HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT: This study was carried out with the view to assessing the relationship between some selected human resource practices and employees’ performance in a Nigerian public university. In specific, two (2) dimensions of human resource practices were used, namely hiring process and training. The study employed the descriptive survey design via the administration of questionnaire to one hundred and four (104) academic and non-academic staff in Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE) in Warri, Delta State of Nigeria. Data obtained in the study were analyzed using both descriptive (frequency count, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation, and Pearson correlation) and inferential (simple regression) statistical tools. Specifically, the results of the simple regression revealed a significant link between hiring process (F-ratio= 22.11; p-value= 0.0000) and employees’ performance. Additionally, the study found a significant relationship between training (F-ratio=28.47; p-value= 0.0000) and employees’ performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that concerted efforts by Nigerian public institutions of higher learning should be geared towards enhancing their human resource practices, particularly in areas of training process so as to further boost the performance of employees. More so, Nigerian public institutions of higher learning should design a viable framework in their hiring process in order to have a formidable workforce that can deliver its goals and objectives. This study has contributed to knowledge by filling the literature gap on what is known about the Human Resource Practices and the performance of employees of public institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human Resource, Employees, Practices

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, employees’ performance has been a subject of concern for every organization whether private or public, small, medium or multinational and hence an overemphasized research theme in management literature. Although, conventionally, the import of employee performance was seen as a concern for only private organizations, remarkable changes has been made to this view in the last couple of years, where both private and public organizations support and value performance (Mgaiwa & Kapenga, 2021; Dangol, 2020; Arubayi 2023; Lin & Kellough, 2018; and Odole, 2018). Onyekwelu, Dike and Muogbo (2020) asserted that one of the vital goals of any organization is to enhance its performance, which is thought to turn into superior profit.

In the same vein, public higher institutions of learning also endeavour to enhance employees’ performance in order to allow them deliver their mandates. For institutions of higher learning to perform adequately, they require a robust workforce to address a variety of challenges they may be confronted with as they attempt to enhance employees’ performance (Al Shobaki, Naser, Salama, Alfehah, Alferjany, Amuna, Abu & Abu-Naser, 2018; Arubayi 2023; Akinwande, Dikko & Samson, 2015; and Akinbowale, 2014). Thus, the import placed on employees’ performance and the strategic place of human resources has altered the manner in which human capital is seen in most organizations. Baakeel (2018); Beltrán-Martín and Bou-Llusar (2018); Arubayi, & Odiri, (2023) see human resource practices (HRP) as the foremost process via which organizations can induce the workforce to carry out their assigned tasks as well as structuring their behaviour and skills in order to realize the set goals.

Mayes Finney, Johnson and Shen (2017); and Mayrhofer, Gooderham and Brewster (2019) asserted that it is probable to influence the performance of employees via the use of HRP. The HRP encompassed but not limited to hiring process, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation/reward systems. In Nigeria we adopted the Western practices in HRM, while indigenous knowledge, cultural and social values are deep-rooted in organization (Babić, 2014; Atan, Raghavan & Mahmood, 2015; Arubayi 2023; Etebu, 2016; and Erasmus, 2018). For example, numerous organizations acknowledge the import of respecting older people or employees just as the society accords respects to elder people; however, the integration of indigenous values has been disapproved by numerous scholars since it does not pay attention to the import importance of evidence-based management method.
Prior researchers (Mgaiwa & Kapenga, 2021; Dangol, 2020; Onyekwelu, et al., 2020; Mbiti, Arasa & Kinyili, 2019; Canet-Giner, Redondo-Can, Saorín-Iborra & Escribá-Carda, 2019; Lin & Kellough, 2018; Odole, 2018; and Brown, O’Kane, Mazumdar & McCracken, 2018, Tiemo, and Arubayi, 2012) had shown that there exist a significant and negative relationship between HRPs (particularly hiring process, training and development, compensation and performance appraisal) and employees’ performance; the negative relationship between the selected HRP and employees’ performance could be connected to the overreliance of indigenous practices, which caused the restricted application of scientific principles of HRM in enhancing the performance of employees (Cook, MacKenzie & Forde, 2016; and Elena-Juliana & Maria, 2016, Arubayi 2023).

Supporting to the above viewpoints, Wood and Bischoff (2020) showed that managements in Africa are compelled to cope with the demands and expectations of the community, which usually result to ineffective and inefficient HRM practices. Several HRPs have been used in Africa; however, the most predominant HRPs types used in Africa include hiring process, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation. For instance, efficient hiring process would lead to recruitment of skilled employees; incessant training would make the workforce to become equipped with the right skills and knowledge that would enable them perform their tasks optimally; performance appraisal would enable organizations to identify weakness and strengths in their processes; while compensation/reward systems would motivate employees to contribute their best to the organizations’ processes. All these HRPs as noted by Janet (2019); Kadir, Al-Hosani, Ismail and Sehan (2019); Kollitz, Ruhle and Süß (2019); Moraa and Datche (2019); Nitika and Arora (2020); Nor and Abdullah (2020); Arubayi& Ejeta,(2022); and Nikolaou (2021), result to improvement in employees’ performance.

On the other hand, Pradhan and Jena(2016); Otoo Assuming and Agyei (2018); Sothy (2019); Tursunbayeva (2019); and Ujma and Ingram (2019) observed that these HRPs (hiring process, training, compensation and performance appraisal) are profoundly relied on concurrently with conventional management practices. Thus, this study investigated the effects two (2) selected HRPs(hiring process and training) on employees’ performance in a Nigerian public university.

Statement of the Problem
In any organization, human resource (HR) is one of the most vital assets; thus, organizations’ invests in the improvement of this competitiveness asset. Unlike the conventional method that assessed performance of organizations in financial terms, scientific techniques of management also assess performance on the basis of HRM (Ujma & Ingram, 2019; Hassan & Mahmood, 2016; Arubayi & Eruvedede, (2022); Lai, Saridakis & Johnstone, 2016; and Muriu, Proeller & Fuhr, 2017). Most studies on HRPs and employees’ performance were done in organizations outside Africa. A study in the African milieu will help to fill the research lacuna on how selected HRPs affect employees’ performance. Also, most empirical studies were done in the private sector; thus much is not known about the relationship between HRPs and employees’ performance in the public sector in Nigeria.

Unlike the private sector, the performance of public sector is low due to failure to use efficient human resource strategies(1Dole, 2018; and Onyekwelu, Arubayi & Egbule (2020); Dike & Muogbo,2020); this scenario is evident in Nigeria. Specifically, Nigerian public sector is characterized by low employees’ performance, which in turn leads to poor institutional performance. According to Onyekwelu, et al (2020) the performance of employees in the Nigerian public institutions is low due to numerous factors like poor remunerations, lack of training, poor compensation/reward system, and efficient appraisal practices. Consequently, this research seeks to ascertain the effects of selected HRPs (hiring process and training) on employees’ performance.

Research Questions
In line with the specific objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised:
1. What is the effect of hiring process on employees’ performance?
2. To what extent does training affect employee performance?

Objectives of the Study
The broad objective of this study is to investigate the effect of selected human resource practices on employees’ performance. The specific objectives:
1. To determine the effect of hiring process on employees’ performance
2. To establish the effect of training on employee performance

Hypotheses of the Study
The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05% level of significance:

**Hypothesis I**
Hₐ: There is no significant relationship between hiring process and employees’ performance.

**Hypothesis II**
Hₐ: There is no significant relationship between training and employees’ performance.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Human Resource Practices (HRPs)

The concept of human resource practices (HRPs) have been broadly defined in management literature and has occupied a central place in human resource research. However, there is a need to review the available literature on the role of human resource practices in organization performance. The human resource management literature is rich with studies on training and development, compensation, and assigning duties to the workforce. The practices of human resource according to Hassan (2019) when effectively and efficiently carried out, results in improved performance of employees.

Fundamental among the HRPs employed by organizations include but not limited to training, hiring process, performance appraisal, compensation, and employee development. Notably, most of the human resource researches are clustered around training and development, hiring process, performance appraisal, motivation, and compensation. In this study, two (2) selected HRPs were examined, namely hiring process and training as they relate with the performance of employees in a public university in Warri, Delta State of Nigeria; these selected HRPs are briefly discussed as follows:

Hiring Process

The hiring process is a task of the human resource unit; hiring is a process involving review of application, selection of suitable applicant for interview, testing the applicant, carrying out pre-employment test and selecting the most qualified applicant for the job (Nikolaou, 2021). Hiring is a vital process in an organization as it brings new talents to the workforce in order to facilitate growth and creative thinking. Specifically, hiring process entails other aspects like job design, analysis, and description (Nitika & Arora, 2020). Nahida-Afroz (2018) noted that hiring process is the most determining factor driving the success of an organization. Similarly, Nor and Abdullah (2020) opined that organizations with efficient hiring process are deemed to have good reputation and improved employees’ performance.

There are two (2) essential segments of the hiring process as observed by Beltrán-Martín and Bou-Llusar (2018); and Dangol (2020) – attraction and selection. While attraction is all about having a large pool of qualified employees, selection is the capability of the human resource manager to get the right employees to hire. Thus, the efficacy of the recruitment process is triggered by the capability of human resource manager to attract and select the most suitable employees for the job. In hiring employees, the human resource unit looks at the qualities, work experience, and interpersonal and communication skills of the employees (Janet, 2019).

In the past, organizations were hiring employees with the best academic qualifications without much attention on their personal traits such as interpersonal and communication skills. Thus, modern organizations prefer to hire employees with the right work experience, interpersonal and communication skills rather than just their academic qualifications. The prominence in hiring process today is due to the actualization of the vital role hiring plays in the performance of employees (Wood & Bischoff, 2020; Sothy, 2019; Arubayi 2023; Tursunbayeva, 2019; and Ombanda, 2018).

Available literature suggests that hiring process positively and significantly affects the performance of employees (see Onyekwelu, Dike & Muogbo, 2020; Mayrhofer, Gooderham & Brewster, 2019; and Odole, 2018). Thus, effective and efficient hiring process leads to improved performance of employees. Remarkably, most of the studies on hiring process and the performance of employees were those carried out in the private sector, thus leaving a gap in the literature as it pertains to the public sector where hiring process has been criticized due to corruption, politicization, nepotism, tribalism, among others. Thus, this study examined the relationship between hiring process and employees’ performance in the public sector in order to fill the literature gap.

Training

Training refers to the process of acquiring skilled workforce for certain job roles in order to support certain occupational roles (Adewoye & Adele, 2017). According to Ali and Nada (2018), training is very vital to the employee and the organization as it offers the workforce the right skills and knowledge (in form of workshop, coaching, mentoring and learning) aimed at inspiring and motivating employees to perform assigned tasks effectively and efficiently. Ali and Nada (2018) opined that training makes the workforce feel that they are part of the organization.

Ashish and Jain (2019) see training as the acquisition of skills and the process of teaching the workforce to become acquainted with the right knowledge for better performance. Training needs as observed by Azizi and Khan (2018), are triggered by organizational demands or job roles. Nkemakonam (2020) showed that training results to positive work or employees’ attitude. This implies that training can be used to address a need identified in the organization. Notwithstanding the importance of training in enhancing the performance of employees, most public institutions in Nigeria are yet to grapple with it as they see it as a waste of resources.

There are several types of training – on-the-job training and off-the-job training. There are others like refresher training, technical training, orientation and induction, and promotional and advancement training (Shu-Rung & Chun-Chieh, 2017). The growth of an organization is influenced by numerous factors, training inclusive. This argument shows that there would be a remarkable difference in organizations that train their employees and those that do not. Extant literature showed that there is the presence of a significant and positive relationship between training and employees’ performance (see Nahida-Afroz, 2018; Nitika & Arora, 2020; and Nikolaou, 2021).

Notably, studies on training and employees’ performance were carried out among private sector organizations, thus leaving a literature gap as it relates to public sector organizations where training has been criticized due to corruption, politicization, nepotism,
tribalism, etc. Consequently, this study examined the relationship between training and the performance of employees’ in the public sector in order to fill the literature gap.

**Employee Performance**

Employee performance has been broadly defined in the management literature. Notably, the concept of employee performance has no universally accepted definition and as such scholars see it based on their understanding as well as the academic discipline. Baldwin (2008) defined employee performance as the efficient performance of assigned tasks to employees aimed at actualizing the predetermined goals of organizations. A key attribute of Baldwin (2008) definition is that of the interface between employees and the organization. In the context of this study, employee performance refers to the ability of academic and non-academic staff of institutions of higher learning to efficiently carry-out assigned tasks in order to realize set goals.

Given that employees take specific tasks and steadfastly carry out the assigned tasks, it is assumed that they are obligated perform carry out the tasks competently and properly. In line with this view, Porter and Lawler cited in Armstrong (2010) see employee performance as the successful completion of those tasks constituting an employees’ job. Fundamentally, some measures of employee performance encompassed but not limited to timeliness in completion of assigned tasks, quality of output and efficiency. Broadly, employee performance can be grouped into task and contextual performance. First, task performance is concerned with the level of effectiveness in which an employee executes assigned tasks that are part of his/her duties and contribute enormously to the technical core. In task performance, tasks are very mandatory and failure to do them may attract punishment. Second, contextual performance consists of organizational activities that are discretionary and not specified by the job.

In the literature, diverse measures have been considered as vital means of harnessing the performance of employees. These measures entail motivational incentives, promotion, salary increment, and conducive work environment, among others. However, this study takes on a dissimilar view by showing how some selected human resource practices (specifically, hiring process and training) could be used to harness employees’ performance.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on the ability-motivation-opportunity which was advocated by Bailey in 1993 (Etebu, 2016). The theory contended that to encourage the workforce to increase their performance, three (3) vital components are required: skills, motivation and opportunity. The paradigm contends that a set of interconnected HRPs will lead to enhanced employees’ performance and Bailey sees the set of interconnected HRPs to include ability, motivation and opportunity. The theory has been broadly employed in the HRM literature in explaining the relationship between HRPs and the performance of employees and the organization (Babić, 2014; Hassan & Mahmood, 2016; Hegarty & Moccia, 2018; Canet-Giner, et al, 2019; and Ilyas, et al, 2020).

In these sets of studies, they found that ability, motivation and opportunity are connected with employees’ performance. In addition, the theory underscored the role hiring process (ability) and training (motivation) play in enhancing the performance of employees. Regardless of the acceptance and use of the theory, it has been critiqued that it may not be a perfect fit for all situations for organizations. The reason being that HRPs can be influenced by other dynamics like work environment, employees beliefs, etc. Interestingly, the theory supports the study as it contends that some specific sets of bundles of HRPs have significant effect on employees’ performance.

**Empirical Studies**

There are few studies that had assessed the relationship between some selected HRPs and the performance of employees in public institutions of higher learning in Delta State of Nigeria. Most studies in this area had focused on institutions or organizations in the private sector. For example, Mgaiwa and Kapinda (2021) examined the implications of career development and training in Tanzanian private sector using a stratified tool. Primary data and regression analysis was used and results indicated that career development and training significantly influence employees’ performance.

Nkemakonam (2020) looked at how training affects employees’ performance in private sector organization in Nigeria using a survey design. Data obtained were analysed via the Pearson correlation and findings indicated that there is a positive and significant correlation between training and employees’ performance.

Nor and Abdullah (2020) used the ability, motivation and opportunity theory in assessing how HRPs affect the performance of employees and organization. The regression results showed that training and hiring process significantly and positively affects performance of employees.

Onyekwelu, Dike and Muogbo (2020) assessed how employee remuneration serves as a means of increasing employees’ performance in Nigeria using a descriptive design. The descriptive and inferential (regression) statistical results indicated that employee remuneration positively and significantly influences the performance of employees.

Sothy (2019) investigated the effect of human resource management on the performance of employees’ in private secondary schools in Cambodia using descriptive survey design. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression result indicated that HRM significantly and positively affects the performance of employees.

Dissanayake and Fernando (2019) carried out an investigation on job rotation practices on employee job performance in Sri Lanka using descriptive survey design. The regression result revealed that job rotation is an important program for enabling employees,
enhance their productivity, acquire new skills, develop new relationships across the company and gain skills needed for future career development and advancement.

Muhammed and Aiman (2017) carried out a study on training and development and employee performance of banks in Pakistan using survey research design. The regression results showed that most of the employees agreed to the item that training and development had a positive effect on employee performance in areas of job knowledge, loyalty, functional skills and work quality.

Muhammed (2016) examined the relationship between training and development and the performance of employees in Jordanian private sector transportation companies via survey research design. The regression results revealed that there is a significant and positive link between training and development and employees’ performance.

Research Gap
Given the review of empirical studies, there is lack of studies that had assessed the effects of selected HRPs (hiring process and training) on the performance of employees in Nigerian public institution of higher learning in a single study. While most studies had assessed the link between training and employees’ performance, there are limited studies that had assessed the relationship between hiring process and the performance of employees, particularly as it concerns employees in Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE).

RESEARCH METHOD
The method used is the descriptive survey research design, which according to Mcburney and White (2013) is concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions that either exist or existed. This research design allowed the researcher to describe the effects of selected HRPs on employees’ performance in a Nigerian public university. Additionally, the study also described common attributes among the sample population of the research. The study population comprised of the entire workforce (academic and non-academic) in FUPRE, Warri, Delta State of Nigeria. Specifically, there are forty-seven (47) academic staff and ninety-four (94) non-academic staff in FUPRE (Establishment Unit, 2022). Thus, the study population comprised of one hundred and forty-one (141) employees and the Taro-Yamane sample size formula was used in arriving at the sample of the study which was 104.

In view of the above, the proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of the study. The purpose of using this method was to ensure that the number of respondents drawn from each category was proportionate to the aggregate number in the strata (i.e. the total number of academic and non-academic staff).

The questionnaire was used as the major instrument of data collection. This method was used in order to collect data from the study’s respondents. The questionnaire contained questions, designed to contain closed-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections and designed on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree (SD), agree (A), undecided (UD), strongly disagree (D) and disagree (D). Section A items drew on the demographic information of the study respondents while section B addressed the research themes in areas of selected HRPs (hiring process and training) and employees’ performance. Besides, the questionnaire was administered on a face-to-face basis.

The study used descriptive statistics (frequency count, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation and Pearson correlation) and inferential statistics (simple regression) in analyzing the data obtained in the survey. Specifically in the area of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, frequency count, and simple percentages were employed while the research questions were analyzed via mean and standard deviation. More so, to ascertain the relationship between the dependent (employees’ performance) and the independent variable (selected HRPs – hiring process and training), the Karl Pearson correlation results were used while the simple regression was used in validating the hypotheses of the study. The models of the study are given as follows:

\[
\text{Empeef} = \text{F(Hipro)} \quad \text{Eq. 1}
\]

\[
\text{Empeef} = \text{F(Tar)} \quad \text{Eq. 2}
\]

\[
\text{Empeef}_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Hipro}_i + \epsilon_t \quad \text{Eq. 3}
\]

Equations 1-2 were re-estimated in their explicit forms as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Empeef} & = \text{F(Hipro)} \\
\text{Empeef} & = \text{F(Tar)} \\
\text{Empeef}_t & = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{Hipro}_i + \epsilon_t
\end{align*}
\]
Where: $Empee_{f1}=employee$ performance; $Hipro=hirng process$; $Tar=training$; $et=error$ term. Furthermore, in order to test the research hypotheses of the study, inferential statistical tool (simple regression) was used and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance. The decision rule is that if $F$-calculated probability is greater than the $F$-tabulated probability, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted vice-versa. The statistical test was carried out by means of STATA 17.0 version.

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Analysis of Bio-Data of Respondents

Table 2: Bio-Data of Respondents on the Selected Human Resource Practices (HRPs) and Employees’ Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Frequency N=104</th>
<th>Percent(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Educational Status</td>
<td>OND/HND</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B.Sc./BA</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M.Sc./MBA</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Academic</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Actual Field Work, 2023

The bio-data of respondents presented in Table 2 showed that 57(54.81%) of the respondents are males while 47(45.19%) are females. Also, it was found that 16(15.38%) and 86(82.69%) of the respondents are single and married respectively while 2(1.93%) are separated. More so, it was revealed that 10(9.62%) and 31(29.81%) are holders of OND/HND and B.Sc./BA degree respectively while 40(38.46%) and 23(22.11%) are M.Sc./MBA degree holders and Philosophy Degree (PhD) holders. In addition, it was shown that 35(33.65%) of the sampled respondents were academic staff while 69(66.35%) were non-academic staff.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the effect of hiring process on employees’ performance of selected consumer goods companies in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Hiring Process and Employees’ Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics for Hiring Process</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.340</td>
<td>3.220</td>
<td>3.204</td>
<td>3.120</td>
<td>3.590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>.6407</td>
<td>.8103</td>
<td>.7503</td>
<td>.8402</td>
<td>.7803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Actual Field Work, 2023

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the extent to which hiring process relates with employees’ performance in FUPRE, Effurun-Warri, Delta State of Nigeria. From the table, it shows that item 5 had the highest mean score (mean=3.590) while item 4 had the lowest mean score (mean=3.120); this means that recruitment process in the public institution of higher learning investigated is carried out in a transparent manner while at the same time, they engage the most qualified candidate. Interestingly, all the 5-items had their mean ratings within the range of 2.50-3.59, which is above the benchmark of 2.50; this implies that to a large extent hiring process relates with employees’ performance.

Research Question 2: To what extent does training affect employee performance?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Training and Employees’ Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics for Training</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.480</td>
<td>3.510</td>
<td>3.580</td>
<td>3.180</td>
<td>3.460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>.8100</td>
<td>.8154</td>
<td>.6989</td>
<td>.9361</td>
<td>.5759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for training and employees’ performance in FUPRE, Efferun-Warri, Delta State of Nigeria. From the table, it shows that item 3 had the highest mean score (mean = 3.58) while item 4 had the lowest mean score (mean=3.18); this means that the university trains employees to prepare them for future assignments while at the same time, they strive to ensure that training is provided to equip the university staff with various skills to perform different jobs. However, all the 5-items had their mean ratings within the range of 2.50-3.59, which is above the benchmark of 2.50. Impliedly, to a large extent training relates with employees’ performance.

4.3 Test of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis I

H₀: There is no significant relationship between hiring process and employees’ performance.

Table 5: Regression Result for Hiring Process and Employees’ Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F (1, 103)</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3043</td>
<td>= 22.11</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>24.64</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.0182</td>
<td>R-Squared = 0.7200</td>
<td>Adj. R-Sq = 0.7110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.37</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.4865</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empeerf</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>P&gt;</td>
<td>t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hipro</td>
<td>0.0629</td>
<td>0.0538</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.4475</td>
<td>0.3772</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Actual Field Work, 2023

In Table 5, we presented the ordinary least square (OLS) results for employee performance (Empeerf) and hiring process (Hipro) and it was observed that the values of the R-squared and adjusted R-squared were (0.72%) and (0.71%) respectively. This shows that the independent variable (Hipro) explained about 71% of the systematic variation in the dependent variable (Empeerf). The R-squared showed among others that there are few excluded variables that drive employee performance.

The F-statistics (df=1, 103, f-ratio=22.11) with a p-value of 0.0000 indicated that the result is statistically significant at 5 percent level. Also, the regression coefficient and t-value are carrying positive signs; this implies that there is a significant and positive relationship between hiring process and employees’ performance.

Decision: Given that the f-ratio=22.11 with a p-value of 0.0000, which is less than 0.05%, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between hiring process and employees’ performance.

Hypothesis II

H₀: There is no significant relationship between training and employees’ performance.

Table 6: Regression Result for Training Process and Employees’ Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F (1, 103)</th>
<th>Prob. &gt; F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4420</td>
<td>= 28.47</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>27.12</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>0.0194</td>
<td>R-Squared = 0.8300</td>
<td>Adj. R-Sq = 0.8200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27.78</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.6363</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empeerf</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>P&gt;</td>
<td>t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tar</td>
<td>0.0764</td>
<td>0.0421</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.3224</td>
<td>0.5117</td>
<td>11.22</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Actual Field Work, 2023

In Table 6, we presented the ordinary least square (OLS) results for employee performance (Empeerf) and training(Tar) and it was observed that the values of the R-squared and adjusted R-squared were (0.83%) and (0.82%) respectively. This shows that the independent variable (Tar) explained about 82% of the systematic variation in the dependent variable (Empeerf). The R-squared showed among others that there are few excluded variables that drive employee performance.

The F-statistics (df=1, 103, f-ratio=28.47) with a p-value of 0.0000 indicated that the result is statistically significant at 5 percent level. Also, the regression coefficient and t-value are carrying positive signs; this implies that there is a significant and positive relationship between training and employees’ performance.

Decision: Given that the f-ratio=28.47 with a p-value of 0.0000, which is less than 0.05%, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between training and employees’ performance.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Organizations such as public institutions of higher learning recognizes the vital roles human resources play in enhancing the performance of employees(Hegarty & Moccia, 2018; Mariani, Gigli & Bandini, 2019; Ilyas, Abid & Ashfaq, 2020; and Onyekwelu, Dike & Muogbo, 2020). Consequently, this study assessed the effect of some selected human resources practices on employees’
performance in Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), Effurun-Warri, Delta State of Nigeria and the emphasis was on two (2) selected HRP measures namely hiring process and training.

The study found that there is significant link between the selected HRP and employees’ performance, particularly in areas of hiring process and training. The findings of the study are similar in part to the results of Moraa and (2019); Onyekwelu, et al (2020); and Mgaiwa and Kapinga who found out HRP influences employees and organizational performance.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
In light of empirical results, it can be said that Nigerian public institutions of higher learning have a high degree of awareness on the contemporary issues relating to HRP; this awareness reflects in the data obtained and in comparison with empirical literature. The practices of human resource have some advantages; some of which have been identified in the literature as improving the performance of the employees and organization. Again, the implementation of HRP initiatives of public institutions of higher learning has improved the performance of employees. Thus, the conclusion reached is that human resource practices contribute to the performance of employees. Based on the findings of the study, some useful recommendations were proffered:

1. Efforts by Nigerian public institutions of higher learning should be geared towards enhancing their human resource practices, particularly in the training process so as to further boost the performance of employees and that of the organization.
2. Nigerian public institutions of higher learning should design viable framework in their hiring process in order to have a formidable workforce that can deliver its goals and objectives.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE
This study established empirically that human resource practices (HRPs) serve as a means of enhancing the performance of employees of public institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Also, this study contributes to knowledge by filling the literature gap on what is known about the relationship between some selected HRP (training and hiring process) and employees’ performance of public institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

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