E, 2011).

Human capital through vocational and technical education is an inevitable issue that needs attention of both the government and spirited individuals. Human capital development is something that must exist or happen for national development. It implies building an appropriate balance and critical mass of human resource base and providing an enabling environment for all individuals to be fully engaged and contribute to goals of an organization or a nation (Enyekit, E. O, Amaehule, S & Teerah, L. E, 2011). Any effort to increase human knowledge, enhance skills, productivity and stimulate resourcefulness of individuals is an effort of human capital development (Erhuraa, 2007) (cited in Enyekit, E. O, Amaehule, S & Teerah, L. E, 2011). Although there is broad assumption that human capital has positive effects on

firms' competency, the notion of competency for human capital perhaps or probably remains largely untested.

Statement of the Problems

Employee development programmes were based on the recognition that organizations were becoming increasingly dependent on their human resources (Schein, 1977) (cited in Peter Brenya, 2014). Human capital is getting wider attention with increasing globalization and also the saturation of the job market due to the recent downturn in the various economies of the world. Developed and developing countries may have put emphases more on human capital development towards accelerating the economic growth by devoting necessary time and efforts (Marimuthu, Arokiasamy & Ismail, 2009).

A strategy for improving workforce productivity to drive higher value for the firms has become an important focus (Marimuthu et. al, 2009). Worldwide, unemployment levels remain high while organizations have difficulty in filling vacancies that require specific expertise (Alan Price, 2007). More importantly, Healthfield, (2011) suggests that the shortage of skilled people can act as a limiting factor on individual organization and on the economy as a whole. Economic growth creates employments, but economic growth partly depends on skilled human resources. Educational institutions, especially tertiary institutions, are expected to produce high quality human capital through qualitative instruction delivery by highly competent instructors (Lecturer, Technologist etc.). It is equally expected that those who have acquired qualitative learning and skill would avail society the best of their intellectual wealth and skills. Whereas the reverse may be the case in Nigeria where visions of development cannot be translated into reality (Ogechukwu & Okoye, 2015)

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the predictive influence of Human Capital Development on Employee Competency among Lecturers in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions. To achieve this, the research intends

- i. To ascertain the extent to which investment in human capital development provides organization with competent workers comparatively.
- ii. To examine the extent to which hindrances to human capital development and utilization affects employees' competency in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

Research Hypotheses

1. Ho: There is no significant predictive influence of human capital development on employees' competency.
2. Ho: Investment in Human capital development has not significantly provides organizations with competent workers comparatively.
3. Ho: There are no significant hindrances to human capital development and Utilization in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Significance of the Study:

The government as well as different group of people will benefit from the study i.e. employees, managers and organization as a whole on the long run. It is anticipated that the findings of the study will pave way for the Management of academic institutions in Nigeria to accept human capital development as one of the variable that affect employees' competency. Management of academic institutions could utilized such an acceptance to improve on the capability, capacity, and competency of employees. It is hoped that the study will help practitioner managers of organization to work on their relationships with their employees, with a view to ascertain gaps in their actual skill and knowledge as against desired skill and knowledge and be prompted to assist them to achieve the desire level of competency through human capital development. The result is expected to throw more light on reasons why government needs to embark on human capital development in general as a veritable tool for economic development. Finally, the horizon of individual employee will be broadened towards human capital development as a catalyst for improving their individual marketability and employability in labour market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept and Theory of Human Capital

Human Capital is a term that denotes all the knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, and wisdom possessed individually and collectively by individuals in a population (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Capital). Human Capital can be defined as knowledge, skill, attitudes, aptitudes, and other acquired traits contributing to production (Goode, 1959). The impact of human capital can be largely categorized into three: individual, organization and society (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009). The different sources of human capital are: innate

ability, schooling investments, training, school quality and non-schooling investments and pre-labour market influences (Acemoglu & Author, 2010). Going by the viewpoints of some neo-classical economics such as: Becker _ Gardener, Schultz, a Nelson _ Phelps Bowles _ Gintis and Spencer, (Acemoglu & Author, 2010) some uses of human capital can be exemplified as; 1). Facilitation of production process; 2) Identification of different skills such as physical and mental abilities; 3) Dealing with disequilibrium situation; 4) Instilling of the “correct’ ideology and approach towards life in individuals; 5) Act as signal of ability independently useful in production process (Acemoglu & Author 2010). Three kinds of human capital have been identified by researchers as: a general, firm specific and task-specific (Gibbons & Waldman 2004; Hatch & Dyer, 2004) (cited in Acemoglu & Author 2010). It is difficult that the specific human capital embedded in an individual is transfers to different industries (Acemoglu & Author 2010).

Application of human capital concept on human is not recent. The view that human and his qualification might be a part of capital has proponents among economists since the birth of science of economics (Bildiric, Orean, Sunnal & Aykac, 2005). The origin of human capital goes back to the emergence of classical economics such as: W. Petty, W. farr, A. Smith, J.B. Say, N. Senior, F. List, J.S. Mill, A. Marshall, V. Thunen, W. Roscher, W. Bagehot, E. Engel, H. Sigwick, L. Walras and I. Fisher (Bildiric et al., 2005). The first estimate of a nation’s stock of human capital was probably made around 1676 by Sir William Petty in his Political Arithmetick Published in 1960 (Machlup, 2014). Exactly a hundred year later in 1776, Adam Smith published his inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Smith considered education as one of the effective ways of increasing the productivity of human resources (Machlup, 2014).

From the foregoing, it is indicated that including human beings within the analytical framework of capital is not a new idea (Anumudu Nnamdi, 2010). It is therefore important to dispel the misconception that the theory of human capital is an entirely new field (Machlup, 2014). It suffices to show at this point that the theory of human capital had been in the economics and statistical literature for almost 300 years before the floodgates were opened by Shultz and Becker (Machlup, 2014). Though the use of the term “human

capital” in the modern neoclassical economic literature dates back to Jacob Mincer’s article “Investment in Human Capital and Personal income Distribution” in the Journal of Political Economy in 1958, but, Arthur Lewis is said to have begun the field of development economics and consequently the idea of human capital ([Http: /en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/ Human_Capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_Capital)). Thereafter, Schultz applied the notion of human capital to the economics of education, particularly to an explanation of human resources (Machlup, 2014). The best – known application of the idea of “human capital” in economics is that of Mincer and Gary Becker of the “Chicago School of economics”. Becker’s book entitled Human Capital, published in 1964, became a standard reference for many years. In his view, human capital is similar to “Physical means of production” and one’s outputs depend partly on the rate of return on the human capital one owns. Thus, human capital is substitutable, but not transferable like land, labour, or fixed capital (https://en-wikipedia.org/wiki/human_capital).

Concept and Theory of Employee Competency

The prominent role of competency development in enhancing the success of employees and organizations has drawn the attention of practitioners leading them to introduce competency development as a central part of their human resource practices (Delamare & Winterton, 2005; Lawler, 1994). As a result, the use of competencies within human resource management has become widespread in today’s organizations (Athey, & Orth, 1999; Heinsman, de Hoogh, Koopman, & van Muijen, 2006; Nybø, 2004). Following Spencer & Spencer (1993), competency is defined as: “an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job or a situation”. A competency is a set of skills, related knowledge and attributes that allow an individual to successfully perform a task or an activity within a specific function or job (UNIDO, 2002). According to Furnham (1990) the term competence is new and fashionable but the concept is old. Competency has its origins in the Latin word ‘competentia’ which means ‘is authorized to judge’ as well as ‘has the right to speak’ (Caupin, 2006). Chankaya in his book, Arthashastra has explained competency-mapping models as early as 3000 years ago (Misra, 2004). McClelland (1976) described ‘competency’ as the characteristics underlying superior performance. He is credited with introducing the idea of ‘competency’ into the human resource literature (Draganidis, & Mentzas, 2006).

The most outspoken proposals for a generic competence framework is the one developed by (Bartram, 2005), who conducted a meta-analysis on a series of 29 competence research studies with a total research group covered 4,861 participants. **Competencies as presented by Bartram, 2005(Great Eight Framework)** consists: 1. Leading and Deciding, 2. Supporting and Cooperating, 3.Interacting and Presenting, 4. Analyzing and Interpreting, 5.Creating and Conceptualizing, 6. Organizing and Executing, 7. Adapting and Coping, 8. Enterprising and Performing.

Theory in field of learning suggests that competency seeking typically begins with a sense of uncertainty (Collins, Mellon & Young, 1987); (Kuhlthau, 1993)(cited in Gross & Latham, 2007).Competency theory develop in the domain of psychology suggests that people who lack competency tends not only to be unaware of their lack of ability, but to overestimate what they can do (Duning& Kruger, 1999) (cited in Gross & Latham, 2007).Conversely, highly skilled people tend to underestimate their performance, assuming that they are less skilled than they actually are (Erlinger et. al., 2008). However, individuals with strong skills can use social comparison to regulate this misconception, while individuals who lack this skill cannot. This may mean that people who lack skills do not realize it and therefore are unlikely to seek remediation (Duning& Kruger, 2009; Duning, Johnson, Erlinger& Kruger, 2003) (cited in Gross & Lathan, 2012). Competency theory posited that low skills individuals lack the meta-cognitive skills needed to recognize the relevant of training and other skill acquisition efforts to their personal context (Freemans, 2004; 45).

Erlinger& Dunning (2003) explored the basis of these inaccurate self- evaluations and their finding suggest that the locus of these inaccuracies is that people do not receive “unambiguous and unbiased feedback about their performances” (Erlinger& Dunning, 2003) (cited in Machlup, 2014). Dunning, Johnson, Erlinger, & Kruger (2003) offer a working definition of metacognition as the ability to evaluate responses as correct or incorrect (Machlup, 2014). According to Carter & Dunning (2008), people live in an information environment that does not contain all the accurate data they need for conforming to self-evaluation.

Empirical Review

Olalere & Adenugba (2013) conducted a research on human capital development in First Bank of Nigeria PLC using both primary and secondary data, and particularly questionnaire and in-depth interview as instruments for primary data collection and their findings revealed that the human capital development programmes of First Bank of Nigeria Plc have improved the skills, attitude and the performance of staff of the bank which invariably has led to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. They also concluded that there is still a need for the bank to put in place other motivational policies that will be attractive to the staff to retain them after the training and development exercise (Oyinlola&Adeyemi, 2014).

Bapna, Mehra, Gopal & Guta (2011) study the impact of human capital investments in the context of the Indian IT services industry. They find a significant positive impact of training on employee performance. According to the additional training course, on an average employee improve their performance by 3.6% and their findings also state that the value of training is conditional upon a focused curricular approach that emphasizes a structured competency development programmes (Al-Ghazawil, 2012).

Ogechukwu and Okoye, (2014) asserts that, there are “Hindrances to human capital development, orientation and utilization through Nigerian system of education and noted that the challenge is mostly experienced at the tertiary level of education. Some of the challenges further mentioned are: Nigeria system of education was ineffective due to poor coordination and administration; the objectives enshrined in the National policy on Education (NPE) of Nigeria are vague (both in clarity and measurability); inadequate funding of education sector; neglect of the tertiary institution in the policy implementation; dilapidated infrastructures.

METHODOLOGY

Research Area:The study was conducted in the South-West Geo-political zones of Nigeria.

Research Design: The independent variable in the study is Human Capital Development (HCD), while the dependent variable is Employee Competency (EC). In the study, there was no manipulation of the independent variables used to proxy for HCD, since the process had already occurred before the

commencement of the study and the researchers were only interested in inferring into the outcome (Competency). Therefore, the study was an Ex-post facto research.

Population: The population of the study consists of Academic Staff from Four (4) Federal Polytechnics in the South-West states Nigeria. This comprises instructors, technologists, lecturers and librarians.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample of the study is drawn from the population of Academic Staff from the Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun; Federal Polytechnic, Ado, Ado-Ekiti; Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun; Yaba college of Technology, Yaba, Lagos. A systematic random sampling technique was adopted to select 300 samples.

Instrument: A questionnaire consisting of two scales was used to collect the necessary data. The questionnaire consisted of three (3) sections; Section A is biographic information of the respondents, Section B is Human Capital Development Scale and Section C is Employees' Competency Scale.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument: The instrument was pretested to Academic staff in another Polytechnic (MoshoodAbiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta which was not part of the targeted population) with a view to validate its psychometrics property, using Cronbach-alpha method analysis to measure the internal consistency and factor analysis for the validation. It was found that the instrument has a stable psychometric characteristics evidenced by the internal consistency ($\alpha=.765$) (see table 1 below) and it was also found to provide an objective means of assessment, evidenced by the result of the principal component factor analysis.

The solution revealed that the items on the scale loaded keenly on three factors/components; the total variance explained indicated that the factor accounted for 98.13% (cumulative percentage) variation in the solution /model; the communality table reported extract value with strong loading that ranges from .804 - .996; the component matrix value ranges from .42 - .655; the correlation matrix has a significant value ($p < .05$) which implies a sufficient correlation among the items on the scale. From the foregoing, it is indicated that the responses (from the pretested scale) are a function of the content of the items in the instrument and not of any form of bias.

Method of Data Analysis: The data was analyzed, using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) by adopting Multiple Regression Analysis.

Model Specification: The model can be denoted as $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3$ where, Y= Employees' Competency; β_0 = Intercept; β (i.e. $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$)= Correlation coefficients of X_1, X_2, X_3 ; X_1 = Human Capital Development, X_2 = Investment on Human Capital Development X_3 = Hindrances to Human Capital Development and Utilization

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|------------------|--|------------|
| .765 | .761 | 38 |

Table2: Correlations

| Std. Deviation | Competency | HCD | InvHCD | HindHCD |
|----------------|------------|-------|--------|---------|
| 3.75374 | 1.000 | - | - | - |
| 4.36173 | .932 | 1.000 | - | - |
| 2.01139 | .988 | .871 | 1.000 | - |
| 2.08588 | -.978 | -.873 | -.985 | 1.000 |

Table3: Model Summary^b

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .999 ^a | .997 | .997 | .19634 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), HindHCD, HCD, InvHCD

b. Dependent Variable: Competency

Table 4: ANOVA^a

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 4201.669 | 3 | 1400.556 | 36331.096 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 11.411 | 296 | .039 | | |
| | Total | 4213.080 | 299 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Competency

b. Predictors: (Constant), HindHCD, HCD, InvHCD

Table 5: Correlation Coefficient

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | -1.997 | 1.189 | | -1.680 | .094 |
| 1 HCD | .255 | .005 | .296 | 47.327 | .000 |
| InvHCD | 1.335 | .033 | .715 | 40.743 | .000 |
| HindHCD | -.027 | .032 | -.015 | -.834 | .405 |

Testing of Hypothesis

Research Hypothesis 1 – Ho: There is no predictive influence of human capital development (HCD) on employees’ competency (EC).

Human capital and Employees’ competency were correlated and the result from the multiple linear regression analysis confirmed that: The predictive influence of HCD on EC is significant evidenced by the correlation coefficient value $\beta = .296$, $t = 47.327$, $p < .05$; and associated significant probability “.000” therefore the above null hypothesis is rejected. Following from the foregoing, it is deduced that a unit change in HCD will result to 29.6 percent change in EC (see table 5 above).

The result also confirmed that: (1) The model use for the test is of good fit, evidenced by ANOVA value $f(3/1400.556=36331.096)$, $p < .05$ and associated significant probability “.000” (see table 4 above); (2) 99.7% of the variation in the dependent variable (EC) was accounted for by the independent variable (HCD), this is evidenced by the model summary value $R = .999$, $R^2 = .997$ and $adjR^2 = .997$ (see table 3 above); (3) there exists a strong positive relationship between HCD and EC evidenced by the value of the correlation matrix $r = .932$ (see table 2 above)

Research Hypothesis 2 - Ho: Investment in human capital development has not significantly provides tertiary institutions with competent workers comparatively.

Based on the result of the test concerning investment on human capital development which have the value $\beta = .715$, $t = 40.743$, $P < .05$ with associated significant probability value of “.000” (see table 5 above), it was deduced that there is a significant relationship between investment in HCD and EC and the null hypothesis is rejected. Following from the above, a unit change in Naira (Expenditure) incur on human capital development, will result to 71.5% change in employees’ competency level. It could also be

deduced from table 2 above that there exists a strong positive relationship between HCD and EC evidenced by the value of the correlation matrix $r = .988$

Research Hypothesis 3 - *Ho: There are no significant hindrances to human capital development and utilization in Nigerian tertiary institutions.*

The test concerning hindrances to human capital development and utilization in Nigerian tertiary institutions was found to be insignificant with a value of $\beta = -0.15$, $t = -.834$, $P > .05$ and significant probability value of 40.5 percent. This implies that the null hypothesis is accepted and assumed that there is an insignificant inverse relationship between hindrances to human capital development and utilization, and employees' competency. It could also be reasonably concluded from the foregoing that a unit increase in any form of hindrance to HCD would result in 0.1% decrease in employees' competency. Finally, it was found that there exists a strong negative relationship between HCD and EC evidenced by the value of the correlation matrix $r = -.978$ (see table 2 above)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary of findings: In discussing research hypothesis 1, which is concerned with predictive influence of human capital development on employees' competency (EC) revealed a strong positive correlation between the two variables (HCD and EC) and this align with some previous studies: Olalere & Adenugba (2013) (cited in Oyinlola & Adeyemi, 2014) for instance concluded that human capital development programmes of First Bank of Nigeria Plc have improve the competencies (Skills, Attitude, and Performance) of their employees'.

Concerning research question two which probes how investment on human capital development has provided organization with competent worker's comparatively. The result of the hypothesis test revealed the existence of a positive significant relationship between human capital investment and employees' competency. This concession substantiates the studies by Bapna et.al (2011) which investigated the impact of human capital investment in context of the Indian IT service industry and found a significant positive impact of training on employees' performance.

With respect to research question three, scrutiny the possible hindrances to human capital development and utilization, the test affirm that there are hindrances to HCD and utilization. It was also attested that

there exists an insignificant negative correlation between HCD and EC. This disclosure supported the claims of previous studies: Oghechukwu & Okoye, (2014) in questing into Hindrances to HCD and Utilization asserted that the supply of educational institutions are not related to labour market requirements nor individual students interests; the educational system predicted limited high level manpower need in the country; Nigerian system of education was ineffective as a result of poor co-ordination and administration; the country's National policy on Education bothers on unclear and immeasurable term.

Conclusion: It is quite important to briefly have an overview of the findings of this study. This study revealed that there is significant relationship between human capital development and employees' competency and that 99.7 % of the variance in employees' competency is influenced by human capital development. Equally, the study find a strong significant relationship between each of the variable that were used to proxy for human capital development. This study also revealed that human capital investment is the highest predictor of employees' competency.

Limitation of the study: The sample of the study may not be wide enough to generalize the findings of the study of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, as it is only limited to Federal Polytechnics in South-West, Nigeria. The researchers did not possess the luxury of time and wherewithal in carrying out the investigation of all tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Also, the independent variable (Human Capital Development) tested to predict workers' competency is sound but some variables are lacking in this study which may also be contributing to workers' competency. Furthermore, the data collection was not diverse enough to give the image of all academic institutions functioning in Nigeria. The data collection exempted the workforce in the private academic institutions, whereas the total proportion of the Nigerian workforce in the private academic institutions is substantial. Hence, results may not be adequately generalized for academic workforce in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions.

Recommendations

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

1. Training and Development Programmes that could build the desired capacity of the workers in terms of updating their skills and knowledge of the jobs towards adaptability to changes in working environment should be introduced by both private and public employer of labour on regular basis in order to boost and improve the competencies among workforce.
2. Periodic capacity/capability assessment should be embarked upon by organizations to identify gaps in staff knowledge and skill with the aim of establishing and aligning appropriate developmental programmes with both employees and employers' need.
3. Employer should conduct periodic "work place index survey" to identify and itemize what employee desire and receive to help improve their competencies.
4. Concerted efforts should be made by relevant bodies in the educational sector (i.e. NUC and NBTE) in Nigeria to enhance the vocational and entrepreneurship content of academic programmes, offered by tertiary institutions in the country.
5. Organizations should adopt a documented human capital management policies and strategy which is not only achievable and effective but also can be integrated into the corporate strategy
6. Professional Bodies in Nigeria should develop a standardized scale for the assessment of human resources in Nigerian corporate organizations.
7. Management of educational institutions should adopt a pragmatic and proactive of consistence re-evaluation that can lead to the establishment of causal relationship between human capital management and employees' competency and consequent developmental programmes such as seminars and workshops.
8. Government should adopt a comprehensive human capital development policies backed up by substantial annual budgetary allocation aim at maximizing individual citizen competency and thus (his or her future) employees' earnings and by extension, a company's profits and the nation's wealth.

Suggestion for further Research

To further broaden the frontiers of knowledge, the following areas are thereby suggested. The population

can be broadened to enhance generalization of the results; that is intensive research work is carried out on a wider scale covering other state polytechnics as well as other geo-political zones in Nigeria.

There is need to establish a greater understanding of the relationship between human capital development and hindrances to human capital development (HCD) which is one of the elements used as a proxy for HCD as this study had established a non-significant relationship which is contrary to some other research findings. Furthermore, other factors should be used to characterize HCD in future investigation. Equally, future researchers could focus on other important work related variables.

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