
DETERMINANTS OF ADOPTION OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AMONG SMEs IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The contributions of small-scale enterprises to economic development are generally acknowledged. However, entrepreneurs in this sector face many challenges that limit their long-term survival and development. These challenges have been linked to economic variables such as lack of finance, inadequate infrastructure, low industrialization capacity, inconsistent government policies and poor management practices among others that undermine the growth of SMEs. This study examined factors that affect the adoption human resource management practices among SMEs in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design and collected primary from purposively selected 100 SMEs. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyze the data obtained. Findings of the study indicates that financial resources and firm size are factors that had significant impact on adoption of HRM Practices by SMEs in Kaduna state. The investigation recommends that, an enabling environment that will encourage adoption of HRM practices by SMEs, should be provided. This is expected to facilitate their ability to grow and build the required capacity for the promotion of sustainable development in the nation.

Keywords: Human resource management practices, firm size, financial resources, legal regulations, business performance

INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the engine of economic growth and promoters of equitable development (Kadiri, 2019; Aremu and Adeyemi, 2018). SMEs dominate world economies in terms of employment and number of companies (Kadiri, 2019). They are key to the development of developed and developing economies, owing to their contribution to all aspects of development. In Africa, SMEs are the largest employer of labour and constitutes the backbone of economic development in all the countries on the continent (Ojokuku et al., 2019). SMEs constitutes the main driver of economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction in developing nations.

In Nigeria, the economy has developed to a phase where SMEs contributes over 65% of Gross National Product, and accounts for over 70% of every single new employment in the nation (Osolor, 2019). Furthermore, given their financial constraints and other resource limitations, SMEs are directing increasing attention to how they can utilize available resources more efficiently and effectively (Gallego et al., 2012). SMEs, have fewer resource options than larger enterprise to improve performance, but one resource that is common to all organizations, irrespective of size, is human resources, and this is becoming an increasing focus of theoretical and practical attention in SMEs (Sheehan, 2013; Kayanula & Quartey, 2010).

The alarming rate of failure of SMEs in Nigeria calls for concern. The need to research factors that drive the adoption of HRM practices that influence SMEs growth and performance has become essential. Despite the significant position Nigeria enjoys in terms of natural resources, majority of firms mostly, SMEs, still underperform while others wind up within first five years of business, only five to ten per cent survive to maturity stage, even with available financial resources (Ayanda & Danlami, 2019), due to lack of strategic human resource planning (Okpara, 2019).

Against the backdrop of the increasing realization of the essence of HR practices to business performance, this study examined determinants of HRM practices among SMEs in Kaduna State Nigeria. Factors influencing adoption of HRM practices among SMEs have been examined by a few other studies, including those of Akabueze (2020), Sangosanya (2019) Okpara (2019), AGI (2019) among others.

However, most of these studies focused on local large enterprises and multi-national companies (Kamoche, 2019; Okpara, 2019; Sanusi, 2013). Furthermore, these studies majorly distinguished firm size, ownership type and financial resources as factors influencing the adoption of HRM practices by SMEs. This study will employ additional variable (legal regulations) which according to scholars (Kamoche, 2019; Okpara, 2019; Sanusi, 2013) influence HRMP of large organizations. Moreover, no study has been done in Kaduna state, a multi-cultural business hub and the third most populated state in Nigeria and currently the third highest earner of internally generated revenue in the country (FIRS, 2020). Therefore, this study seeks to examine determinants of adoption of HRM practices among SMEs in Kaduna State Nigeria.

The broad objective of the study is thus to examine factors that influence adoption of HRM practices among SMEs in Kaduna State. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- 1) Determine influence of firm size on adoption of HRMP among SMEs in Kaduna State;
- 2) Examine influence of ownership type on adoption of HRMP among SMEs in Kaduna State;
- 3) Determine influence of financial resources on adoption of HRMP among SMEs in Kaduna State; and
- 4) Examine influence of Legal regulations on adoption of HRMP among SMEs in Kaduna State.

Based on the objectives specified, the following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

Ho₁: Firm size have no influence on SMEs' adoption of HRMP.

Ho₂: Ownership type have no influence on SMEs' adoption of HRMP.

Ho₃: Financial resources have no influence on SMEs' adoption of HRMP

Ho₄: Legal regulations have no influence on SMEs' adoption of HRMP.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

The legal definition of "small business" or 'small scale business' varies by country and by industry. The European Union generally defines a small business as one that has fewer than 50 employees. However, in Australia, a small business is defined by the Fair Work Act, 2009, as one with fewer than 15 employees. By comparison, a medium sized business or mid-sized business has less than 500 employees in the US, and fewer than 200 in Australia. In addition to number of employees, other methods used to classify small companies include annual sales (turnover), value of assets and net profit (balance sheet).

In Nigeria, the National Council of Industry in 2001 defined small scale business as an enterprise with 11-100 workers and total cost (including working capital but excluding cost of land) of not more than fifty million naira. Small businesses are common in many countries, depending on the economic system in operation. Typical examples include: convenience stores, other small shops (such as a bakery or delicatessen), hairdressers, restaurants, guest houses, photographers, small-scale manufacturing, and online businesses, such as web design and programming, etc. Fadahunsi (2012) affirmed that small scale businesses represent 90% of enterprises in developing countries. They also provide 70% of employment opportunities for citizens and promote indigenous technology.

Kuratko and Hodgetts (2001) states that small businesses employ 53% of private workforce and account for 47% of sales and 51% of private sector gross domestic product (GDP). This indicates that small scale business predominates the economies of developing countries. This study adopts the definition of SMEs by Nigeria National Council of Industry in 2001 which states that small scale business are an enterprise with 11-100 workers and total cost (including working capital but excluding cost of land) of not more than fifty million naira. Small businesses are common in many countries, depending on the economic system in operation.

Human Resource Management Practices

Human resource management primarily functions as a means to contribute to realizing set goals of an enterprise by enhancing and supporting business operations (Noe, 2012). According to Fombrum (2004), the field of HRM consists various practices used to manage people in enterprises such as selection, training, appraisal, and rewards. Thus, it directs the human resources to the achievement of set objectives. Though HRM is seen by scholars as an approach to managing employment relationships (Storey, 2001), its dual role of functioning administratively as well as being a source of sustained competitive advantage in support of the enterprise has not been overlooked by researchers.

The co-existence of different normative models allow HRM to guide different approaches in the management of human resources. This causes some problems as there are contradictions between various HRM models (Storey, 2001). Recent years have witnessed theoretical arguments between human capital theories, resource-based theory, motivational theories, strategic human resource theory, and others, which support the idea that HRM practices affect performance. These theoretical arguments provide insights into how HRM practices translate to higher enterprise performance. The focus of studies has shifted from examining nature of HRM to examining impact of HRM on enterprise performance (Delery & Doty, 2016; Storey, 2001; Boselie, 2019), with many of them focusing on HRM practices that may improve enterprise performance through improved employee competencies and commitment (De Kok, 2013).

This study explored determinants of HRM practices of SME in Nigeria (Kaduna State) to ascertain if the practices they employed were effective and efficient to positively affect performance of their respective enterprises. The explorative nature of the study makes it difficult to choose any one of the SHRM perspectives to guide it. However, based on ideas in literature that most high performing enterprises adopt SHRM measures (Cook & Ferris, 2016) and that a positive relationship exist between HRM practices and enterprise performance (Huselid, 2019) the current study adopt best practices under SHRM perspective. This study assumes that with highly motivated workforce who possess the needed core competencies in place, the enterprise may achieve sustainable competitive position and succeed, seeing employee motivation and competency as factors to high employee performance.

Empirical Review

The investigation of Bayo-Moriones and Merino-Diaz de Cerio (2018) in the Spanish setting, gave proof about varieties in HRM works as indicated by firm size. The presence of a HRM department is another significant factor affecting variations in HRM practices in SMEs, and part of the effect of firm size on the formalization of HRM practices is directed through the presence of a HRM department.

The findings of a few studies on HRMP and SME performance have uncovered that organizations must implement successful HRM practices in order to increase competitive advantage. For instance, Fanny (2019) examined effect of HRM practice on small and medium ventures performance in Hong Kong, utilizing four variables (firm size, ownership type, legal regulations and financial resources). The outcome demonstrated that HRM practices inform to performance of SMEs in Hong Kong.

Also, Obasan (2019) studied effect of HRM practice on small business performance in Nigeria. The investigation concentrated on firm size, ownership type, legal regulations and financial resources as factors that inform adoption if HRM practices. The study found that a positive relationship exists between HRM practices and SME performance. More so, Arthur and Hendry (1992) proposed a model of how principal factors recognized in literature may influence HRM practices in small enterprise. The principal factors liable to impact HRM activities in small firms are human asset supply, industry sector, type of ownership, product market structure and small firm infrastructure, development stage, culture and the management.

Additionally, Kok and Uhlener (2001) proposed a model of how organization-relevant factors may impact adoption of HRM practices in SMEs, utilizing experiences from resource-based perspective of the firm, institutional theory, exchange cost financial aspects and behavioral point of view. Organization size, aggregate labour agreement, large firm partnership and development strategy are argued to to impact adoption of HRM practices in SMEs.

Furthermore, a considerable number of studies demonstrate that organization size impacts HRM practices (Mohammad, 2019; Ding & Akhtar, 2019; Kotey & Slade, 2007). Other contextual factors that have been found to have capacity to build up human resource competencies in SMEs include financial resources and ownership structure, while external environmental factors include activities of competitors, government regulations, type of industry and sector. Based on the foregoing, the research model conceptualized is for this study as illustrated in Fig. 1. The model consist four variables: firm size, ownership type, legal regulations and financial resources. It is hypothesized that these variables affect adoption of HRM practices of SMEs in Kaduna State.

Theoretical Review

This study adopted the Resource Based-view of the firm. RBV emphasizes that long-term competitiveness of an enterprise depends on resources that differentiate it from competitors; and which are durable, and difficult to imitate and substitute (Barney, 1991). These according to Ray (2014) may be tangible and intangible resources used to develop and implement strategies. It follows then that not all enterprise resources and capabilities can be used to achieve competitive advantage, but only those which fall within the core competencies of the enterprise. It also follows that RBV sees HR as an asset that can be utilized for competitive advantage (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Chadwick & Debu, 2019).

In effect, RBV shifts the emphasis placed on external factors of strategic planning of enterprise towards the enterprise's internal resources and states that such resources, which include human capital pool, could be source of competitive advantage to the enterprise if they are effectively and efficiently planned to enhance the objective of the enterprise (Boxeall & Purcell, 2013; Olalla, 1999). Thus conceptually, RBV proposes that human capital pool, where it is highly skilled and motivated (making it valuable, rare, costly to imitate, and non-substitutable) constitute a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Wright, 2001). Motivation as such becomes an important factor in RBV since the actual stock of human capital is liable to changes overtime, and as such needs constant motivation to keep its match with the needs for achievement of continuous competitive position of the enterprise (Wright. 2001).

Effective HRM practices can, therefore, increase the value of human capital pool through developments such as sound recruitment and selection practices and skills development (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005), that enable the achievement of competitive advantage by the enterprise, by ensuring such practices are efficient and effective enough to cause human resources to be valuable, rare, costly to imitate, and non-substitutable (Olalla, 1999).

This study suggests that if SMEs in Kaduna state are able to execute their choice of recruitment and selection processes effectively and efficiently, develop well-designed plans for training and development, and with well-designed and executed performance management and appraisal in place, competent employees who are willing to work towards the achievement of enterprise objective may be developed. However, developing competent employees will require commitment to their added costs and thus will need justification. This study seeks to contribute evidence towards such a justification to provide a framework that can help individual enterprises track benefits against costs.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey design. The population of the study consist SMEs in Kaduna state. Kaduna has a total of about 2,862 registered SMEs making it the state with one of the largest concentration of SMEs in Nigeria (NBS & SMEDAN, 2020). A sample of 100 SMEs was purposively selected spreading across key industries such as farming/poultry; trade and commerce; business support services; financial services and; food & restaurant in Kaduna state. SMEs owners were the respondents. The Data collected for this study were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and regression analysis to test the hypotheses.

Model Specification

The model specification for the regression is as follows

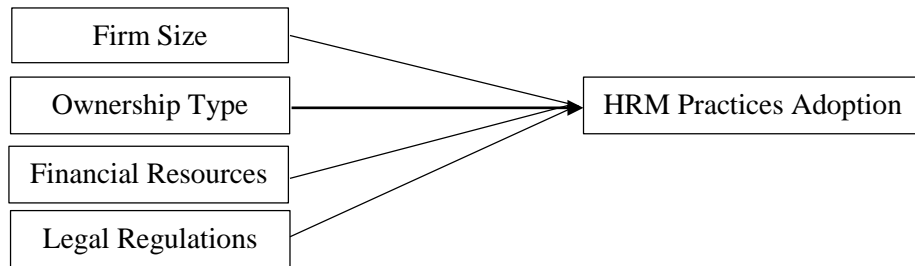


Fig. 1: Conceptual model of HRM practices

Mathematically, the model is expressed as follows:

$$BP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (X_1) + \beta_2 (X_2) + \beta_3 (X_3) + \beta_4(X_4) + \epsilon$$

AHRMP = F(X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄) Where; AHRMP = Adoption of Human Resource Management Practices X₁ = Firm size, X₂ = Ownership type, X₃ = Legal regulation, X₄ = Financial resources β₀ = Intercept β₁- β₄ = Regression coefficient ε= Stochastic error term

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Characteristic of respondents

S/N	Sector	Industry	Years operation	of Participants
1.	Financial Services	Microfinance	10	General Manager
2.	Financial Services	Fund manager	17	Owner
3.	Business support	Infrastructure and transport service	8	General Manager
4.	Business support	Real estate	9	Owner
5.	Restaurant & Confectionary	Bakery	15	Owner
6.	Restaurant & Confectionary	Catering and restaurant	7	Owner
7.	Trade and commerce	Wholesale & retail	1	Owner
8.	Trade and Commerce	Telecommunication services	7	Owner
9.	Agriculture	Livestock production	7	Owner
10.	Agriculture	Fishery	8	Owner

Source: Authors Survey (2023).

Table 2: Respondents Personal Data

S/ N	Respondent category	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1.	Sex:			
	Male	53	53.33	
	Female	47	46.67	53.0
2.	Marital Status:			
	Married			
	Single	42	42.33	
	Divorced/Widowed/Separated	33	32.67	42.0
		25	25.00	
3.	Age:			
	18 – 25	11	11.01	
	26 – 35	27	26.60	
	36 – 45	28	27.80	28.0
	46 – 55	25	25.13	
	Above 55	9	9.46	
4.	Tribe/Ethnicity:			
	Yoruba and affiliate tribes	33	33.0	
	Hausa and affiliate tribes	34	34.0	33.0
	Ibo and affiliate tribes	33	33.0	
5.	Educational Background			
	None	8	7.80	
	Primary School Certificate WASC/SSC/GCE	20	20.20	
	NCE/OND	27	27.13	
	1 st Degree/HND	23	22.73	27.0
	Master Degree	15	14.50	
	Ph.D/Professional Doctorate	6	6.4	
		2	7	

Source: Authors Survey (2023)

Table 2 shows the analysis of data on respondents' background on four characteristics: Sex (gender), marital status, tribe/ethnicity and educational background. The sex (gender) distribution showed that, of the total respondents consist of both genders and are all adults. The tribal/ethnicity distribution of entrepreneurs showed that there are equal number of business owners in all the three major ethnic groups as stated in the methodology of the study. [How, please recast]. These characteristics imply that the study incorporates the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The analysis of the data on respondents' educational background in general is shown in the table which shows that most of the business owners were educated.

Table 3: Respondent's Business Data

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage
	Source of Initial Capital:		
	Personal savings	27	26.73
	Bank loan	26	25.93
1.	Personal savings and Bank loans	16	16.07
	Assistance from friends & family	8	7.87
	Loans from Private Individuals	7	7.40
	Cooperative society	9	8.73
	Government Assistance	7	7.27
	Form of Ownership:		
2.	Sole proprietorship	52	51.87
	Partnership	29	28.87
	Company	19	19.27
	Entrepreneurial Activities:		
	Manufacturing/Processing	13	12.73
	Fabrication/Construction	7	7.33
3.	Agriculture	19	19.28
	Commerce (Trading)	34	33.93
	Services	16	16.00
	Entertainment/Fashion	11	10.73
	Current worth of business:		
	Below #200,000	7	6.73
4.	#200,000 - #500,000	16	15.60
	#500,000 - #1000,000	22	21.47
	#1m - #5m	25	24.73
	Above #5m	31	31.47

Author's Survey, (2023)

Table 3 analyze entrepreneurs' business data on three items, source of initial capital, form of ownership, and type entrepreneurial activities. The data analysis of sources of initial capital indicates that majority of entrepreneurs generated their initial capital from their personal savings, with a score of 27(26.73%) responses, followed by Bank loan with a score of 26 (25.93%) responses, personal savings and bank loans with a score of 16 (16.07%) responses, Assistance from friends & family has a score of 8 (7.87%) responses and Loans from Private Individuals has a score of 8(7.40%). Cooperative society also has a score of 9(8.73%) responses and Government assistance with a score of 7 (7.27%).

The analysis of the form of business ownership indicated 52 (51.87%) response score for sole proprietorship, and 29(28.87%) and 19 (19.27%) for partnerships and companies respectively, of the total business owners' respondents. The analysis of entrepreneurial activities which entrepreneurs were engaged in, revealed that there was more concentration in business activities such as commerce (trading), services, and Agriculture with response scores of 44(33.93%), 16 (16.00%) and 19 (19.28%) respectively than more demanding activities such as manufacturing/processing, fabrication/ construction with response scores of 13(12.73%) and 8 (7.33%) respectively.

Entertainment/Fashion has a response score of 11(10.73%). The analysis on the current worth of business shows that majority of the respondents businesses worth above 5 Million this was indicated with a response score of 32 (31.47%), followed by the business worth of 1Million-5Million with the response rate of 25 (24.73%). 500,000-1Million has a response score of 25 (21.47%) and 200,000-500,000 has a response score of 16(15.60%) while below 200,000 has a response score of 7(6.73%). The data presented in Table 3 implies that all the selected business are SMEs and in line with the objectives of the study.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.729 ^a	.530	.501	.54719

a. Predictors: (Constant), Firm size, Ownership type, Legal regulation and Financial resources
 Author’s Survey, (2023)

Table 5: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.239	4	5.560	18.56 9	.000 ^b
	Residual	19.761	66	.299		
	Total	42.000	70			

a. Dependent Variable: AHRMP (Author’s Survey 2023)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Performance appraisal, Recruitment, Compensation, Training

Tables 4 demonstrate that HRMP adoption is predicated by the variables X_1 = Firm size, X_2 = Ownership type, X_3 = Legal regulation and X_4 = Financial resources with a coefficient of determination of 53.0% ($R^2=0.530$). Thus, implying that these variables significantly account for 53.0% variation in HRMP adoption in SMEs in Kaduna state. The remaining 47.0% is as a result of other factors outside the model which were depicted as U_t (error term).

Table 6: Regression result of the factors influencing HRM Practices in Small Scale Businesses

Variable	Beta	t- value	Sig.
Firm Size	0.321	3.475	0.001
Ownership Type	0.141	1.755	0.084
Legal Regulation	0.046	0.560	0.577
Financial Resources	0.571	5.923	0.000
R2 Adj. R ²	0.685		
F. value	0.661		
Probability	28.16		
	0.000		

Author’s Survey, (2023)

Table 6 demonstrates that financial resources has a beta value of 0.570 and is noteworthy at 1% level. This suggests that financial resources comprise the most significant factor that impacts HRM practice adoption in small scale organizations in Kaduna state, Nigeria. This outcome is in concurrence with Fanny (2019) who attested that adoption of formal HRM practices may not generally be conceivable in light of the fact that it is regularly excessively exorbitant. Additionally, firm size has significant impact on HRM practice adoption with ($\beta = 0.320, P <.01$). This infers the adoption of HRM practices varies among firms of various sizes.

The outcome of this study is consistent with the findings of Mohammad (2019); Ding and Akhtar, (2019) and Kotey and Slade, (2007) that firms of various sizes contrast in the adoption of HRM practices. Bigger firms could have progressively advanced HRM practices contrasted with small firms, as large firms need to spread out their expense, and have more significant level of control and picture awareness, because of their higher perceivability in the society. The result likewise demonstrated that ownership type and legal regulation impact the adoption of HRM practices by small scale organizations in Kaduna state.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this study, it is concluded that, financial resources and firm size are central factors that influence adoption of HRM practices in small scale organizations in Kaduna State. The implication of these findings is that a financial empowering environment, that will energize adoption of HRM practices by small scale organizations, ought to be given. This is relied upon to encourage their capacity to develop with regards to the advancement of economic development in the country. The study thus recommends that an

empowering condition, that will support adoption of HRM practices by SMEs, ought to be given. Also, tax motivators could be organized for SMEs that adopt HRM practices. Moreover, a lot of motivators could be intended to support HRM adoption and Practices among SMEs.

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