

Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and Employees' Career Development in Selected Commercial Banks in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to investigate the effect of strategic human resource management practices on employees' career development of selected commercial banks in Lagos State. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 450 was drawn from the 1,399 employees of nine (9) commercial banks. The simple random sampling and stratified random sampling techniques were adopted to select the respondents. This was adopted to ensure that different groups of the population were adequately represented. The proportional stratified sampling technique was further used to select equal sample of 50 from each of the banks surveyed. The reliability of the study instrument was conducted by means of Cronbach's Alpha. It was hypothesised that strategic human resources management practices do not affect employees' career development in commercial banks in Lagos State. From the test of hypothesis, it was found that strategic human resources management practices have a significant effect on employee career development of commercial banks in Lagos State. The findings obtained from the multiple regression analysis indicates that the independent variables, that is, strategic human resource management practices (business and human resource strategy, human resource planning, strategic employment practices, performance appraisal practices and employee retention) have significant effect on the dependent variable (employee career development) of the commercial banks surveyed. It is hereby recommended that for organizations to achieve optimal performance and effective employees' career development, strategic human resource management practices should be embraced and adopted.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Management Practices, Employees' Career Development, Commercial Banks.

1. INTRODUCTION

The changes, challenges and competition in the business world are making every dynamic organization to strategize with a long term perspective and to leverage on its internal resources for a competitive advantage. Previous research revealed that firms can gain sustainable competitive advantage by strategically managing their human resource (Barney, 1991, 1995; Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Wei, 2006). Moreover, it was noted that competitive advantage lies in the employees, and not in HRM practices. But, overtime the lack of importance attached to addressing employees' needs is most apparent in times of major crisis or opportunity for the business, and in the case of Nigeria, the recent reforms and capitalization of the Nigerian banking sector brings this observation to the fore. Francis and Keegan (2006) noted that there is a tendency for a focus on business performance outcomes to obscure the importance of employees' well being in its own right. A broad range of ideas and techniques have characterized the concept of Human Resource Management (HRM) over time. According to Fajana (2009) as a management strategy; it is centered on the welfare of individual members rather than those of the group. More recently, the term has been frequently used as a management tool/technique in response to changes in the global business, particularly, with HRM processes taking place within the context of the internal and external environments of the business concern.

The discussion on the significance and practices of HRM in enhancing both the individual and corporate performance is gradually embracing a strategic management notion. Prominent authors support this in the recent definition of the concept, Beer, Spector, Lawrence, Mills, and Walton, (1984) defines the concept of HRM as all management decisions and actions that affect the relationship between the organization and the employees'. While Armstrong (1992) defines it as a strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to the management and development of the organization's human resources. These definitions are helpful in contributing to the understanding of different career models and empirical studies that seek to ascertain employees' perceptions of their career development in the banking sector in Nigeria. The strategic human resource management practices examined are human resource planning, HR/business strategies, employment practices, performance appraisal and employee retention.

The notion of HRM as a strategic concept is now being viewed critically and embraced around the globe, most especially, in attaining competitive advantage. According to Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008), strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the longer term, which achieve advantage in a

changing environment through its configuration of resources and competence with aim of fulfilling stakeholders' expectations". This terrain was summed up by Storey (2001) as a distinctive approach to employment management that seeks to achieve competitive advantage through strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce, using integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques.

In the same vein, Fajana (2009) noted that the pillar of the economic development strategy rests with people. Furthermore, Price (2004) defines the SHRM concept as "a long term perspective concerned with issues such as corporate culture and individual career development as well as availability of people with the right skills". Moreover, putting career and development together, it was noted that, "career development is the life-long process of fostering and cultivating the shape of the individual's working life so as to make the best use of inherent talents, skills, knowledge and interests for that person" (Peel, 1992, p.13) According to Hirsch and Jackson (1995), employees are gradually taking more responsibility for their own career development, whilst the employers are taking less. Organizations now perform supportive role, not directive role, in enabling employees' career success.

Much of the early studies evaluating the impact of SHRM practices on performance focused on the organizational level analysis, and examined the effect of systems of HRM practices on organizational outcomes such as employee turnover, productivity, machine efficiency, scrap rates, customer alignment, customer satisfaction, and financial and perceptual measures of firm performance (Arthur, 1994; Delaney and Huselid, 1996; Delery and Doty, 1996; Huselid, 1995). Further evidence was provided on the synergistic effect of bundles of HR practices on firm outcomes (Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995). More recently, a 'high performance work system' approach is beginning to dominate HR research. This is conceptualized as a system of interconnected HR activities, designed to ensure that employees have a broad range of superior skills and abilities, which are utilized to achieve the organization's goals, and thereby provide sustainable competitive advantage (Wood & Wall, 2002). However, this is contrary to the opinion of classical authors in the field of Industrial Sociology, Miller and Form (1951, p.7) who noted that "underneath the stop watches and bonus plans of efficiency experts, the worker is driven by a desperate inner urge to find an environment where he can take root, where he belongs and has a function; where he sees the purpose of his work and feels important in achieving it".

Baruch (2004) suggests that current relationship between employer and employees is shifting from a relational contract to a transactional one. This new situation was summed up as one, where organizations offer employability to employees in return for versatility and multi-skilled outputs, plus a willingness to find other employment gracefully when they are no longer needed (Holbeche, 2003). However, Herriott and Pemberton (1997) emphasizes that, in the face of increased job insecurity and narrowing promotion opportunities, employment relations may now take the form of a personal, transactional contract in which individual seeks personal development for individual employability. Since matters of strategic plans of an organization will definitely require people to actualize, this research intends to explore the effects of SHRM practices on the development of highly professional/skilled employees and also investigate the implications of recent pressure for change on the employee career development (ECD) of commercial banks employees in Nigeria. This study brought to the forefront the interactions between work and the social milieu in which the worker moves to achieve inner urge; and thus establish the need to balance both personal satisfaction and efficient production which are noted to From the late 1980s there has been evidence of the demise of traditional careers, in which individual followed a career path and stayed within one function where career moves were primarily vertical (Arthur, 1994, 1995; Baruch, 2004). In recent times employees are encouraged to take charge of their careers and development to meet the challenges of contemporary changing business environment (Hirsch and Jackson, 1995). According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), many employees experience "boundaryless" career which is independent of traditional organizational career arrangements. In a "boundaryless" career, employees attempt to advance their careers through whatever means necessary, unlike in the past where employees were more or less passive concerning their career when they entered an organization. Then, employers were responsible for planning employees' career and gave them little or no control over their own progress, preferring to place and promote them without consultation (Beer et al, 1984).

However, under the current uncertain economic conditions this attitude no longer suffices. In other words, employees are expected to plan their own careers. Discussion of the changing context of organization careers has led to revised models of traditional career development in view of the psychological contract which is affecting the ownership and management of careers (Boxall and Purell, 2003; Holbeche, 2003). Part of the new model being offered by employers include less job security and feelings of powerlessness by engaging in transactional form of employment relationships. This, in contrast according to MacNeill (1985), is short term, and is predicted on performance based pay. It involves lower levels of commitment by both parties and allows for easy exit from the agreement. This has created a world of work characterized by high levels of anxiety and uncertainty, temporary relationships, decreased mutual commitment between employers and employees. It further places less emphasis on long term career growth sponsored by employers. Hall (1976) suggests that career is best conceptualized as progressing through a systematic sequence, from one position to another, within

an individual profession. Therefore any job within an occupational grouping, which does not offer individuals the opportunity for systematic progression is not regarded as continuing a career.

Maguire's (2002) research into the banking industry found that the relational aspects of the psychological contract between employees and the organization had generally decreased. The banking industry in Nigeria harbors different shades of professionals, skills and ability; which have made Employment Relations (ER) more diversified and versatile. Employers are increasingly employing workers in ways which allow them to use their labour as efficiently as possible. Olaosebikan (2006) noted that:

“the employer-employee relations in the banking industry has been the worst as banks attracted people into their organizations with fat salaries only to destroy and ravage their intellect. First class graduates were turned into zombies by these banks within a few years of employment. The banks made them embrace unsustainable and expensive lifestyle and believed that the only thing that mattered is money. The staff were used and dumped at will without a care for them and the families they supported. Even now most of them come to work each day unsure if they still had a job.”(pp. 28-29)

Banks are fast becoming 'lean and mean' in coping with globalization pressures, thereby resulting in sharp HR practices on short term in the name of “strategizing” to keep afloat as a result of competitive pressure. Organizational hierarchies have become flatter, according to Daft (1992), in the past bigger meant better and growth in terms of personnel was a major goal of companies, nowadays there is a trend towards smaller, leaner and less hierarchical organizations.

Contemporary inquiry and practices in HRM is directed towards the development and maintenance of workplace environments which foster the commitment of workers to their employing organizations (Millward, Brynson & Forth, 2000). This according to Legge (2005), is described as forced involvement which brings compliance rather than commitment. This research considers the implications of recent pressure/reforms and the attendant effects of the strategic human resource practices on employees' career development in the Nigerian banking sector. The import of this is that, organization tends to move away from the internal labour markets demarcated on the basis of core and periphery lines. The core workers, being privileged employees, may have a career with the organization, while peripheral workers provide labour to the firm as when required (Lepak and Snell, 1999). Such business strategy and SHRM practices to staffing may directly challenge the career competencies of affected workers and may also cause confusion, insecurity and loss of identity for such workers. The core workers may enjoy a temporary boost of self-esteem with the resulting sense of responsibility to learn new skills, and further develop their core identities to continue in their employment. The failure to achieve the balance between both personal satisfaction and efficient production may lead to frustration and obsessions; a further neglect of this human function of production could cost a high price in restricted output and a vast sea of human waste.

The objective of the study is to investigate the effect of strategic human resource management practices on employees' career development of selected commercial banks in Lagos State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section examines the theoretical underpinnings which are germane to the study as well as the conceptual model and some empirical researches bearing on strategic human resource management practices and employees' career development.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

- **Contingency and Configurational Theory of HRM**

These approaches to HRM emphasizes set of researches that recognize the need to integrate human resource practices or human resource systems with a series of organizational aspects and primarily, with the company strategy (Delery & Doty, 1996; Wood, 1999; Hartog & Verbug, 2004; Datta, Guthrie & Wright, 2005). HRM is influenced by the organization's environment and circumstances; this has assumed rapid changes and complexities amidst the difficulties of operational and contextual environments (Fajana, 2002). Consequently, as Boselie, Dietz & Boon (2005) explained, HRM responds accurately and effectively to the organization's environment and complements other organizational systems and delivers added value through the strategic development of the organization's rare, imitable and non-substitutable resource, embodied-literally-in its staff.

- **Resource-based view (RBV)**

The resource-based view (RBV) argues that the organization's resources and capabilities, rather than environmental conditions, should be the basis for organizational decisions. This approach is consistent with the investment perspective of HRM. According to Barney, (1991, 1995), HRM delivers added value through the strategic development of an organization's rare, hard to imitate and hard to substitute human resource. The RBV has become the most often used within the SHRM, both in the development of theory and the rationale for empirical research (McMahan, Virick & Wright, 1999). Consequently, the growing acceptance of internal

resource as source of competitive advantage corroborates HR's assertion that people are strategically important to the firm's success. The integration of the RBV from the broader strategy literature brought about a foundation for both theoretical and empirical examinations. The applications and implications of the RBV have led to an increasing convergence between the field of strategic management and strategic human resource management (Snell, Shadur & Wright, 2001).

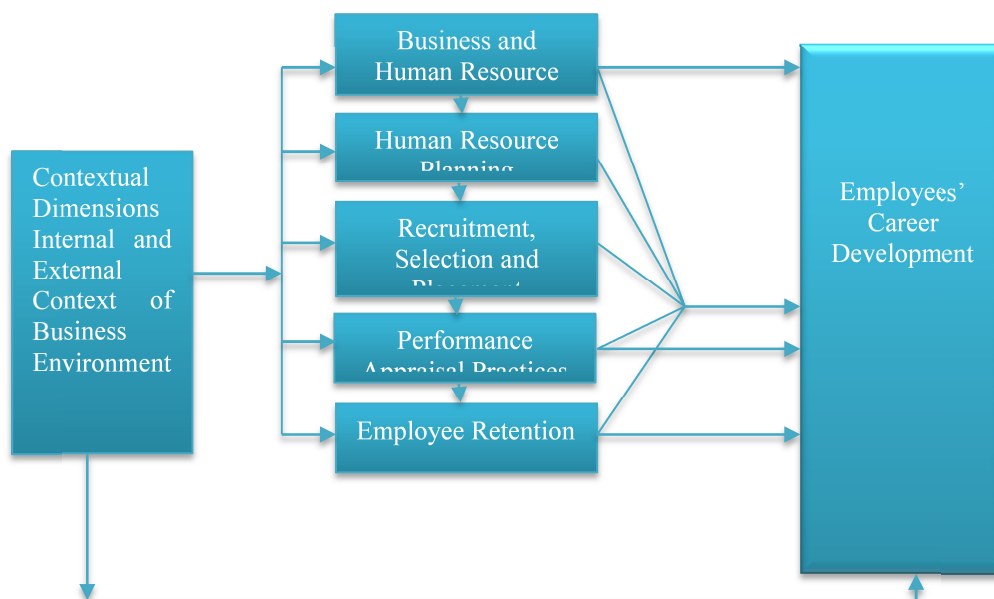
- **Ability, Motivation and Opportunity Theory**

This theory is of the view that $\text{Performance} = \text{Ability} + \text{Motivation} + \text{Opportunity}$; where Ability connotes skills and capabilities requisite to the performance of a behaviour; motivation implies the impetus towards a behaviour and opportunity is the contextual and situational constraint relevant to the performance of the behaviour. In the framework motivation has a direct influence upon behavior which is then moderated by both ability and opportunity (MacInnis & Jaworski, 1989). To participate provides the basis for developing HR systems that attend to employees' interests, namely their skill requirements, motivations and the quality of their job (Appelbaum et al 2000; Bailey et al 2001; Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Taking into consideration the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which places self-actualization at the top of pyramid as the goal to which all aspire, it can be concluded that career development is central to this self-actualization.

- **Career development theory**

This study considered the Holland's career theory which was based on the assumption that an individual's career choice is based on his or her personality and thus, the individual must combine specific career information with self knowledge to make the appropriate choice.

2.2 Conceptual Model



Source: Developed by the researcher (2013)

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Strategic Human Resource Management and Employee Career Development

2.3 Empirical Researches bearing on Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and Employees' Career Development.

According to Wei (2006), previous research suggests that firms can gain sustainable competitive advantage through strategically managing their human resources, operationally exercised as strategic human resource management (SHRM). There is a growing consensus that the human input has become the main source of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations (Porter 1985; Porter & Stern 2001). In the same vein, Pfeffer (1994) affirmed that it is not the people *per se*, but mainly how they are managed had become increasingly important. In particular, people must be resourceful at the levels of the organization, industry, and the nation if they are to contribute to national development (Fajana, 2009). Armstrong (1994) regards it simply as a notion of how people can best be managed in the interests of the organization; while Keenoy (1990) defines it as 'a method of maximizing economic return from labour resource by integrating HRM into business strategy. Fajana (2009) further states that 'resourceful' as they must be people are presented in diverse categories including but not limited to age, gender, education, competencies, ethnicity, spatial locations, and the like.

One of the major themes running through HRM is the acknowledgement that employees are valued assets of the company, that there should be an interface between a strategy for human resource and the main strategy for business. Wright and Snell (1998) suggest that seeking fit requires knowledge of the business strategies, knowledge of the skills and behaviour necessary to implement the strategy, knowledge of the HR practices to elicit those skills and behaviours, and the ability quickly to develop and implement the desired system of HRM practices. To achieve the vertical fit i.e. to integrate business and HR strategies, Armstrong (2009) noted that business and HR issues influence each other and in turn influence corporate business unit strategies; and in establishing these links, account must be taken of the fact that strategies for change have also been integrated in the external and internal environments. Fit may exist at a point in time but circumstances will change and fit no longer exists. The underlying logic is that HRM strategy should be driven by business and market considerations, for the objective of securing a committed and capable workforce; which put people at the center of corporate strategy (Matanmi, 2005).

Human resource planning (HRP) is concerned with proactively analyzing the external environment and making the best possible use of employees. According to Fajana (2002) planning is done with reference to the task and contextual environment of organization. Mayo (1991) sees career management as 'the organizational process which enables the careers of individual to be planned and managed in a way that optimize both the needs of the organization and the preferences and capabilities of the individuals'. More recently, the focus has swung towards individuals driving their own progress, with an emphasis on personal development plans, learning center and career workshops (Bratton & Gold, 1999). The impact of such measures is that planning becomes an interactive process in which employees and the organization seek to accommodate each other to some extent. Hall and Associates (1996) emphasized the importance of career planning as the first step towards the career development process. In the same vein, Farren and Kaye (1986) argue that individuals are responsible for initiating their own career planning as well as identify their skills, values and interests, and seek out their career options in order to set goals and establish their career plans. This apparent flexibility, which seems to benefit employees, might exist to a greater extent in policy and use of rhetoric than in the reality experienced by employees (Legge, 1998). Regardless of the strategies adopted by an organization in analyzing and identifying the right balance to meet its goals, it will be necessary for the HR strategies to have the right people in the right places at the right time to make the overall strategies work in capabilities and utilization of talent. HR planning is critical to the effective employee career development as it identifies gaps and surpluses in capabilities as well as issues of utilization of talent. Grundy (1998) argued that the key role of a strategic HRM is to facilitate organization and people strategy, together with joint coordination with line management of strategic programmes such as management development and succession planning. HR planning must identify the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and characteristics affecting the capabilities of employees for current and future jobs (Mathis and Jackson, 2008).

The traditional approach to recruitment and selection, referred to as 'system approach' by Graham and Bennet (1998) defines the ideal candidate who most closely fits the ideal profile for the job. More recently the use of the Internet in recruitment and selection has been on the increase. However, it was noted that for many organizations it is mainly a tool for recruitment and a supplement to advertising rather than a fully fledged selection device. Furthermore, the incidence of hiring on the basis of influence will have to be de-emphasized and selection instruments will have to be devised, validated and used as intended (Fajana, 2002). The traditional HRM function, or technical HRM activities, covers a wide range of employment practices, including recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, training and development and administration of compensation and benefits (Wei, 2006). According to Fierman (1994) the use of contract staff and temporary workers have sought to become more efficient by using human capital in a just-in-time fashion. For many individuals, working on a contingent basis has become a permanent way of life. These approaches to staffing directly challenge the career competencies of affected workers; which further results into changed playing field for the individual management of careers, with a new set of individual behaviours and actions required (DeFillipi & Arthur, 1994). Employment relationships may be seen as having the characteristics of social exchange that individual HRM practices impact on employee perception of organization support (Blau, 1964).

Redman and Wilkinson (2006) noted that with the decline of careers in the flat, delayed organization, HRM techniques such as performance appraisal have become more important managerial tools in motivating and controlling the workforce. Employees are increasingly being appraised not only on objective measures such as attendance, timekeeping, productivity and quality; but also on more subjective aspects such as dependability, flexibility, initiative, loyalty etc. Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1986) contend that career development involves an organized, formalized, planned effort to achieve a balance between the individual's career needs and the organization's work force requirement. According to Bowles and Coates (1993) 'it has been much more important in maintain employee loyalty and commitment than in directly managing performance'. Providing training and development and investment of managerial time in appraising the performance and training needs of employees send strong messages that they are valued organization assets (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Tansky

& Cohen,2001). Its use provides managers with a major opportunity to reinforce corporate values and attitudes and thus appears as important strategic instrument in the control process. Thus, Bowles and Coates (1993) stressed the importance of performance appraisal in maintaining employee loyalty and commitment.

The term retention can be defined as “a systematic effort to create and foster an environment that encourages employees to remain employed by having policies and practices in place that address their diverse needs” (Workforce Planning for Wisconsin State Government, 2005). More specifically, HRM practices which demonstrate that the organization is committed to employees in the long term, wishes to invest in them, and is concerned about their welfare and development are likely to result in employees feeling that the organization is being supportive, and so be positively associated with ECD. Allen et al. (2003) found that ‘supportive human resource practices’ (i.e. participation in decision making, fairness of rewards, and growth opportunities) contributed to employees’ perceived organizational support, which mediated the relationships between HRM practices and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee turnover. According to Willie, Jayawardena and Laver(2008) and Earle (2003), proactive approach of employer regarding retention cultivates employee satisfaction, enhanced goodwill and germinates trust that ultimately leads to productivity

Research Hypothesis: Strategic human resources management practices do not affect employees’ career development in Commercial banks in Lagos State.

METHODS

This section concentrates on the adopted methods or procedures for carrying out the study. It highlights the research setting, research design, population of study including sample and sampling techniques, research instrument/measurement of variables, validation of research instrument, administration of instrument and the statistical techniques for the test of hypothesis.

The setting for this study is Lagos State in South Western part of Nigeria. This study area is important to this study because it has most commercial and financial businesses. Victoria Island in particular, headquartered most of the country’s commercial banks, financial institutions and major corporations. Lagos State is the nation’s most industrialized State, where much of the nation’s wealth and economic activity are concentrated. Lagos State is regarded as the economic and financial capital of Nigeria, formerly, the capital of Nigeria. It is the hub of Nigeria’s national economy; a huge metropolis and currently rated as the second most populous city in Africa, after Cairo, and is estimated to be the fastest growing in the world (Un-Habitat, 2008). By the Nigerian Census of 2006, it has a population of 9,013,535(nine million and thirteen thousand five hundred and thirty five) people.

This study adopted the survey research design which is ideal in view of large samples of respondents. It specified the information to be gathered, the sources, administration, collection and analysis of data. It enables getting answers to the research questions. The use of the survey design follows a correlational research strategy and helps in predicting behavior (Kerlinger, 1973; Bordens & Abbott, 2002); it also helps to determine whether or not a relationship exists between variables of study.

The population for this study consists of the employees of selected commercial banks in the financial sector of the Nigerian economy. Consequently, the post consolidation era have seen more people engaged with few banks compared with the pre-consolidation era that had many banks (89 banks). For the purpose of this study, middle level employees of nine (9) quoted commercial banks on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) which have their headquarters in Lagos State, were randomly selected from the 20 (twenty) licensed banks, as of 2011. There are 1,399 employees in this category as obtained from various annual reports.

A sample size of 450 was drawn from the 1,399 employees of the nine (9) commercial banks. The simple random sampling and stratified random sampling were adopted to select the respondents. This was adopted to ensure that different groups of the population are adequately represented in the sample so as to increase the level of accuracy when estimating parameters (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2009). In particular a proportional stratified sampling technique was used to select equal sample of 50 from each of the banks surveyed. As noted by Cooper & Schindler (2001) even if the population is not normally distributed, the distributed sample means will be normal if there is large enough set of samples.

TABLE 3.1 SAMPLED COMMERCIAL BANKS

Banks	Population	Copies of Questionnaire Distributed
Access Bank	84	50
Diamond Bank	180	50
ECO Bank	281	50
First Bank	66	50
GT Bank	61	50
Skye Bank	164	50
UBA	82	50
Union Bank	55	50
Zenith Bank	426	50
Total	1,399	450

Source:Field Survey 2013

Out of the 450 copies of the questionnaire administered to respondents, 307 representing 68 percent, were returned and analyzed.

The independent variables of the study are the strategic human resource management practices namely business and human resource strategies, human resource planning; strategic employment (i.e. recruitment, selection and placement); performance appraisal practices ; employee retention and redundancy practices .The dependent variable of the study is employee career development. The instrument employed in this study was a well-structured questionnaire containing opinion, factual questions/categorical statements which were designed to obtain respondents view on the various situations, phenomena, and assertions in respect of the identified variables of the study. The Rensis Likert 4-point scale, measuring the degree or intensity of the responses, was employed to elicit information from respondents. It ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1).The instrument consist of three sections. Section A has 32 relevant factual/categorical statements divided into six sub-divisions which sought the views of respondents on business and human resource strategies (5 items); human resource planning practices (5 items); strategic employment practices i.e. recruitment, selection and placement (11 items); performance appraisal practices (5 items); and employee retention/career commitment (17 items). Section B consists of three (3) sub-divisions that relates to the dependent variable – employee career development. That is, career development (4 items); career planning (7 items) and career management (6 items). Section C of the instrument elicits information on the demographic profile of the respondents.

The validity of the data collected was ascertained by ensuring that the research instrument measured what it ought to measure in terms of content and construct. The first draft of questionnaire was assessed by the researcher’s supervisors, consultants/professors in the field of study. The reliability of the study instrument was conducted by means of Cronbach’s Alpha test statistic (Cronbach, 1951) with the use of SPSS version 17; and the square root of reliability co-efficient gives the internal validity otherwise known as intrinsic validity (Guilford,1954). Armstrong and Foley (2003) suggested that “the closer Cronbach’s alpha is to 1.00, then, the more reliable the scale”. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) stated that a value for Cronbach’s alpha coefficient greater than 0.60 is considered acceptable. In conclusion, all reliability coefficients as shown in TABLE 3.2 have exceeded the minimum acceptable level of 0.60. Therefore, this indicates that the items used in the construct are reliable and consistent.

TABLE 3.2 RELIABILITY& VALIDITY CO-EFFICIENTS FOR THE VARIABLES

S/N	Variables	Reliability Coefficient	Validity Coefficient
1.	Business and Human Resource Strategy	0.76	0.87
2.	Human Resource Planning	0.66	0.81
3.	Employment Practices	0.66	0.81
4.	Performance Appraisal Practices	0.76	0.87
5.	Employee Retention Practices	0.79	0.89
6.	Overall Reliability	0.89	0.94

Source: Field Survey,2013

The data generated were presented in simple frequency distribution tables. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages were used to analyze demographic characteristics of respondents. The data were processed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. Regression analysis was used to examine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The test of hypothesis was done at 5 per cent level of significance. The Pearson’s product moment correlation was also adopted. The adopted multiple regression model is depicted as $y = \alpha + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \varepsilon$. Where, $y =$ Employee Career Development, $x_1 =$ Business/Human Resource Strategy, $x_2 =$ Human Resource Planning, $x_3 =$

Strategic Employment Practices, x_4 = Performance Appraisal practices, x_5 = Employee Retention/Career Commitment. β is the gradient i.e. a change in y as a result of a change in x .

RESULTS

TABLE 4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS

S/N	Variables	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
1	Gender : Male	167	54.3%
	Female	140	45.7%
2	Age:		
	Less than 20years	2	0.7%
	20-29	89	31.6%
	30-39	134	47.5%
	40-49	53	18.8%
	50 and above	4	1.4%
3	Marital Status:		
	Single	91	32%
	Married	191	66.6%
	Separated	3	1.0%
	Divorced	2	0.7%
	Widow/Widower	1	0.3%
4.	Highest Educational Qualifications		
	OND/NCE + Professional Qualification	7	2.4%
	HND/B.Sc/B.A/B.Ed	91	31.6%
	First Degree + Professional Qualification	104	36.1%
	M.Sc/M.A/M.Ed	43	14.9%
	Masters Degree + Professional Qualification	42	14.6%
	Ph.D	1	.3%
5.	Job Category		
	Middle Level Manager/Supervisor	222	86.0%
	Senior/Management Staff	36	14.0%
6.	Working experience		
	1 -5 years	153	62.2%
	6 -10 years	60	24.4%
	11 – 15 years	16	6.5%
	16 - 20 years	10	4.1%
	21 years and above	7	2.8%

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4.1 presents the frequency of respondents' profiles. Out of a total of 307 respondents, 54.3 per cent were male and 45.7 per cent were female demonstrating the large extent of male participation in the sampled commercial banks. This is a reflection of a good proportion of gender balance among the respondents, though male respondents were in higher number. Furthermore, the largest age group (47.5 per cent) was represented by participants/ managers in the 30-39 age range. This implies a young and dynamic managerial workforce that could be easily groomed for top management and leadership positions. Also, the table shows that 66 percent of the respondents are married, which reflect the probability of the majority of the workforce having the right environment to attain their personal and family goals e.g. raising and keeping a family, thereby making them more responsible and committed. Majority of the respondents are middle level managers/ supervisors (86 percent). Those who had spent between 1 -5 years (62.2 percent) in service. This shows a group of people who may desire to advance in their careers. In the same vein, majority of the respondents are graduates with 195 (67.7 percent) possessing at least first degree. This shows that these sets of respondents are well educated and thus have the needed understanding and pedigree for this research work.

TABLE 4.2 RESPONSE RATE OF SAMPLED COMMERCIAL BANKS

Banks	Population	Copies of Questionnaire Distributed	Copies returned	Percent of Responses
Access Bank	84	50	25	50
Diamond Bank	180	50	26	52
ECO Bank	281	50	35	70
First Bank	66	50	43	86
GT Bank	61	50	43	86
Skye Bank	164	50	47	94
UBA	82	50	34	68
Union Bank	55	50	19	38
Zenith Bank	426	50	35	70
Total	1,399	450	307	68

Source:Field Survey 2013

Out of the 450 copies of the questionnaire administered to respondents, 307 representing 68 percent, were returned and analyzed.

It was hypothesised that strategic human resources management practices do not affect employees' career development in Commercial banks in Lagos State. From the test of hypothesis, it was found that strategic human resources management practices have a significant effect on employee career development of Commercial Banks in Lagos State considering the *p*-value of 0.000, which is less than $\alpha=0.05$. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.88 indicates significant correlation between the variables. The F-ratio value of 4.332 further revealed the strength of the independent variable as a predictor of employee career development of Commercial Banks in Lagos State. The *p*-value is less than $\alpha=0.05$. The result of simple regression analysis shows that the relationship between business strategy and human resources strategies significantly affects employee career development of Commercial Banks in Lagos State considering the *p*-value of 0.000, which is less than $\alpha=0.05$. The correlation coefficient *R* has the value of 0.205 and the F-ratio value of 13.385 indicating positive correlation with the employee career development. This further affirms that business and human resources strategies are a predictor of employee career development of Commercial Banks in Lagos State.

The result of simple regression analysis shows that human resource planning did not make significant contribution to employee career development, considering a *p*-value of 0.293, which is greater than $\alpha=0.05$ while $R=0.060$. The result further showed the F-ratio value of 1.112 which indicates that human resource planning does not significantly affect employee career development of Commercial Banks in Lagos State. Using the Pearson's Product moment correlation coefficient, the result shows that there is a significant positive correlation between strategic employment practices (recruitment, selection and placement) and employees' career development in commercial banks in Lagos State, $r = 0.183, p < 0.001$. Since the *p*-value is less than $\alpha=0.01$, H_0 is hereby rejected and H_1 is accepted, thereby showing that there is a significant relationship between strategic employment practices and employees' career development in Commercial Banks in Lagos State.

The result of the simple regression analysis shows that performance appraisal practices has a significant effect on employee career development considering a *p*-value of 0.000, which is less than $\alpha=0.05$ while $R=0.212$. The result further showed that the effect did occur by chance as it gave the F-ratio value of 14.358 which shows the strength of the independent variable as a predictor of employee career development of sampled Commercial Banks in Lagos State is weak.

The result of simple regression analysis shows that employee retention has a significant effect on employee career development, considering a *p*-value of 0.000, which is less than $\alpha=0.05$ while $R= 0.200$. The result further showed the F-ratio value of 12.639 which indicates that employee retention has a significant effect on employee career development of sampled Commercial Banks in Lagos State. The overall model has *R* greater than zero showing that there are positive significant relationships between all the measures of strategic human resource management practices and the dependent variables; business & human resource strategies, human resource planning, employment practices (recruitment, selection and placement), performance appraisal practices, employee retention practices, and redundancies practices. The independent variables with the highest beta (β) coefficient have the most significant contribution on the dependent variables. Hence, Multiple Regression Model $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \epsilon$

$$y = 2.439 - 0.107x_1 + 0.059x_2 + 0.042x_3 + 0.107x_4 + 0.082x_5 + \epsilon$$

After the Backward elimination method of regression analysis, the best fit regression model is $y = 2.356 + 0.104x_1 + 0.110x_4 + 0.085x_5$. This confirms that strategic human resource management practices is vital to employees' career development. The model shows that business and human resource strategy, performance appraisal practices and employee retention are the best independent variables to predict employee

career development of Commercial Banks.

3. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The results of the study are consistent with the literature. Beer et al (1984) noted that there must be a fit between competitive strategy and internal HR strategy; and a fit among the element of the HRM strategy; Boxall (1992) also noted that HRM is seen to be strategic by virtue of its alignment with business strategy and its internal consistency. Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1986) contend that career development involves an organized, formalized, planned effort to achieve a balance between the individual's career needs and the organization's work force requirement. This also illustrates that HR planning must identify the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and characteristics affecting the capabilities of employees for current and future jobs (Mathis and Jackson, 2008). Bowles and Coates (1993) stressed the importance of performance appraisal in maintaining employee loyalty and commitment. According to Willie, et al. (2008) and Earle (2003), proactive approach of employer regarding retention cultivates employee satisfaction, enhanced goodwill and germinates trust that ultimately leads to productivity.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

This study set out to investigate the effect of strategic human resource management practices on employees' career development of selected commercial banks in Lagos State. From the test of hypothesis, it was found that strategic human resources management practices have a significant effect on employees' career development of commercial banks in Lagos State. Thus, strategic human resource management practices are vital to employees' career development. This study established that the alignment of business strategy with HR strategy, performance appraisal practices and employee retention are the most effective predictors of employees' career development (ECD) which in turn increases organization's ability to attract, maintain and retain employees who eventually become the organization's competitive advantage. It is recommended that for organizations to achieve optimal performance and effective employees' career development, strategic human resource management practices should be embraced.

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