

Unlocking human potential for institutional excellence: an examination of talent management practices and employee productivity in Ogun State universities, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between talent management practices and employee productivity in Ogun State universities, Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate the influence of talent management on employee productivity and identify strategies for unlocking human potential and driving institutional excellence. A survey research design was used, and data were collected with a self-structured questionnaire from 586 academic and non-academic employees of four selected universities in Ogun State and simple random sampling technique was employed, the research instrument was validated by the average variance (0.831). Cronbach's alpha of the scale for the variable was greater than 0.70, which suggest that instrument was reliable and data gathered was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (simple linear regression analysis). The result showed there was a positive influence talent management on employee productivity in universities in Ogun State at the value of ($\beta = .517$, $t = 14.791$, $p < 0.05$), supporting previous research that effective talent management practices improve employee productivity. The study also showed a significant relationship between talent management and organizational performance, emphasizing the importance of talent management in achieving organizational objectives. The study recommends that universities in Ogun State should develop and implement effective talent management programs, invest in training and development programs, and conduct regular assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of their talent management practices.

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Introduction

In today's knowledge-driven economy, institutions of higher learning are facing increasing pressure to improve their performance and productivity (Bryson, 2017). Universities, in particular, are expected to produce high-quality research, innovative solutions, and skilled graduates who can drive economic growth and development (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt & Terra, 2000). To achieve these goals, universities must effectively manage their most valuable resource: human talent (Blass & Hayward, 2020). Talent management practices, such as recruitment, training, and development, performance

management, and retention, are crucial for unlocking human potential and driving employee productivity (CIPD, 2020). Talent management practices are critical for unlocking human potential and driving employee productivity in institutions of higher learning (Blass & Hayward, 2020). Effective talent management practices can lead to improved job satisfaction, increased employee engagement, and enhanced organizational performance (Alfes, Shantz & Truss, 2013). In the context of Ogun State universities, Nigeria, talent management practices are crucial for driving institutional excellence and achieving strategic objectives.

In developing countries, including those in Africa, the challenges of talent management are exacerbated by factors such as brain drain, limited resources, and inadequate infrastructure (Mohammed, 2018). Nigeria, with its large and growing youth population, is no exception. The country's universities are expected to play a key role in driving economic growth and development, but they face significant challenges in terms of funding, infrastructure, and human resource capacity (Nwachukwu, 2019). Ogun State universities, located in southwestern Nigeria, are among the institutions facing these challenges. Despite their potential, these universities struggle with low productivity, high turnover rates, and inadequate talent management practices (Adeyemi, Oyewunmi & Oladele, 2020). In fact, a recent study found that Nigerian universities lose up to 50% of their staff annually due to poor working conditions, inadequate compensation, and lack of opportunities for professional development (Adeyinka, Oyewole & Ogunleye, 2017). The problem of inadequate talent management practices and low employee productivity in Ogun State universities is a pressing concern that requires urgent attention. With over 100,000 students and 5,000 employees, Ogun State universities have the potential to drive economic growth and development in the region (National Universities Commission, 2022). However, the inability to effectively manage talent can lead to - High turnover rates, with up to 50% of staff leaving annually (Adeyinka *et al.*, 2017), - Low productivity, with an average employee productivity rate of 2.5/5 (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2020), - Inadequate human resource capacity, with a staff-to-student ratio of 1:200 (National Universities Commission, 2022).

Employee productivity in universities is significantly influenced by the skills, knowledge, and experience of employees, which are direct outcomes of effective human capital management (Oke, Ojo & Oladipo, 2022). In Nigeria, managing human capital is a complex task that requires careful attention, as the quality of the workforce and human capital management capabilities directly impact organizational performance (Ojo, Oke & Oladipo, 2020). While financial constraints were previously considered the primary obstacle to developing educational institutions in Nigeria, the inability to employ and retain high-quality human capital is now recognized as a more significant challenge (Nwachukwu, 2021). Despite these challenges, research has consistently shown that effective talent management practices can lead to improved job satisfaction, increased employee engagement, and enhanced organizational performance (Alfes *et al.*, 2013). In Nigeria, where the higher education sector is characterized by low productivity and high turnover rates (Adeyemi *et al.*, 2020), the need for effective talent management practices is more pressing than ever. This study aims to examine the relationship between talent management practices and employee productivity in Ogun State universities, with a view to identifying strategies for unlocking human potential and driving institutional excellence.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of talent management on employee productivity of selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria

Research Question

How does talent management affect employee productivity of selected public and private universities in Ogun State?

Hypothesis

In line with the objective of this study, and in order to provide answer to research question above, a null hypothesis was formulated and tested at P value of 0.05:

Ho1: Talent management has no significant influence on employee productivity of selected public and private universities in Ogun State.

Literature Review

Human Capital Management

Human capital management involves practices that address organizational needs by providing specific competencies and treating employees as assets whose value can be enhanced through investment (Oke *et al.*, 2022). It encompasses workforce planning, recruitment, employee training, and analytics to achieve optimal performance (Oke *et al.*, 2022). Human capital management can be measured through drivers such as leadership practices, employee engagement, workforce optimization, knowledge accessibility, and learning capacity (Blass & Hayward, 2020, 2020). Effective human capital management is crucial for talent management and employee productivity, as it informs strategic decisions and enhances organizational performance (Blass & Hayward, 2020). However, in Nigeria, human capital management practices are often guided by parochial interests, leading to casualization, lack of compensation packages, and limited career development opportunities (Ojo *et al.*, 2020). These negative practices erode employee commitment, dampen morale, and lead to turnover intentions (Ojo *et al.*, 2020).

Talent Management

The concept of talent management emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as human resource departments shifted from administrative tasks to strategic planning and employee management (Oke *et al.*, 2022). Human resources play a crucial role in developing competitive compensation packages, serving as a central point for employee well-being, and facilitating effective communication (Oke *et al.*, 2022). Talent management has become a global challenge, with organizations competing for a limited pool of skilled employees to drive growth and profitability (Singh & Sharma, 2020). Talent management involves identifying, developing, and retaining high-potential employees to fill strategic roles and achieve organizational objectives (Blass & Hayward, 2020). Its primary goal is to ensure the right people are in the right jobs at the right time, fostering an environment that encourages commitment and optimal performance (Blass & Hayward, 2020). According to the Chartered Institute of Professional Development (CIPD, 2020), talent management focuses on developing individuals who can significantly impact organizational performance. Effective talent management ensures that organizations have the necessary skills and expertise to execute their business strategy (CIPD, 2020).

Concept of Employee Productivity

Productivity refers to the relationship between outputs and inputs, where an increase in output with a less than proportionate increase in inputs or the same output produced with fewer inputs indicates a rise in productivity (Oke *et al.*, 2022). Productivity can be measured in monetary terms, employment rates, wage rates, job satisfaction, and market share, among others (Blass & Hayward, 2020). It is a measure of the quantity and quality of work done, considering the cost of resources used, and is crucial for an organization's competitive advantage (Oke *et al.*, 2022). Productivity is not just about producing more, but also about using fewer resources to achieve the same output (Blass & Hayward, 2020). Human resources play a critical role in productivity, and various HR activities such as pay, appraisal systems, training, selection, job design, and compensation are designed to impact individual or organizational productivity (Ojo *et al.*, 2020).

Talent Management and Employee Productivity

Research has shown that effective talent management practices significantly impact organizational productivity (Oke *et al.*, 2022). A study conducted in a public sector enterprise found that implementing proper talent management policies, processes, and programs led to increased employee productivity (Oke *et al.*, 2022). Another study in a major telecom company in India revealed that effective talent management practices led to enhanced employee engagement, reduced attrition, and increased average employee tenure (Singh & Sharma, 2020). The study emphasized the importance of defining organizational capabilities in terms of skills, knowledge, ability, and behavior, and conducting gap analyses to identify employee competency deficiencies (Singh & Sharma, 2020). Furthermore, the study highlighted the need for mandatory talent management practices to foster innovative ideas, drive organizational growth, and ensure the right people are selected for the right jobs at the right time (Oke *et al.*, 2022).

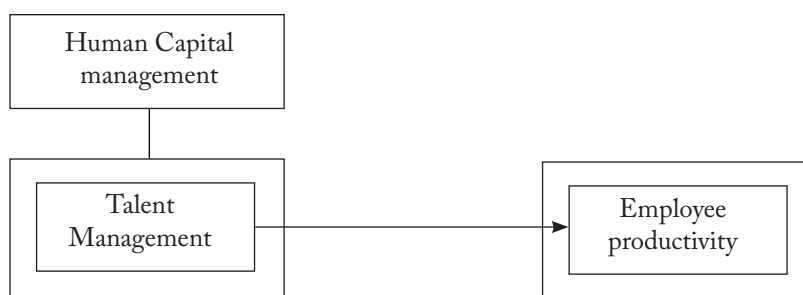


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Human Capital Theory, which posits that employees are a crucial asset for organizations to achieve their objectives and goals (Yusuf *et al.*, 2022). Human Capital Theory is considered the most relevant framework for understanding the relationship between human capital management and employee productivity. The theory emphasizes the importance of human capital management measures such as leadership practice, employee engagement, knowledge accessibility, workforce optimization, and talent management (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Human capital refers to the knowledge, expertise, and skills acquired through education and training, and is concerned with the quality, rather than quantity, of the labor supply (Khan *et al.*, 2022).

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study consists of academic and non-academic employees of the four (4) selected universities Babcock University, Covenant University, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo University located in Ogun State which amounts to 6,058 employees. Using Cochran (1997) equation, the sample size was 586 university employees and random sampling technique was employed. A self-structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents, the research instrument was validated by the average variance (0.831). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient confirms the reliability of the instrument, which suggests that the instrument used for evaluation is highly reliable and data gathered was analyzed using inferential statistic (simple linear regression analysis).

Model Specification

The model used in establishing relationships between the variables of the study were specific in this section as:

Where: X = Talent Management (TM) (Independent Variables)

Y = Employee Productivity (Dependent Variable)

Therefore, functional relationship is expressed as:

Hypothesis

$Y = f(X)$

$Y = a_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon_i$

$EP = a_0 + \beta_1 TM + \epsilon_i$ _____ (1)

Result and Discussion

Talent Management has no significant influence on employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State.

In order to test the null hypothesis, simple linear regression analysis was used. The data for talent management and employee productivity were created by summing responses of all items for each of the variable. The result of the regression was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis Result for the Influence of Talent Management on Employee Productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.846	1.596		10.556	.000
	Talent Management	.517	.035	.524	14.791	.000
R = 0.524;		R ² = 0.274;		F(1,579) = 114.850		

The result in table 1 revealed that talent management had a significantly effect on employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State ($\beta = .517$, $t = 14.791$, $p < 0.05$). The result also revealed that talent management explained about 27.4% of the variation in employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State ($R^2 = 0.274$, $p < 0.05$). The result was supported by F-statistic of 114.850 with p-value of 0.000 which shows that talent management is statistically significant in explaining changes in employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State.

The equation found for the regression was the following:

$$= EP + TM$$

Where:

EP = Employee Productivity

TM = Talent Management

$$= 16.846 + 0.517 \text{ _____} \quad (1)$$

The regression equation above shows that the parameter estimate of talent management follows the a priori expectation which says that talent management will have positive effect on employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State. The equation shows that when talent management is constant at zero, employee productivity level was 16.846 implying that without talent management, employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State would be 16.846. The coefficient of talent management was 0.517. This indicated that an increase in the talent management leads to an increase in employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State with a value of 0.517. This implies that an increase in talent management will subsequently increase employee productivity of selected universities in Ogun State implying that the model $EP = 16.846 + 0.517$ is significantly fit. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) which stated that talent management does not significantly affect employee productivity of selected Universities in Ogun State is hereby rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings revealed a significant positive impact of talent management on employee productivity in selected universities in Ogun State. This supports previous research by Oke et al. (2022), which found that effective talent management practices improve employee productivity. Additionally, the study showed a significant relationship between talent management and organizational performance, consistent with Blass & Hayward (2020), who emphasized the importance of talent management in achieving organizational objectives. However, the concept of talent management remains complex, with various definitions and interpretations (Ojo et al., 2020). Nevertheless, research by Oke et al. (2022) confirms that organizations recognize the strategic value of talent management programs, despite facing challenges in implementation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the relationship between talent management practices and employee productivity in Ogun State universities, Nigeria. The findings revealed a significant positive impact of talent management on employee productivity, supporting previous research that effective talent management practices improve employee productivity. The study also showed a significant relationship between talent management and organizational performance, emphasizing the importance of talent

management in achieving organizational objectives. However, the concept of talent management remains complex, with various definitions and interpretations. Despite facing challenges in implementation, organizations recognize the strategic value of talent management programs. Therefore, universities in Ogun State should prioritize talent management practices to unlock human potential, drive employee productivity, and achieve institutional excellence.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of this study, the following recommendation were made:

- Universities in Ogun State should develop and implement effective talent management programs to improve employee productivity and organizational performance.
- Talent management practices should be tailored to meet the specific needs of each university, considering factors such as size, structure, and culture.
- Universities should invest in training and development programs to enhance the skills and competencies of their employees.
- Universities should conduct regular assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of their talent management practices and make necessary adjustments.

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