ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN ABIA STATE

BY

NWOKOHU CHIMAROKE

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Nwokohu CHIMAROKE (B.Sc. Building) (ABSU) 2008

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING,
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN,
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OCTOBER, 2018

Declaration

I declare that the work in thisDissertationentitled "**ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN ABIA STATE"** has been carried out by me in the Department of Building.

The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this dissertation has been presented for another Degree or Diploma at this or any other institution.

NWOKOHU CHIMAROKE _____ _____

Signature Date

Certification

ThisDissertationentitled **ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN ABIA STATE** by **NwokohuCHIMAROKE**meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Masters of Science of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

_____ Date _____

Prof. I. H. Mshelgaru

Chairman, Supervisory Committee

_____ Date _____

Dr. D. Danwata

Member, Supervisory Committee

_____ Date _____

Dr. D. Kado

Head of Department

_____ Date _____

Prof. Sadiq Z. Abubakar

Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

Dedication

This research Dissertationis dedicated to Almighty God and to my wife.

Acknowledgements

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Abstract

In a period of economic down turn, construction companies must find a way to sustain its human resources as well as remain in business. The research evaluated the Human Resources Management practices of building construction firms in Abia state with a view to highlight the performance of the building construction firms in the State. The objectives of the research was geared at the implementation of the standard HRM practices, Departmental functions of HRM and the predominant factors determining HRM practices. The research method sampled a size of forty three (43) construction companies, registered with Federal Inland Revenue (FIRS) and the state board of internal revenue (BIR). Analysis was done using mean score and percentage. The result obtained identified that recruitment and selection practices had an average mean score (MS) of 2.15. The Involvement of the employees in the building firms had MS of 2.18. The Training, Development and Education had an average MS of 1.91. The Work Conditions had an average mean score (MS) of 1.89. The Competency-Based Performance Appraisal had MS of 1.96. The Compensation and Rewards had an average MS of 2.0.The research concludes that practice of HRM in construction firms in Abia state is below the standard HRM practices identified.The research therefore recommends a full implementation of the standard HRM practices identified in the research, and the involvement of other relevant body or stakeholders in monitoring of the HRM implementation process, the HRM department should be given adequate resources and authority to carry out a fair recruitment and selection process, which is devoid of personal interest, the need to reinforce the firm's savings and the diversification or reinvestment of the firm's profit, so as to create a stable financial base in the case of economic fluctuations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The construction industry just like the manufacturing industry requires a number of resources for achieving set goals and objectives. The resources can be classified into money, materials, machine, men and manpower. According to Ulasi (2011) the development of any nation depends to a very large extent on the calibre, organization and motivation of its human resources. Human resources are the life blood of an organization. Despite the application of technology in modern business management, human resources are still relevant and most adaptive resources of the organization. The strategic values of HR stem from the fact that apart from other resources employed in the course of production (land, capital, technology etc) which are passive, human resources are endowed with discretionary decision-making power and thus have competitive advantage over the other resources. Besides, HR combines other resources in the right mix to formulate appropriate strategies for the accomplishment of the desired objectives of the enterprise. This essential attribute of HR assist the enterprise to make rightful decisions and respond effectively to the threats and opportunities within the environment of the organization. Thus the enterprise depends highly on its HR for success and survival. This dependence continuously is increasing, considering the complex and turbulent nature of the construction environment of this century (Francis, Cyril and Samuel, 2011).

According to Raheem and Bankole, (2014) there is a specific case in Nigeria where diversity exerts tremendous influence on politics and administration, the capacity to increase the benefits and reduce the costs of this diversity constitutes a human

resource management challenge of epic proportion in its construction firm. Human resource in the construction industry refers to the managerial and technical workforce required for construction. Some construction firms are limited by ownership and employing between 25 and 300 workers in order to effectively exercise control. Management refers to the selection of goals and the procurement, planning, organizing, coordinating, direction and control of necessary resource for their achievement. Human resource management refers to the planning, organizing, directing and controlling of the recruitment, compensation, integration, sustenance, and separation of manpower resources to an end best suited to the achievement of organizational and individual objectives.

There are no more important decisions within an organization than people decisions: staffing a job, placing people into jobs and into assignments, promoting people, letting them go, and so on. No matter how carefully organizations hire people, they will not perform if put into jobs that are the wrong ones for them. No matter how brilliant and clever top management decisions are regarding a company's business or its strategy, its products, or services, they will not produce results if the company's decisions do not work out (Drucker and Maciariello, 2008).

HRM is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques (Storey, 2001). Harrison, (2000) defined HRM as a strategic approach to the management of human resources that involves all management decisions and actions that affect the relationship between the organization and employees. While Armstrong (2006) defines HRM as a strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to the management and development of the organisation's human resources in which

every aspect of that process is wholly integrated within the overall management of the organisation. Schuler and Jackson (1987) develop the strategic model of HRM by linking HR practices to competitive strategies framework that an organisation can use to gain competitiveadvantage. They argue that the strategy that management of an organisation employs can affect the kind of employees' behaviour. However, this strategic model of HRM is not left with some flaws such as ignoring the employees' interest, not recognising the legal requirement, social norms and values of the environment in which they operate (Legge, 1995; Budhwar and Debrah, 2001). The strategic model according to Legge labels this model as the hard HRM model, which contrast totally from the 'soft model' of HRM that emphasises commitment HR strategy. This commitment strategy model was as a result of the interest in the cultural factors that has promoted the Japanese economic performance making the country to have a competitive advantage over countries in the late 1970 to 1980. Looking at these three definitions of what HRM is, there is a major area of convergence, which is the 'Strategic' nature of the management approach. These definitions have encompassed the linking of various HRM practices such as recruiting, selection, rewarding, training, appraising and planning with organisational goals. Hence, strategic HRM is a more integrative HRM practice that links the organisational goals with the strategic management process (Sparrow, Brewster and Harris, 2004).

It is noteworthy that the construction industry is characterized by labour intensive technique which makes it paramount for building construction firms to adopt and implement human resource practice to motivate their workforce and improve their productivity. Therefore, continuous improvement in human resource practice, corporate governance and organizational design are required for improved performance of building construction firms (Michic and Oughty, 2003). The ability to

attract and develop talented employees is ideal for successful operation of an organization. People are an organization's most valuable asset and this is especially true in relatively high-tech labour-intensive industries including construction (Loosemore, Dainty and Lingard, 2003). Undoubtedly, people equally constitute the most difficult resource for organizations with individuals' needs which must be managed if they are to contribute to organizational growth and development. However, poor management of people has the potential of impairing organizational growth and threatening the viability of a business. Modern organizations are often faced with the challenge of increasing productivity and achieving competitive advantage Guest (2003).

Nigeria are now re-emphasizing the need to train their employees as well as engender effective and efficient interpersonal relationship among their employees with exception of the construction industry (Bratton and Gold, 2003). The growing interest in HRM practices by organizations has been distributed by (Wolf and Zwick 2002) as a derivative of the theoretical assumptions and empirical evidences on the positive linkage between HRM practices and a firm's productivity. Despite widespread calls for improvement in HRM practices in Nigeria to avoid actions capable of threatening the competitiveness and profitability of firms in the construction industry, building construction firms in Nigeria have been alleged of perceiving HRM practices as a peripheral function which rarely affects their competitiveness and overall performance (Huselid, 1995). It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to assess the human resource management practices of building construction firms in Abia state.

1.2 Statement of theResearchProblem

Construction industry is one of the industries troubled by abundant labour and scarce talent (Fajana 2009).Attracting, developing, deploying, good place of work and retaining best talents had become a challenge and other associated problems. The desire for high performance has driven the need for effective management.HRM standard practices in construction industry can be said tobe 'still in Infancy' and lot of academic and other research is still required in this area. The Lack of indigenous and comprehensiveHRM models is the reason why majority of the principles andpractices evidence in workplaces in construction industry are adopted from other countries and industries (Mondy, 2008). However, Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) as curtained that HRMpractices in the Nigerian construction industry are convergence with western-inspired standard approaches, with the evidence of cultural and institutional influences on it. The sensitivity to individuals' socialization as well aseconomic, historical, political, and social contexts may enable organizations to capitalize on the potential to assess HRM in developing countries such as Nigeria.Nevertheless, most organizations are characterized by lack of funding for human resource management research anddevelopment. According to Olofin and Folawewo, (2006) most developing countries will rather prefer the importation of new technologies and expatriates, while paying less attention to the human resource of their country, thereby leaving them dissatisfied.

1.3 Justification for the Study

Human Resources Management (HRM) practice has been regarded as one of the most critical elements of business success. It has the potential of releasing a significant amount of productive resources in the construction industry if properly harnessed, however HRM in the construction industry has remained untapped due to widespread

ignorance of good practice in this area (Mathis and Jackson 2000). This study provides an insight to the standard at which HRM are practiced by building construction industries in Abia state. Human resources management standard can help the organization monitor its progress toward achieving its stated goals and objectives in the strategic plan (Harrison, 2005). This study helps to foster a sense of team spirit and companionship within the organization by creating a HR strategy that will aligns with organizational benefit. It also help the organization as well as stakeholders to understand the dominant influences on HRM in Abia State and guide adequate decision making.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to evaluate Human Resources Management practices of building construction firms in Abia state with a view to highlight the performance of building construction firms in the area of HRM.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study include:

I. To evaluate the extent of implementation of the standard HRMpracticed by building construction firms in Abia state.
II. To assess the Departmental functions of HRM in building construction firms in Abia state.
III. To ascertain the predominant factorsdetermining HRM practices of building construction firms in Abia state.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

1.5.1Scope

This research was streamlined to the involvement of only building construction firms active with Federal Inland Revenue and state board of revenue, based in Abia state, therefore not all the state was covered.

1.5.2Limitations

The generality of the research findings was affected by the knowledge of the building construction firms on the standard practices and requirements of Human resource management.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Human Resource Managementand the Building Construction Industry

Construction industry accounts for a significant portion of world economic activities, especially in emerging economies where infrastructure developments are much needed. Construction industry is typically characterized as a labor-intensive and low-tech sector. Meanwhile, it is also the sector consistently found to be the least productive. Bratton and Gold (2003).Commonly cited reasons for such poor performance in this sector are fragmentation, project-based culture, and temporary teams. These factors have something in common as they point to the difficulty in managing human resources. Therefore, one way to increase the performance of this sector is to leverage more on human capital through the use of human resource management (HRM) practice (Nakhon and Somjintana, 2012). A review of definitions of the HRM concept resulted in a number of definitions as researchers have over the years defined the concept differently. These definitions however according to Heijltes and Witteloostuijn (2001) maintained certain basic principles which the authors outlined as that:

1. People are crucial in organizational success;
2. Goals of organization and HRM practices are mutually reinforcing;
3. The personnel function should move to decentralized units and line management; and finally that
4. Organizations should integrate components of HRM.

Most definitions found during the review did not represent the full picture of the HRM function. For example, Armstrong (2003) defined it as “a strategic and coherent

approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets: the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives". This author for instance did not specify in his definition that it involves first managing the people as a resource and then managing their individual inherent characteristics which are also resources to the organization, hence needs to be managed by the organization. Also, that of Harris (2000) who defined HRM as "programs, policies and practices for managing an organization's workforce" though is very brief and straight to the point, seems too generic and will not provide the necessary insights that a reader would want to derive from a definition. Another definition by Mathis and Jackson (2000), which described the concept as that which "deals with the design of formal systems in an organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of human talent to accomplishorganizational goals" can be said to touch the surface of the iceberg of the definition of the concept. Additional definitions' by authors including (Price 2000,Mullins 2002, Bratton and Gold 2003), did not provide a satisfactory definition to fit the purpose of this research.

2.2 Fundamentals of Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human resource management (HRM) is arguably one of the oldest management concepts. It provides an organization with competitive edge over its competitors. Broadly, HRM can be defined as a coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets; the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Armstrong, 2006). In essence, it is the people practices and ranges from hiring new employees to developing them into successful organizational members to managing their separation from the company. Also, HRM is often used to change the attitude and behavior of employees toward the organization, which could result in better organization's

performance. Human resource (HR) professionals administer these programs and can be generalists or specialists. Generalists have some knowledge about each HR function, while specialists are experts in one particular function such as recruitment, labor relations, or training (Armstrong, 2006).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of human resource management, there should have the following aligned activities: (a) strategic human resource management, (b) job analysis, (c) recruitment and selection, (d) training and development, (e) career development, (f) performance management, (g) compensation and benefits, (h) discipline, and (i) safety and health. Also, (Pfeffer1998) described that HRM activities that promote a sustainable path to competitiveness should involve the following: (i) employment security, (ii) selective recruiting, (iii) high wages, (iv) incentive pay, (v) employee ownership, (vi) information sharing, (vii) participation and empowerment, (viii) teams and job redesign, (ix) training as skill development, (x) cross-utilization and cross-training, (xi) symbolic egalitarianism, (xii) wage compression, (xiii) promotion from within, (xiv) long-term perspective, (xv) measurement of practices, (xvi) overarching philosophy. To successfully implement these HRM activities, there must be the alignment between the HRM practices and organization's strategies (Gareth, 2009).

2.3 The development of International Standards in Human Resources Management

In 2009, ANSI (American National Standards Institute) instructed SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) to develop standards focused on human resources that can be used and implemented in US organizations. Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) "aimed to use the most efficient

procedures and practices in various areas of human resource management in any organization" (SHRM, 2015).

The evolution of thecurrenteconomic situation and increasing globalization and competitive pressure led organizations to assume compliance with international standards (ISO, 2014). International Standards are "documents developed through consensus and approved by a recognized body, which set for common and repeated use the rules, coordinates or characteristics for various activities or their results", in order to achieve optimum degree of order and regulations in a given context (ISO, 1996). International standards are useful because they summarize the latest knowledge in a particular area and make them accessible to all. In this way, "standards assist the development and the transfer of knowledge and techniques" (ISO, 2011). They facilitate trade, spread of knowledge, technological advances and best practices in human resource management (ISO,2015).

Taking into account the increasingly need of standards, the HR Council in 2009 underlined that the development of a standard which captures a wide spectrum of HRM practices from across the globe is a significant advantage for general acceptance (Tschopp et al., 2012).

2.4 Human Resource Management standard practices in the Construction Industry

Schuler, Budhwar, and Florkowski (2002) define the purpose of standard international HRM practices, as the enabling of construction companies to be successful globally by establishing standards which increases competitiveness. Cusack (1991) recorded that, contractors have been known to plan their survival by using economic,

technological and social forecasts as a basis for decisions that shape the company's future. Such planning often involves simple extrapolation of information from past results as part of the informal exercise performed by top management. According to this author, strategies resulting therefore are often ad hoc and hardly comprehensive. The reason for such an approach may be found in the type of ownership prevalent in the past when construction companies were predominantly family businesses. Strategy only referred to what the 'owner family' wished to achieve with the company, and the question of how to achieve it was a matter only for the family to decide. Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) added that, future performance only had to be better than the past, and previous results were simply extrapolated to derive targets for the future. Below are the standard Human resource management practices as identified by HR Council (2009).

Recruitment and Selectionpractices

This is the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, to apply for jobs with an organization (Mondy 2008)**.**Selection is the process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position and for the organization (Mondy 2008).

The overall aim of the recruitment and selection process should be to obtain at minimum cost the number and quality of employees required to satisfy the human resource needs of the company.

Getting the right person in the right place at the righttime remains the key objective in any recruitmentprocess. Every aid worker can recount the untoldconsequences of getting it wrong, and mistakes inrecruitment are often expensive as well as

potentiallydamaging both to the individuals and to the reputationand activities of the organisations themselves.

The importance of sound recruitment is such that itnow appears in its own right as a Principle within this standard. The existence of a recruitment policyoutlining a process which is both legally compliant andalso in keeping with good practice regardingtransparency and fairness is essential; further, itmoves away from the traditional reliance on "word-ofmouth"recommendations and closed networks, whichis to be welcomed. Together with an appropriatemonitoring mechanism, this approach will help ensurethat there is no unfair discrimination.

The Codes of Practice also set out requirements in relation to the conduct of candidates in the recruitment and selection process. This ensures that a standardised approach to recruitment and selection is adopted by all organisation.This Code of Practice (No. 01/2017) was prepared by the Commission for Public Service Appointments in accordance with the provisions of Sections 23 and 24 of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Act 2004.

Involvementpractices

According to (Essays, 2013) employee involvement is 'a range of processes designed to engage the support, understanding and optimum contribution of all employees in an organization and their commitment to its objectives'.

Training, Development & Educationpractices

Learning is the process by which a person acquires and develops new knowledge, skills, capabilities and attitudes. According to Williams (1998) defined it, 'learning is goal directed, it is based on experience, it impacts behaviour and cognition, and the

changes brought about are relatively stable'. Honey and Mumford (1996) explained that: 'Learning has happened when people can demonstrate that they know something that they did not know before (insights, realizations as well as facts) and when they can do something they could not do before (skills)'. Mumford and Gold (2004) emphasized that: 'Learning is both a process and an outcome concerned with knowledge, skills and insight (Armstrong 2006).

Training and development has to be integrated witheffective management systems and procedures. Theprocess of identifying and analysing training needs iscrucial and influences an organisation's training anddevelopment strategy. Equally important is to ensurethat all staff can and do allocate time for training.

Work Conditionspractices

An integral part of Working Conditions is Health and safety which can also be defined as *the physical and psychological conditions of organisation's work force that result from the work environment provided by the organisation (*Schuler 1995).

The core of every business is man whose output is partially dependent on his state of health and safety, an appreciation of the concept of working conditionsbecomes imperative to the success of any organization (Amponsah-Tawiah and Dartey-Baah, 2011). It can therefore be inferred from these two definitions that the primary objective of health and safety is to ensure the protection of workers from contracting work related diseases, accidents and also to prevent injuries at work places thus promoting congenial work environment.

Competency-Based Performance Appraisalpractices

Competency-based Performance appraisal has been defined as the process of identifying, evaluating and developing the work performance and competency of

employees in the organization, so that the organizational goals and objectives are more effectively achieved, while at the same time benefiting employees in terms of recognition, receiving feedback, catering for work needs and offering career guidance (Lansbury 1988).

Performance management can be defined as a systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams. It is a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competency requirements. Processes exist for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and for managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that it will be achieved in the short and longer term. It focuses people on doing the right things by clarifying their goals. It is owned and driven by line management (Armstrong 2006).

Compensation and Rewardspractices

This involves the focus of organization on incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc. it also requires that salary are influenced by results in the organization. This offer employee's salary that is compatible with skills, training, and education. The remuneration of employees is according to the remuneration offered at both the public or private marketplace levels and also a need to consider the expectations and suggestions of its employees when designing a system of employee rewards(Garavan and Morley, 2006).

2.5 Functions of Human Resource Management Departments

The Human resource department is saddled with two outstanding HRM functions. These HRM functions include managerial functions and operative functions.

2.5.1 Managerial Functions

The managerial functions of HRM are organized into four functions undertaken by the human resources management department. These functions are discussed below:

2.5.1.1 Human Resource Planning

This HRM function focuses on determining the number and type of employees required to accomplish organizational goal. Specifically, the human resource management is concerned with three courses of action. The first course of action involves forecasting supply and demand for each job category. The second course of action involves projecting net shortage and excess of personnel for a specific time horizon and the third plan is developed to eliminate the forecast shortages and excess of particular categories of human resources. (Guest, 2003)

2.5.1.2 Organizing

The organizing function of HRM entails establishing relationships among the employees so that they can collectively contribute to the attainment of organizational goal. This function is concerned with grouping of personnel activity logically into positions, assigning different roles to different individuals, delegating authority according to the tasks assigned and responsibilities involved and coordination of activities of different individuals.(Huselid, 2002)

2.5.1.3 Directing

This HRM function involves encouraging people to work willingly and effectively for the actualization of set goals. Thus, the workforce is motivated and guided to accomplish the personnel tasks and responsibilities. Guiding and motivating

employees provides basis for tapping the maximum potentiality of employees. (Armstrong, 2006)

2.5.1.4 Controlling

The function of control helps in checking, verifying and comparing the actual performance of employees after planning, organizing and directing activities. Specifically, performance appraisal critical scrutiny of personnel records and statistical and personal audit provides basis for control function. (Armstrong, 2006)

2.5.2 Operative Functions

The operative functions is concerned with tasks such as recruitment and selecting; job analysis and design; performance appraisal; training and development; employment welfare, personnel record and labour relations performed by human resource department. (Fajana2002)

2.5.2.1 Recruitment and Selection

The first function performed by the human resource department is the employment of proper kind and number of persons required to achieve organizational objectives. Recruitment is preceded by selection. The recruitment and selection activities cover the sources of supply of labour and the measures designed to select the right type of people for various jobs. Placement of personnel is equally integrated into these courses of actions.(Armstrong 2003)

2.5.2.2 Training and Development

Training and development of personnel is a follow-up of recruitment and selection function. This function of human resource management helps the employee to acquire skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively. Training and development

programmes are organized for both new and existing employees as they offer the employees opportunity for higher level responsibilities. Both on-the-job and off-the-job methods are used for training and development. (Huselid, 2002)

2.5.2.3 Job Analysis and Design

This function involves analyzing the process of describing the nature of a job and specifying the human requirements such as qualification, skills and work experience to perform the job. It equally aims at outlining and organizing tasks, duties and responsibilities into a single unit of work for the achievement of certain objectives. (Fajana2002)

2.5.2.4 Compensation

Compensation function is concerned with the determination of adequate and equitable renumeration for the employees in the organization for their contribution to the organizational objectives. This can take the forms of monetary and non-monetary rewards. The compensation paid is predicated on the employee's basic needs, requirements of the job, legal provisions regarding minimum wage, ability of the organization to pay and wage level of competitors among others. (Guest, 2003)

2.5.2.5 Maintenance

The maintenance function involves keeping the best performing employees within the organization through the provision of good working condition, safety and comfort of the workforce. Additionally, the human resource management department provides for varsious welfare services which confer on physical and social well-being of the employees. (Fajana, 2002)

2.5.2.6 Personnel Records

The personnel records functions encompasses the recording, maintaining and retrieving employee related information such as application forms, employment history, working hours, earnings, employee absent, and presents, employee turnover and other data related to employees. Records on training, achievement, transfers and promotion of employees are integrated into the personnel records.(Armstrong, 2002)

2.5.2.7 Labor Relations

This function involves the interaction of human resources management with employees who are represented by a trade union. The human resource manager is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining good industrial relations through collective bargaining, joint consultation and settlement of disputes. Labour relations equally provides platform for union leaders to convey their views on various labour problems to the top management.(Fajana,2002)

2.5.2.8 Separation

Separation function is responsible for ensuring that the employee is successfully retired and integrated into the society. The HRM department ensures that the retirement benefits are released on time to the retiring staff.(Raj and kothai, 2014).

2.6 Dominant factors Affecting Human Resources Management

When it comes to human resource management there are several factors that affect day-to-day operations. So HRM practices differ from one organisation to other organization and from one country to another. Ozutku and Ozturkler (2009), suggested that external and internal factors affecting HR practices differs significantly

across countries. There are various factors internal and external that has their impact HRM practices. Some of the major factor which impact HRM practices are:

2.6.1 External Factors

According to Kane and Palmer (1995) external factors affecting HR practices are those pressures on organizations that cannot be controlled and changed as per organization needs for adapting in Human recourse management field is important to have a close look on external factors as these impact the HR practices of the organisation. To avoid HR burnt HR have to be sure that they paying close attention to external influences. So well-developed strategy for human resources should takes into considers external factors because there is a good chance that these external factors affects the organisation work.

These external factors include the following:

2.6.1.1. Economic Conditions/Changes

One of the biggest external influences is the shape of the current economy. Not only does it affect the current talent pool in the organisation, but it might affect the complete selection, hiring ability, compensation structure of the organisation. Satow and Wang (1994) found that due to development in global economy, the international dimension of HR practices has become more and more significant. The economic crises in 2001 resulted in decrease of demand, and so manufacturing and employment. Besides, many firms cut the wages and salaries of their employees. Again, in 2008, like many other countries, Turkey was under the influence of economic crises in which, similar results were observed.HR practices focus has shifted from traditional topics to wide concepts such as globalization and international competition. Kane and Palmer (1995) cite economic recession resulted in reducing workforce in Australia. Mello (2006) discusses economic trends, such as unemployment rate, would have

influences on any achievement of an organization. Rosman and colleagues (2013) stressed the significant interference of national economy on HR policies. To cope up with the turbulence in environment HRM while implementing is HR practices not only should know what's happening in the world around you, but also should create a plan for when there is an economic downturn.

2.6.1.2. Technological Change/ Advancements

Change in technology can provide firm a better infrastructure and business growth. The increase in the number of technological alternatives or innovation in business functions creates a positive image for firms which further increase its revenues and image in the market. Baker (1996). The upcoming new Technology is revolutionizing the way firm's do business. Technology affects HRM to a greater extent because of high degree of interaction between technology and HR. Changes in technology can make it possible to have improved human resource functions such as selection, recruitment, educating, training, performance appraisal or observing, determining wages and salaries Armstrong, (2006). Development in HR can be learned and implemented faster. On other hand when new technologies are introduced with business growth it is expected to improve employee salaries and wages. Requirement of more educated and qualified manpower increase manpower and training cost. To reduce this increased cost HR department start looking at how to reduce the existing manpower and look for ways to save money by changing its policies and practices (Harrison, 2005).

Kane and Palmer (1995) pointed out that, recruitment, staffing, the knowledge, skills and abilities of workforce is affected by usage of technology. According to DeFillippi (2002) Technology changes the way we work, the roles we undertake. It changes the role of HRM. Verkinderen and Altman (2002) argued that technology facilitates the

growth of a multinational enterprise. Garavan et al. (2008) suggested that technology lies at the heart of manufacturing industry. Tiwari and Saxena (2012) pointed out that, technology provides new methods for HRM practices.It provides a series of business advantages. Technological developments alter the context of HR practices and the way they are implemented.

2.6.1.3. Government Regulations

In all organisations Human resources department always remain under constant pressure to stay within the law and work as per workplace compliance. These types of existing regulations or new changes influence every process of the HR department, including hiring, training, compensation, termination, and much more. All of the policies for human resource management should be in accordance with legal necessities. Without adhering to such regulations a company can be heavy fined or other legal actions. Kane and Palmer (1995) pointed out that occupational health, industrial relations and equal opportunity for all can be influenced by the government legislation. Mabey and Salaman (1995) found that for any strategic training and development activities in an organisation government policies and legislation are important. Mello (2006) indicated that, legislation and regulation have positive impacts on every function and activity of an organization. Tiwari and Saxena (2012) also indicated that, HRM policies and activities formation and implementations should be in line with the legislation and regulations of countries. Therefore, the differences of HRM practices with in various organisations are also due to these legislation and regulations.

2.6.1.4. Workforce Demographics

One of the most powerful forces affecting work and organizations is changing worker demographics. Demographics include factors such as gender, age, ethnicity,

occupation, seniority, salary levels, marital and family status. The workforce of 2015 will be different than it is in 2005.The age distribution, characteristics, values, and expectations of new workforce are remarkably different than that of the past. Shenhav and Haberfeld (1992) pointed out that while diversity was always there in workforce in terms of age and skill but this diversity has grown more over the last two to three decades. The number of women in the work force has increased significantly, as have the proportion of different ethnic groups. Due to this changing workforce dimensions human resources department must look for different ways to hire, attract and retain this new set of candidates. As Pfeffer (1985) suggests, sensitivity to demographic effects can help provide a context to understand organizational behaviour. They have to adopt different way to hire, offer different types of compensation packages, attractive policies and contusive work environment to this new workforce. Gibb (2001) makes a reference to demographic differences in employee evaluations of HRM. Guest (2003) considers demographic differences in relation to the number of HRM practices employed by the organisation. Konrad and Hartmann (2002) ,examined the impact of gender and ethnicity on employee attitudes towards EEO initiatives. Knowledge of employee demographic difference helps the HR practitioners in the development of their HRM policies and practices that increase their impact on employee in long run.

2.6.1.5. Competitors Action

Competitor's action does impact HR policies and practice of the firms. Human resource is a basic internal resource that can be the source of competitive advantage. Reaction to the actions of competitors is a widely seen situation in business. Firm react effectively for increase in wages and salaries, extended benefits, offer better social support programs and so on According to Barney and Wright (1997) valuable,

unique, well organized and inimitable human resource can be the sources for competitive advantage competitors respond to such changes in order to satisfy their employee and retain them. Rosenzweig and Nohria (1994) pointed out the impact of competitors on HRM policies and implications, for benefits, gender composition, training, executive bonus, and participation. Tiwari and Saxena (2012) suggest that, comprehensive HRM activities might provide competitive advantage to the organisations.

2.6.1.6. Industry/Sector Characteristics

Industry characteristics might affect HRM activities in different ways. Sectors such as manufacturing, retail, construction, food and health etc. create their own type of HRM systems and practices. Some sectors may require to be more sensitive to the needs of its human resources and some may not depending on the characteristics, skills and abilities of their human resource. To retain human talent companies have to tab the competitors practices. Some sectors offer higher income level, such as health. On the other hand, some industries which depend on continuous technological development and innovation give higher personal satisfaction. Terpstra and Rozell (1993) pointed out the differences of HRM practices according to industrial characteristics, like the characteristics of training. Bingöl, (2006) says firm offers low wage or salaries; it would employ personnel who have lower levels of skills, abilities Tiwari and Saxena (2012) suggest that, HRM practices vary according to manufacturing processes.

2.6.1.7. Union Action

Union activities also affect the HR practices within the organisation. They influence HR practices directly. Kochan*et.et,al.*(1984) suggest that the presence of union in the organisation is associated with HR practices.

2.6.2 Internal Factors

Internal factors that affect the HRM Practices are related to the events and changes taking place within the organisation. This can include changes of ownership, changes in the internal management structure, mergers, acquisitions and significant downsizing or hiring trends. The internal environment of organizations strongly affects their HR practices. According to Zheng and Morrison (2009) study show that various HRM practices at small and medium enterprises are influenced by organizational contextual variables including ownership, age and size of firms.

Milkovich and Boudreau (1991) pointed out that, researchers have compiled a list of organizational characteristics which are related to HR practices. The important internal factors are as follows:

2.6.2.1. Organisations Size

The size of organisation has greater impact on HR practices. Larger the firm more refined are specific are the practices. Organisation size plays an important role in explaining the intensity and type of HR practices within the organization (Gravana et al. 2008). McPherson (2008) suggests that there are large numbers of small firms that do not practice formal HR activities. In large organizations, for each functional there may a need for a different HR department and practices (Jackson et al.,1989; Kaynak et al., 1998). The size of the firms forces the firms to add new dimensions to the HR implementation. The size of an organization is also significant for managerial style, in terms of autocratic or participative. Large organizations can be more democratic, so, their departments or branches might be more autonomous. In these types of establishments, decentralization is a necessity for an effective management. So, there is less control and more self confidence. Conversely, small and medium sized enterprises generally have centralized organizational structure and so, managerial

practice. Therefore, human resource of those firms is under close control of their managers (Harrison, 2005).

2.6.2.2. Organisational Structure

Organizational structure is a system used to define a hierarchy within an organization. It identifies each job, its function and where it reports to within the organisation. A firm's strategy and structure are important in determining HR practices. With increase in global competition and highly changing business environment HR practices are becoming more flexible and integrated. There are important structural differences among firms that affect the way in which HR practices are designed and implemented (Hudson et al., 2001).

2.6.2.3. Business Strategy

To gain competitive advantage, firms use different competitive strategies. These strategies are more productive when they are systematically liked with human resource management practices. Katou and Budhwar (2008) pointed that when business strategies and HRM policies are developed simultaneously, they positively affect organizational performance. HR strategy is an important determinant of both intensity and diversity of HR practices (Gravan et al., 2008). This is more valid for decisions taken simultaneously with respect to quality and employee development, innovation and employee rewards and relations, and cost and employee resourcing. The successful practices of human resource management sub functions facilitate to achieve objectives. Mello (2006) suggested that organisations while designing and practicing their HRM functions should consider targets, purposes, policies and strategies of the organisation. Companies can improve their environment by making efficient choices about human resource practices that consistently support their chosen strategy (Milkovich and Boudreau, 1991; Schuler, 1992).

2.6.2.4. Organisation Culture

Organizational culture consists of the core values, beliefs and assumption that are widely shared by members of an organization. It serves a variety of purposes including communicating what the organization "believe in" and "stand for", providing employees with a sense of direction and expected behaviour, shaping employee's attitudes about themselves, the organization and their role. Pedersen G.E. and Sudzina (2012) reveal that the accessibility of management and the ways in which decisions are made are reflections of an organization's culture. Buller (1998) pointed that positive culture in organisation earns critical acclaim, and has a positive impact on both retention and recruitment. The history and culture of organizations would reveal what is good, and what is bad for the organisation. It demonstrates the characteristics of best employees for that organisation. A number of closely related factors, such as history, traditions and past practices tend to generate resistance to change in most organizations (Kane and Palmer, 1995; Pardo and Fuentes, 2003).

2.6.2.5. Top Management and Line Mangers

The direction of top management and their priorities could be another factor that impact HRM practices. HRM Policies could be shaped through the importance which top managementgive to HR personnel. The influence of top management on HR practices is acknowledged by most writers. In designing and implementing HR policies support and advise of top managements should be present (Kane and Palmer, 1995). Mabey and Salaman (1995) point out the importance of shareholder priorities and management agendas on training and development activities. Rosman et al. (2013) found that, HR department practices in health care sector are majorly affected by top management interference.

Line managers are those managers to whom individual employees or teams directly report and who have responsibility to a higher level of management for those employees or teams. Line Management participation in designing and implementing HR activities is the key to organizational success. Recent research indicates that there is substantial potential for human resource specialists and line managers to share more effectively responsibility for their organization's human resource activities in business partnerships. Okpara and Wynn (2008) suggest that, as line managers are responsible for creating value, they should integrate HR practices in their work. Since line mangers know the requirement and necessities of their team and department so they can play a important role in structuring effective HR policies. Rosman and colleagues (2013) argued that, managerial style is one the important elements shaping the policies HR department.

2.6.2.6. Power and Politics

Tsui and Milkovich (1987) found that organizational power and politics as exercised by various constituencies are crucial determinants of HR practices. The influence of power and politics is considered while implementing new policies and procedures in the organisation. HR manager has to identify the critical constituent of the HR practices and accurately determine their source of power. Kane and palmer (1995) found that HR manager has the role in identifying the stakeholders of critical constituents of HR practices.

2.7 Human Resource Management and Construction Firm's Performance

Huselid (1995) found that HRM practices such as employee recruitment and selection procedures, compensation and performance management systems, employee involvement, and employee training have a significant impact on employee turnover and productivity, and on short and long term corporate financial performance of

construction firms. HRM practices affect organization performance greater when they are integrated and implemented together (Pathaket, al, 2005). Baker (1996) found that employee-centered management practices can improve organizational performance. Huselid (1995) analyze the firm level impact of HRM practices as a system, and found a strong relationship of high involvement on HRM practices with organizational performance.

Although there has been some criticism, past and emerging research in SHRM indicates that human resource management does indeed have an impact on firm as well as other levels of outcomes. An increasing number of studies have found significant relationships between various measures of human resource management and performance. Measures of HRM that have been used in these studies include: high performance and high involvement work systems (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995; Batt, 2002), HR orientation (Snell and Youndt, 1995; Welbourne and Cyr, 1999), and Work life balance: (Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000; Konrad and Mangel, 2000) and single HR practices: (Gerhart and Milkovich, 1990,Shaw, et al, 2002). Global competition, technological advances, shortening of the business cycle as well as the shift from a manufacturing to a knowledge based economy have all influenced the business community in its search for sources of sustained competitive advantage (Dyer andReeves, 1995). These changes put pressure on organizations to find new sources of competitive advantage. Employees and the systems of practices that are set up to manage them are increasingly seen as a source of this competitive advantage (Wright, et al, 2001).

Historically, the field of human resource management has been concerned with the study of specific HR functional areas often categorized as selection, training, appraisal and compensation by the field of industrial and organizational psychology

(Boxall and Purcell 2001). Past research involved the study of these specific HR functional areas as means and ends within themselves. For example, training was studied in isolation from other functions with an emphasis on the inputs processes and outputs or outcomes specific to the training function. Not much research attention was given to how training might work in combination with other HRM functions such as compensation or selection or how individual level HR functions might impact firm level performance (Gareth, 2009).

This focus on specific HR functional areas led to knowledge about specific HR functions evolving in isolation from each other without much coordination between different functional areas (Wright and McManan, 1992). The rise of the concept of strategy and strategic management Miller and Whitford (2006) created an increased interest in how firms can position themselves strategically to compete. This was followed closely by an increased interest on how HRM might contribute to that process (Wright and McManan, 1992).

Initial studies addressing HRM and its relationship to business strategies continued to focus on specific HRM functional areas such as compensation and its individual impact on the accomplishment of business strategy. The findings from these initial studies suggested that HRM functions such as training or compensation could be aligned with firm strategy and proper alignment between these individual human resource management (HRM) functional areas and strategy contributed to sustainable competitive advantage (Miller and Whitford 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Burns and Grove (2003) define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. Parahoo (1997) describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed”. Quantitative approach for data collection was used in this research. Analysis was used to arrive at the conclusions concerning the extent of human resource management practiced in Abia state.

The following methods were used to arrive at achieving the aim and objectives of this research work.

i. The human resource management practices were identified from existing literature. Six HRM practices, two basic HRM functions and two dominant factors (internal and external) were identified.

ii. The identified HRM practices and dominant factors were used to conduct a pilot survey in order to test the understanding of the respondents and the appropriateness of the questions.

iii. The Six HRM practices, two basic HRM functions and two dominant factors (internal and external)were used to draw up questions for the questionnaires.

iv. The analyzed responses from the questionnaires were used to draw conclusions and recommendations.

3.2 Data Collection

This consists of the methods that are used for the collection of both primary and secondary data.

3.2.1. Primary data

The primary source of data came from a research-made questionnaire based on the objective of the research that was given to the respondents. The research also implored qualitative research method, which was an interview to validate the response to the questionnaire and the actual extent of HRM practices in Abia state. The population sample of this study wasselected from building construction firms in Abia state.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of building construction firms within Abia state, with regards to their human resource management practice. The respondents are the human resource manager in the Building firms.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey.

Based on the interest of the research in assessing human resource management practices of building construction firms in Abia State, the research adopted a stratified sampling technique to enable it capture accurately the relevant data without any form of bias from firms in the various local government.

According to Federal Inland Revenue Service's (2015) and Board of Internal Revenue (2015), there are 89 dully registered building construction firms in Abia State. The

following equations were used to define the appropriate sample size from its order to make findings that are applicable to the entire population as advanced by (Kapoor, 2010).

$n = no / [(1 + no / N)]$……. (3.1)

$no = (p*q) / v^2$……...(3.2)

Where;

no = Sample size from a finite population

p = Proportion of the characteristics being measured in the target population

q= complement of *p,* i.e. 1-*p*

V = maximum standard error allowed

N = population size

n = sample size

To maximize the sample size *n,* the value of *p* was set at 0.7 and *q* at 1- 0.7; the target population *N* is 89; maximum standard error *V* was set at 5% or 0.05. Substituting the values into equations 3.1 and 3.2 above,the minimum required sample computed for the research is forty three (43) respondents.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

When the entire survey questionnaires were collected, the research used statistics to analyze all the data using the percentage to determine the magnitude of the responses to the questionnaire.

Tables, means, percentages and chart were used to express the statistical result concerning the demographic data of the respondent.

$$\textbf{Mean Score} = \frac{TS}{N} \quad (3.3)$$

Where,

TS = is the total weight given to each attributes by the respondents.

N = is the total number or respondents in the sample.

Ranking of the items under consideration was based on their Mean Score.

According to Human Resource (HR) Council (2009) and Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2015), the practice of HRM, organizations and firms must adopt a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of the standard practices to be internationally acceptable. Since the research used mean score (MS) as the appropriate tool for analysis, there is the need to find a converging point for appropriate interpretation and conclusion.

Therefore to convert the mean to percentage the formula was used $\textbf{\%=} \frac{Mx}{Mh} x\ \mathbf{100}$ (3.4)

Where Mx is the mean score for each element x and Mh is the highest Mean score. Therefore any Mx< 3 = Mx< 60%

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OFFINDINGS

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter of the study contains the presentation of the result of the, analysis of the data and discussion of findings.

4.1.1 Response to Questionnaire Administered

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, a structured questionnaire was administered. Total distributed, total returned and used in the analysis.

The response to the questionnaire administered is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Descriptive result of Response to Questionnaires Administered

Questionnaire	No/%
Administered	43
Returned	40
Percentage response	93%

Source: Field survey 2015

From Table 4.1 based on the assertion of Moser and Kalton (2003), the result of a survey could be considered significant if the response rate not lower than 30-40%. Therefore, the percentage of the returned questionnaires is adequate for analysis.

4.2 Profile of Building Construction Firms

Section A considered the profiles of the firms in terms of the names of the Building Construction Firms, Years of firm's Activity, Type of firm's ownership, Ways of advertising vacancies, Basis for Recruiting staff, etc. These were considered relevant

for the research because they can help the research work to properly assess the human resource management practice of building construction firms.

4.2.1 Years of Company's Activity

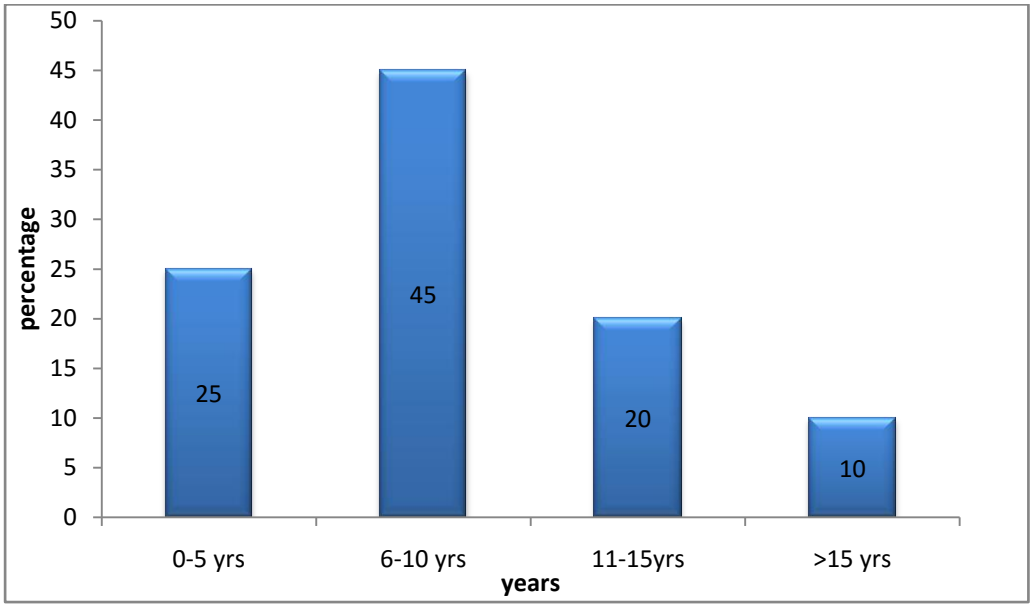


Figure 4.1: Length of the Firms' Operation

Source: Field survey 2015

Figure 4.1 shows that45% of the firms have been in operation for 6-10, which constituted the highest percentage. 25% of the firms have been in operation for 0-5 years, and 20% have been in operation for 11-15 years while 10% have been in operation for more than 15 years. This indicates that that the firms have requisite experience to have a functional human resource management practices.

4.2.2 Construction firm's Ownership

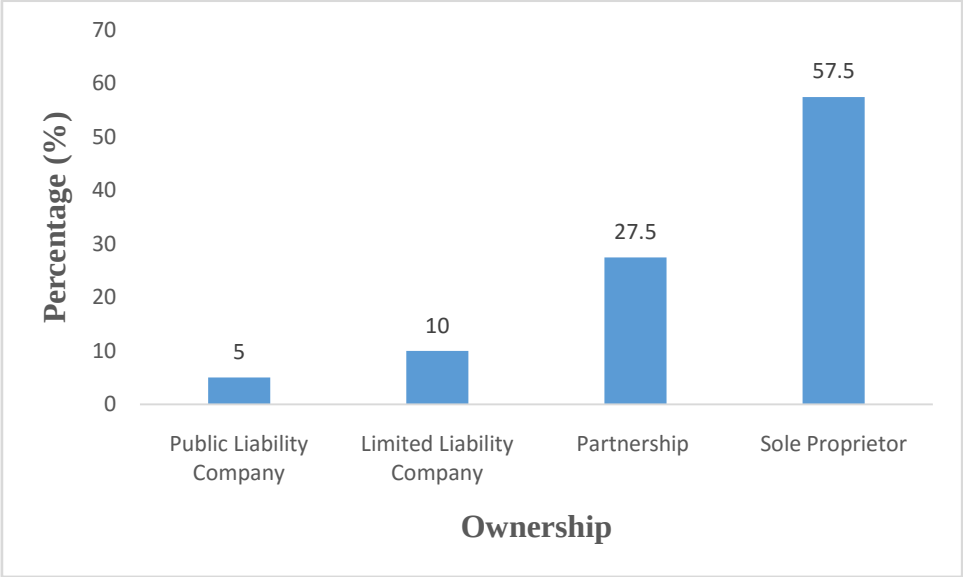


Figure 4.2: Type of Construction firm's Ownership

Source: Field survey 2015

Figure 4.2, shows that sole proprietor constitutes the highest percentage of the type of firms sampled, while the Public Liability Companies (PLC)is the least. From the result therefore, sole proprietorship is the major form of ownership in Abia state building construction firms In Abia State. This information is necessary in ascertain the nature and basis for Human resource management decision making in the firm. Firms with sole proprietor ownership will tend to make unilateral decisions, since it's a one man business, likewise the other forms of ownership will have varying forms of decision especially of human resource management issues.

4.2.3 Vacancy Advertisment

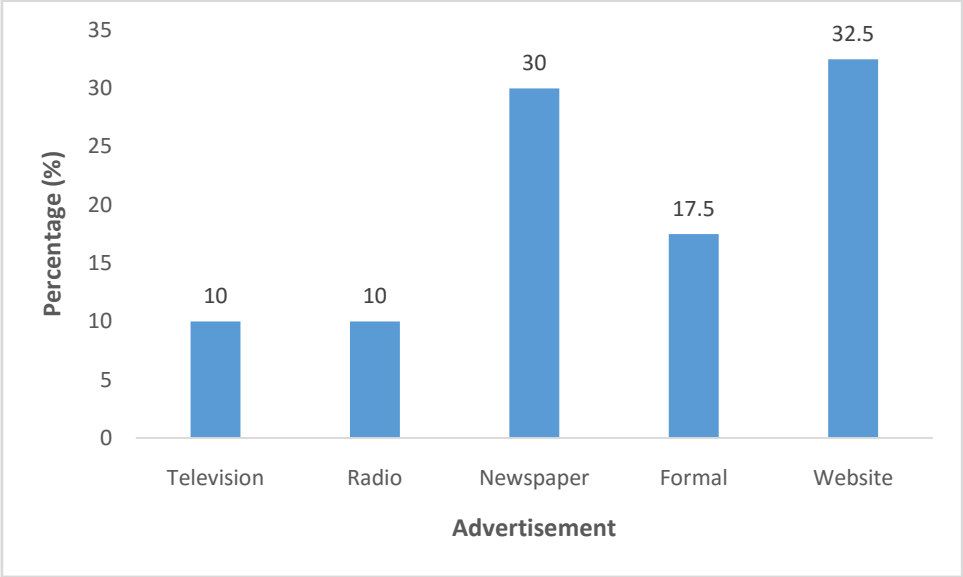


Figure 4.3: Forms of Vacancy Advertisment

Source: Field survey 2015

From Figure 4.3, websites has the highest percentage of 32.5% of the ways in which firms advertise for vacancies, while Television (TV) and Radio both have a percentage of 10% each.

From the result above it can be seen that most building construction firms are going electronic or becoming online oriented, however newspapers have not lost their relevance as a major media tool, especially in job advertisement. Informal means of advertisement is still being used in recruiting staff. Even though a firm may choose to have more than one way of its advertisement.

4.2.4 Basisof Recruitment

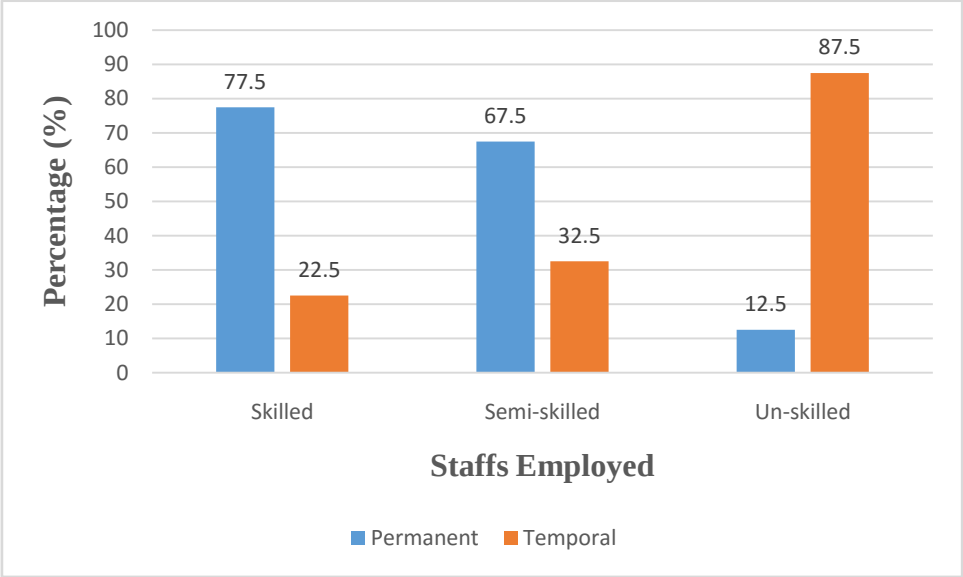


figure 4.4: Basis of Recruitment

Source: Field survey 2015

Figure 4.4,shows that skilled workers have the highest percentage of permanent staff with a percentage of 77.50% and while temporary staff have the lowest percentage of 22.50% under the type of personnel recruited. Unskilled workers have the lowest percentage of permanent staff with a percentage of 12.50% and the highest percentage of temporary staff with a percentage of 87.50%.

From the result above, it can be noted that building construction firms in Abia state employ skilled workers as permanent staff, and unskilled workers as temporary staff, this can be as a result of the ratio of unskilled to skilled workers required to carry out a building project, and also the avaliability of building construction projects.

4.3. Human Resource Management Standard practices of Building construction in AbiaState

The human resource management practices of building construction firms in Abia state is captured by the opinion of the respondents on the measurement of its practices as discussed below. The mean score (MS) gives the weight of the response. Any mean score above 3.0 is considered significant in the study. From the table showing the standard HR practices in construction firms, a number of practices were identified in construction firms in Abia State. These standard practices are classified into six (6) broad classifications.

From the table showing the application of the standard practices in building construction firms in abia state, it is evident that the firm's practices are below standards. This is revealed by their mean scores. The Recruitment and Selection practices had an average mean score (MS) of 2.15 which is below the standard which specify 60% (equivalent to 3.0 on the mean score) as an acceptable percentage. The Involvement of the employees in the building firms had MS of 2.18. The Training, Development and Education had an average MS of 1.91. The Work Conditions had an average mean score (MS) of 1.89. The Competency-Based Performance Appraisal had MS of 1.96. The Compensation and Rewards had an average MS of 2.0. A further comparison of the standard practices with those practiced in building construction firms in Abia state is shown in table 4.3. This goes to further buttress the state of HRM in building construction firms in Abia State.

Table 4.2: Human Resource Management Practices of Building construction in AbiaState.

s/n	Standard	1	2	3	4	5	N	TS	MS
	Recruitment and Selection								
1	The organization should disseminate information about both external and internal recruitment processes.	14	13	10	1	2	40	84	2.1
2	The organization should disclose information to applicants regarding the steps and criteria of the selection process.	12	4	15	7	2	40	103	2.58
3	The organization should communicate performance results to candidates at the end of the selection process.	10	10	10	6	4	40	104	2.6
4	Selection tests of the organization should be conducted by trained and impartial people	23	11	7	0	0	41	66	1.61
5	The organization should have competitive selection processes that attract competent people	15	21	4	0	0	40	69	1.73
6	The organization should use various selection instruments (e.g. interviews, tests, etc.)	7	17	13	3	0	40	92	2.3
	Average							**86.3**	**2.15**
	Involvement								
1	The organization should treat staffs with respect and attention	15	12	8	2	3	40	86	2.15
2	The organization should be concerned with the well-being of employees	16	19	5	0	0	40	69	1.73
3	The organization should have an environment of understanding and confidence between managers and employees.	3	2	9	14	12	40	150	3.75
4	The organization should recognize the work done and the results achieved by employees (e.g., in oral compliments, in articles in corporate bulletins, etc.).	13	13	10	2	2	40	87	2.18
5	The organization should favor autonomy in doing tasks and making decisions.	16	10	11	2	1	40	82	2.05
6	The organization should seek to meet the needs and professional expectations of employees	15	11	7	7	0	40	86	2.15

7	The organization should ensure constant exchange of information between employees and their managers in order to perform their duties properly.	21	12	7	0	0	40	66	1.65
8	The organization should encourage participation in decision- making and problem solving.	16	14	7	2	1	40	78	1.95
9	There should be an environment of trust and cooperation among colleagues in the organization.	13	7	20	0	0	40	87	2.18
10	The organization should encourage interaction among its employees (e.g., social gatherings, social events, sports events, etc.).	10	11	10	5	4	40	102	2.55
11	The organization should follows up on the adaptation of employees to their functions.	22	10	8	0	0	40	66	1.65
12	In the organization there should be a consistency between discourse and management practice.	14	12	8	4	2	40	88	2.2
	Average							**87.25**	**2.18**
	Training, Development & Education								
1	There should be the use of knowledge and behaviors learned in training at work.	11	13	11	2	3	40	93	2.33
2	The organization should help develop the skills needed for the successful accomplishment of duties (e.g., training, conferences, etc.).	20	11	6	2	1	40	73	1.83
3	The organization should invest in development and education promoting personal and professional growth in a broad manner (e.g., full or partial sponsorship of undergraduate degrees, postgraduate programs, language courses, etc.).	15	14	9	2	0	40	78	1.95
4	Training should be evaluated by participants in the organization.	18	12	10	0	0	40	72	1.8
5	The organization should stimulate learning and application of knowledge.	17	11	7	3	0	38	72	1.89
6	The training needs should be identified periodically in the organization.	21	12	7	0	0	40	66	1.65
	Average							**75.67**	**1.91**

	Work Conditions								
1	The organization should provide basic benefits (e.g., health care, transportation assistance, food aid, etc.).	23	11	7	0	0	41	66	1.61
2	The organization should have programs or processes that help employees cope with incidents and prevent workplace accidents.	15	21	4	0	0	40	69	1.73
3	The organization should be concerned with the safety of their employees by having access control of people who enter the company building/facilities.	7	17	13	3	0	40	92	2.3
4	The organization should provide additional benefits (e.g., membership in gyms, country clubs, and other establishments, etc.).	15	12	8	2	3	40	86	2.15
5	The facilities and physical condition (lighting, ventilation, noise and temperature) of the organization should be ergonomic, comfortable, and appropriate.	16	19	5	0	0	40	69	1.73
6	The organization should be concerned with the health and quality of life.	20	11	6	2	1	40	73	1.83
	Average							**75.83**	**1.89**
	Competency-Based Performance Appraisal								
1	The organization should discuss competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results with its employees.	11	13	11	2	3	40	93	2.33
2	Competency-based performance appraisal should provide the basis for an employee development plan.	20	11	6	2	1	40	73	1.83
3	Competency-based performance appraisal should be the basis for decisions about promotions and salary increases.	15	14	9	2	0	40	78	1.95
4	The organization should disseminate competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results to its employees.	18	12	10	0	0	40	72	1.8
5	The organization should periodically conducts competency-	17	11	7	3	0	38	72	1.89

	based performance appraisals								
	Average							**77.6**	**1.96**
	Compensation and Rewards								
1	The organization should give incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc.	13	13	10	2	2	40	87	2.18
2	Salary should be influenced by results in the organization	16	10	11	2	1	40	82	2.05
3	The organization should offer employees salary that is compatible with skills, training, and education.	15	11	7	7	0	40	86	2.15
4	The organization should remunerate employees according to the remuneration offered at either the public or private marketplace levels.	21	12	7	0	0	40	66	1.65
5	The organization should consider the expectations and suggestions of its employees when designing a system of employee rewards.	16	14	7	2	1	40	78	1.95
	Average							**79.8**	**2.00**

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

4.3.1 Comparison of HRM in Abia state and HRM standard

The standard HRM practices identified were majorly categorized into six (6) broad classifications, which are Recruitment and Selection, Involvement, Training, Development and Education, Work Conditions, Competency-Based Performance Appraisal, and Compensation and Rewards.

Table 4.3: Comparison between the International Standard and Abia State HRM practices

Standard	**Abia State**
Recruitment and Selection	
The organization should disseminate information about both external and internal recruitment processes.	The building firms sometimes disseminate information only about external recruitment processes.

The organization should disclose information to applicants regarding the steps and criteria of the selection process.	The building firms do not disclose information to applicants regarding the steps and criteria of the selection process.
The organization should communicate performance results to candidates at the end of the selection process.	The building firms do not communicate performance results to candidates at the end of the selection process, they inform successful or selected candidates of their appointments.
Selection tests of the organization should be conducted by trained and impartial people	Selection tests of the building firms are conducted by the management staffs of the firm.
The organization should have competitive selection processes that attract competent people	The building firms have competitive selection processes that attract competent people
The organization should use various selection instruments (e.g. interviews, tests, etc.)	The building firms use majorly a single selection instruments (e.g. interviews, tests, etc.)
Involvement	
The organization should treat staffs with respect and attention	The building firms treat employees fairly without respect and attention considering them as replaceable.
The organization should be concerned with the well-being of employees	The building firms are not fully concerned with the well-being of employees, except where it has to affect the work
The organization should have an environment of understanding and confidence between managers and employees.	The building firms seldom have an environment of understanding and confidence between managers and employees.
The organization should recognize the work done and the results achieved by employees (e.g., in oral compliments, in articles in corporate bulletins, etc.).	The building firms recognizes the work done and the results achieved by employees majorly in oral compliments
The organization should favor autonomy in doing tasks and making decisions.	The building firms favors autonomy in doing tasks and making decisions in peculiar

	cases.
The organization should seek to meet the needs and professional expectations of employees	The building firms do not consider the needs and professional expectations of employees if it does not relate to their core task.
The organization should ensure constant exchange of information between employees and their managers in order to perform their duties properly.	The building firms ensures constant exchange of information between employees and their managers in order to perform their duties properly
The organization should encourage participation in decision- making and problem solving.	The building firms encourage participation in decision-making and problem solving, especially in cases of difficulty
There should be an environment of trust and cooperation among colleagues in the organization.	There is a poor environment of trust and cooperation among colleagues in the building firms, especially as regards to money.
The organization should encourage interaction among its employees (e.g., social gatherings, social events, sports events, etc.).	The building firms do not encourage interaction among its employees, as it does not consider it important.
The organization should follows up on the adaptation of employees to their functions.	The building firms follow up on the adaptation of employees to their functions.
In the organization there should be a consistency between discourse and management practice.	The building firms there is a consistency between discourse and management practice.
Training, Development & Education	
There should be the use of knowledge and behaviors learned in training at work.	There is the opportunity to use knowledge and behaviors learned in training at work.
The organization should help develop the skills needed for the successful accomplishment of duties (e.g., training, conferences, etc.).	The building firms sometimes help develop the skills needed for the successful accomplishment of some challenging duties by on the job training
The organization should invest in	The building firms in some rare

development and education promoting personal and professional growth in a broad manner (e.g., full or partial sponsorship of undergraduate degrees, postgraduate programs, language courses, etc.).	cases permit employees to go to run some educational programs but will not sponsor the program
Training should be evaluated by participants in the organization.	Training should be are not evaluated by participants in the building firms
The organization should stimulate learning and application of knowledge.	The building firms permit the given task to stimulate learning and application of knowledge.
The training needs should be identified periodically in the organization.	The training needs are rarely identified periodically in the building firms
Work Conditions	
The organization should provide basic benefits (e.g., health care, transportation assistance, food aid, etc.).	The building firms provide basic benefits such as transportation assistance, and accommodation for outside projects
The organization should have programs or processes that help employees cope with incidents and prevent workplace accidents.	The building firms have programs or processes that help employees cope with incidents and prevent workplace accidents.
The organization should be concerned with the safety of their employees by having access control of people who enter the company building/facilities.	The building firms are not focused on the safety of their employees by having access control of people who enter the company building/facilities.
The organization should provide additional benefits (e.g., membership in gyms, country clubs, and other establishments, etc.).	The building firms do not provide additional benefits.
The facilities and physical condition (lighting, ventilation, noise and temperature) of the organization should be ergonomic, comfortable, and appropriate.	The facilities and physical condition of the building firms are not ergonomically comfortable, and appropriate, as most of them are obsolete.
The organization should be concerned with the health and quality of life.	

Competency-Based Performance Appraisal	
The organization should discuss competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results with its employees.	The building firms rarely discuss competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results with its employees, this can be attributed to the absence of a structured competency-based performance appraisal criteria or test
Competency-based performance appraisal should provide the basis for an employee development plan.	Competency-based performance appraisal is not the basis for an employee development plan, as development plans are irregular.
Competency-based performance appraisal should be the basis for decisions about promotions and salary increases.	Competency-based performance appraisal is sometimes the basis for decisions about promotions and salary increases.
The organization should disseminate competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results to its employees.	The building firms does not disseminate competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results to its employees, since it does not have any criteria
The organization should periodically conducts competency-based performance appraisals	The building firms rarely conduct competency-based performance appraisals except in cases of internal recruitment.
Compensation and Rewards	
The organization should give incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc.	The building firms give incentives such as promotions, bonuses especially at the successful completion of a project
Salary should be influenced by results in the organization	Salary is sometimes influenced by results in the building firms
The organization should offer employees salary that is compatible with skills, training, and education.	The building firms offer employees salary that is compatible with skills, training, and education.
The organization should remunerate	The building firms do not

	employees according to the remuneration offered at either the public or private marketplace levels.	remunerate employees according to the remuneration offered at either the public or private marketplace levels, except for expatriate companies. Remunerations are majorly negotiated
	The organization should consider the expectations and suggestions of its employees when designing a system of employee rewards.	The building firms do not consider the expectations and suggestions of its employees when designing a system of employee rewards, with few exceptions were the management are indecisive

Source: field survey, 2015

4.4 Functions Performed by HRM Department of Building Construction Firms

The functions performed by HRM department as gathered from the target respondents is organized into managerial and operative functions.

4.4.1 Managerial and Operative Functions ofHRM Department

The managerial functions are analysed using mean scores calculated from the opinion of the respondents. They are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 shows that key managerial functions performed by HRM department of building construction firms is in determining the number and category of people required to accomplish organizational goal, which had a Mean Score of 3.92. This is evident in the mean score and associated rank order. The second function of the HRM department is the establishment of relationships among the employees which is evidenced in the mean score of 3.75. However, the mean score and rank order indicate that the least function of HRM department is motivating and guiding the workforce to accomplish personnel task and responsibilities (MS=2.13).

This clearly indicates that determining the number and category of people required to accomplish organizational goal is the paramount responsibility of the HRM department, as they are responsible for meeting the human resource need of the organization in accordance to their firm's goal.

Table 4.4 Managerial and OperativeFunctionsofHRMDepartment of Building Construction Firms

S/N	HRM Functions	Frequency of Response					N	TS	MS	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5				
1.	Number and category of people required to accomplish organizational goal are determined by HRM department	2	2	7	15	14	40	157	3.92	1st
2.	Relationships among employees are established by HRM department	5	-	10	10	15	40	150	3.75	2nd
3.	HRM department encourages people to work willingly and effectively to achieve the set goals	-	6	10	18	6	40	144	3.60	3rd
4.	Actual performance of employees are checked and verified by HRM department	11	10	8	6	5	40	104	2.60	4th
5.	HRM department motivates and guides the workforce to accomplish personnel tasks and responsibilities	14	14	5	7	-	40	85	2.13	5th

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)
Source: Field survey, 2015

4.5. Dominant factors Affecting Human Resource Management Practices on Building Construction Firms in Abia State

This section addresses one of the objectives in the research, and several factors have been identified from literature to affect human resource management. The mean score (MS) of each factor gives the weight of the response.

The table shows the dominant factors affecting human resource management practice are classified into internal and external factors. The result and findings reflect the current reality that, the construction environments are becoming more complex day by day, and the number of environmental factor are increasing, and they are changing in a fast way. Thus construction firms while formulating their strategies and HR policies should take this factor into consideration effectively. Economic Conditions/Changes ranked first (1st) with a mean score of 4.6 indicating a very high external influence on HRM practice. This is followed by Technological Change/Advancements which ranked second (2nd) with mean score of 4.0. Organisations Size ranked first (1st) as the major internal factors with mean score of 4.2 which has a very high influence, it is followed by Organisational Structure which with has a mean score of 4.0.

Economic Conditions/Changes as the highest ranking external factor is very significant, because, most construction firms are driven by the economic condition of the country, since most developing countries like Nigeria rely on Government for basic infrastructure and a vast proportion of the construction firms are involved in Public projects. Therefore a change in the economic condition of the country, will inadvertently affect the amount of resources available to the firms, and in the long run affect their HRM which rely on finance to carry out their activities. Organizationl size as a major internal factor is significant because, it affects the HRM demand of the firm. Small Firms will tend to give little attention to the HRM requirement, because of

the availability of finance, but a fast growing firms will tend to pay attention to its' HRM, knowing that they are the backbone of the firms.

Table 4.5: The Dominant factors Affecting Human Resource Management Practices in Abia State

	HRM Factors	Frequency of Response					N	TS	MS	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5				
	EXTERNAL									
1	Economic Conditions/Changes	-	2	-	11	27	40	183	4.6	1st
2	Technological Change/Advancements	1	5	5	10	19	40	161	4.0	2nd
3	Industry characteristics	-	4	10	13	13	40	155	3.9	3rd
4	Government Regulations	-	10	9	13	8	40	139	3.5	4th
5	Workforce Demographics	5	11	7	8	9	40	111	2.8	5th
6	Competitors Action	9	11	6	8	6	40	111	2.8	6th
7	Union Action	10	9	6	8	7	40	109	2.7	7th
	INTERNAL									
1	Organisations Size	-	3	5	15	17	40	166	4.2	1st
2	Organisational Structure	2	2	6	16	14	40	158	4.0	2nd
3	Business Strategy	-	5	8	16	11	40	153	3.8	3rd
4	Organisation Culture	3	5	9	12	11	40	143	3.6	4th
5	Priorities of Top Management	3	11	8	12	6	40	127	3.2	5th
6	Power and Politics	5	11	8	10	6	40	121	3.0	6th

(1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)
Source: Field Survey, (2015)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study assessed the human resource management practices of building construction firms in Abia state using a survey approach. Below are the summary of the findings of this study:

1. The HRM practices identifiedin Abia state showed that recruitment and selection practices had an average mean score (MS) of 2.15.The Involvement of the employees in the building firms had MS of 2.18. The Training, Development and Education had an average MS of 1.91. The Work Conditions had an average mean score (MS) of 1.89. The Competency-Based Performance Appraisal had MS of 1.96. The Compensation and Rewards had an average MS of 2.0.
2. The role of HRM department in the construction firm can be classified into two (2); the Managerial and the Operative function. The key managerial functions performed by HRM department of building construction firms is in determining the number and category of people required to accomplish organizational goal (MS=3.92),
3. The dominant factors influencing HRM are broadly classified into two (2); Internal and External factors. Economic Conditions/Changes ranked first (1st) with a mean score of 4.6 indicating a very high external influence on HRM practice while Organizations Size ranked first (1st) as the major internal factors with Mean Score of 4.2.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the objective of the research, the following conclusions were made:

1. The research concludes that practice of HRM in construction firms in Abia state is below the HRM standard practices identified globally.
2. The research concludes that the Human resource department is responsible for recruiting and selecting adequate employee based on the firms objectives.
3. The research also concludes that Economic Conditions/Changes and Organisations Size are the dominant factors influencing HRM practices in the Abia state.

5.3 Recommendation

In order to improve the performance of building construction firms in terms of adopting and implementing effective human resource management practicesthe following recommendations are proffered:

I. The research therefore recommends a full implementation of the standard HRM practices identified in the research, and the involvement of other relevant body or stakeholders in monitoring of the HRM implementation process.

II. The research recommends that the HRM department should be given adequate resources and authority to carry out a fair recruitment and selection process, which is devoid of personal interest.

III. The research also recommends the need to reinforce the firm's savings and the diversification or reinvestment of the firm's profit, so as to create a stable financial base in the case of economic fluctuations.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

I. The study revealed the major requirement to reemphasize the need for full implementation of the standard HRMpractices inconstruction firms in Abia state.

II. It provided an insight to the need to reinforce the HRM department by the provision of finance and autonomy to enable them carry out their responsibility.

III. It alsoexposed that Human Resource Management practices are associated with positive marginal effects in the form of improving the productivity of the workforce.

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Appendix A: QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING,
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY-ZARIA

ASSESSING THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE OF BUILDING CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN ABIA STATE

Dear Respondent,

I am undertaking a research as part of my M. Sc. Program in the Department of Building, Ahmadu Bello University-Zaria on **Assessing The Human Resource Management Practice of Building Construction Firms in Abia State.** The study, if successfully completed, will provide a clear insight as regards the best human resource management practices in building construction sites in Abia state, which will inform researchers, management and other stakeholders of the way forward towards increasing productivity in the construction industry.

The questionnaire will take you an average of 15 minutes to complete. I would be grateful if you spare your time to answer the questions.

The information provided will be treated confidentially and used for data analysis only.

I would be glad to share the summary of my findings with you, if you provide your contact details at the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your time.

NwokohuChimaroke
07030457577
bonifacebabyboy@gmail.com

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION: answer all questions by ticking the appropriate boxes provided.

Indicate your choice by ticking the appropriate block.

1. Name/Years of construction Activity? _____

2. What ownership is the building construction firm? _____

(a) Public Liability Company (b) Limited Liability Company (c) Partnership

(d) sole proprietor

3. Ways of advertising vacancies in your construction firm?

(a) TV (b) radio (c) newspaper (d) informal (e) websites

4. What type of personnel do you recruit?

Skilled (Professional) _____ (a).Permanent (b).Temporary(c). All

Semi-skilled (Draftsmen) _____ (a).Permanent (b).Temporary(c). All

Unskilled (Labourers) _____ (a).Permanent (b).Temporary (c). All

SECTION B

Dominant HRM Practices

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following. Use a scale of 1-5 (where1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree).

s/n	International Standard	1	2	3	4	5
	Recruitment and Selection					
1	The organization should disseminate information about both external and internal recruitment processes.					
2	The organization should disclose information to applicants regarding the steps and criteria of the selection process.					
3	The organization should communicate performance results to candidates at the end of the selection process.					
4	Selection tests of the organization should be conducted by trained and impartial people					
5	The organization should have competitive selection processes that attract competent people					
6	The organization should use various selection instruments (e.g. interviews, tests, etc.)					
	Involvement					
1	The organization should treat staffs with respect and attention					
2	The organization should be concerned with the well-being of employees					
3	The organization should have an environment of understanding and confidence between managers and employees.					
4	The organization should recognize the work done and the results achieved by employees (e.g., in oral compliments, in articles in corporate bulletins, etc.).					
5	The organization should favor autonomy in doing tasks and making decisions.					
6	The organization should seek to meet the needs and professional expectations of employees					
7	The organization should ensure constant exchange of information between employees and their managers in order to perform their duties properly.					
8	The organization should encourage participation in decision- making and problem solving.					
9	There should be an environment of trust and cooperation among colleagues in the organization.					
10	The organization should encourage interaction among its employees (e.g., social gatherings, social events, sports events, etc.).					
11	The organization should follows up on the adaptation of employees to their functions.					
12	In the organization there should be a consistency between discourse and management practice.					

	Training, Development & Education					
1	There should be the use of knowledge and behaviors learned in training at work.					
2	The organization should help develop the skills needed for the successful accomplishment of duties (e.g., training, conferences, etc.).					
3	The organization should invest in development and education promoting personal and professional growth in a broad manner (e.g., full or partial sponsorship of undergraduate degrees, postgraduate programs, language courses, etc.).					
4	Training should be evaluated by participants in the organization.					
5	The organization should stimulate learning and application of knowledge.					
6	The training needs should be identified periodically in the organization.					
	Work Conditions					
1	The organization should provide basic benefits (e.g., health care, transportation assistance, food aid, etc.).					
2	The organization should have programs or processes that help employees cope with incidents and prevent workplace accidents.					
3	The organization should be concerned with the safety of their employees by having access control of people who enter the company building/facilities.					
4	The organization should provide additional benefits (e.g., membership in gyms, country clubs, and other establishments, etc.).					
5	The facilities and physical condition (lighting, ventilation, noise and temperature) of the organization should be ergonomic, comfortable, and appropriate.					
6	The organization should be concerned with the health and quality of life.					
	Competency-Based Performance Appraisal					
1	The organization should discuss competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results with its employees.					
2	Competency-based performance appraisal should provide the basis for an employee development plan.					
3	Competency-based performance appraisal should be the basis for decisions about promotions and salary increases.					
4	The organization should disseminate competency-based performance appraisal criteria and results to its employees.					
5	The organization should periodically conducts competency-based performance appraisals					
	Compensation and Rewards					
1	The organization should give incentives such as promotions, commissioned functions, awards, bonuses, etc.					
2	Salary should be influenced by results in the organization					
3	The organization should offer employees salary that is compatible with skills, training, and education.					
4	The organization should remunerate employees according to the remuneration offered at either the public or private marketplace levels.					
5	The organization should consider the expectations and suggestions of					

	its employees when designing a system of employee rewards.					

SECTION C

Dominant factors Influencing Human Resource Management Practices on Building Construction Firms InAbia State.

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following. Use a scale of 1-5 (where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree).

	Factors	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
External						
1	Economic Conditions/Changes					
2	Technological Change/Advancements					
3	Industry characteristics					
4	Government Regulations					
5	Workforce Demographics					
6	Competitors Action					
7	Union Action					
Internal						
1	Organisations Size					
2	Organisational Structure					
3	Business Strategy					
4	Organisation Culture					
5	Priorities of Top Management					
6	Power and Politics					

SECTION D
Functions performed by HRM department of building construction firms in Abia state

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following. Use a scale of 1-5 (where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree).

Managerial and operative functions of HRM Department

Functions	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Number and category of people required of people required to accomplish organizational goal are determined by HRM determinant					
Relationships among employees are established by HRM department					
HRM department encourages people to work willingly and effectively to achieve the set goals					
Actual performance of employees are checked and verified by HRM department					
HRM department motivates and guides the workforce to accomplish personnel tasks and responsibilities					

Respondents' Contact Details (Optional)
Name of Organisation: ……
E-mail/Mobile Number: ……...……

Your Department:.……....

Years of Experience:……

Gender:……..