

## RECRUITMENT PRACTICE AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN MINING COMPANIES IN THE NORTH-CENTRAL REGION OF NIGERIA

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### **ABSTRACT**

Extant literature revealed that employment practices determine employee productivity. However, there is paucity of empirical literature on the direct relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity in the Nigerian mining industry. The study examines the relationship between recruitment and employee productivity in selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria. Using survey research design, a structured questionnaire was administered to 425 employees of five selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria. The findings revealed that recruitment practice has a positive significant relationship with employee productivity in selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria ( $r(411) = 0.515, p < 0.05$ ). Based on the findings, the study recommends that management of mining companies in Nigeria should conduct their recruitment exercises in an unbiased manner to ensure the employment of the right personnel and foster high level of employee productivity. Management should appropriately assign responsibilities to each employee based strictly on merit.

**KEYWORDS:** Recruitment Practice, Employee Productivity, Nigerian Mining Industry

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Organisations around the world are in a continuous contest of achieving improved employee productivity. Most business managers in different sectors, especially in the mining industry, have difficulty in constantly achieving high level of employee productivity due to multi-tasking, workplace stress, poor employee recognition, damaged organizational structure, and poor management. The firms in the mining industry across different economies have equally been characterised with decline in employee productivity. Employee productivity has been declining significantly in the mining industry since year 2000. This challenge of low level of employee productivity that cuts across different economies in the world has raised major concerns among scholars and professionals, and has stimulated investigations into the causes of decline in employee productivity in the mining industry.

According to Neingo and Tholana (2016), differences in employee productivity level in countries around the world are due in part to the relative capital intensities and capital utilizations in the mining sector where capital intensity is greatly a function of method and technology of mining to be employed. Many developed economies have experienced

significant level of decline in employee productivity. In the United States of America (USA), the American Bureau of Statistics Report on Mining Industry (2019) showed that employee productivity declined by an average of 27.5% from 2012 to 2017. The Report further revealed that between 2019 and 2018, the decline in employee productivity in the mining industry was due to the increasing complexity of operations and inadequate skills mix. In Australia, employee and capital productivities have been on the decline over the past decade; where Australia mining industry dropped by 45% within the period of 2012 to 2018 due to ineffective portfolio management, organizational incapability, slow pace in innovation, resource nationalism and increase in technical difficulties (Australia Bureau of Statistic Report, 2019). According to the Global Mining Industry Report (2018), Spain, China and France encountered shortage of technically skilled employees, high cost of retaining existing staff talent, and ageing workforce on complex mining jobs which puts pressure on existing staff to do more with less resulting in reduced employee productivity.

The level of continuous low employee productivity in African mining industry has also been a concern for stakeholders (Neingo & Cawood, 2014; Omotehinse & Ako, 2019). In Africa mining markets, many countries are seeing labour costs rise way above the rate of inflation. In South Africa, labour costs currently range from 20%–25% of total production costs for modern, mechanized and open cast mines, to 50%–60% for the mature deep-level underground mines while employee low productivity and demands for increased salaries and wages have continued to plague the industry, and it is estimated that South Africa's mining industry lost more than US\$1.4b in the 2017–2018 financial year (South Africa Bureau of Statistics Report, 2019). The South Africa Bureau of Statistics Report (2019) further stated that there is notable and sustained decrease in employee productivity where in 2018, employee productivity in the gold mining industry, expressed as kilograms produced by employee, declined by 35% within the period of 2017 to 2018. Furthermore, the South African gold mining sector slipped to sixth, behind China, Australia, Russia, Peru and the United States in 2017; where in the 1970s, the country produced almost 80% of the world's new mine supply, and until 2006 was the world's largest gold producer. In Kenya, mining industry is dominated by non-metallic minerals such as soda ash, fluorspar, kaolin and some gemstones. These minerals represent a small percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (Government of Kenya (GoK, 2019). Kenya has proven deposits of titanium, gold and coal, and is estimated to hold significant deposits of copper, niobium, manganese and rare earth minerals. The local share of mining revenue helps to diversify and expand the economy (GoK, 2020).

In Nigeria, Mallo (2012) and Omotehinse and Ako (2019) pointed that there have been a series of negative reports of low employee productivity output in the mining of gold and mercury across the country especially in the Northern part of Nigeria. This low in employee productivity in the Nigeria mining industry according to Omotehinse and Ako (2019) are caused by poor capital-intensive investment, mining organization incapability and government negligence towards the mining industry. Omotehinse and Ako (2019) further pointed that poor employment practices in the Nigeria mining industry tends to negate the miners' ability to perform, leading to reduced morale and motivation within the workplace thus reduce employee productivity. National Bureau of Statistics in Nigeria (2019) reported that mining industry contribute less than 1.0% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to Nigeria economic activities, growth and development compared with 12% of GDP in South Africa, 7% of GDP in Kenya, 6% of GDP in Zimbabwe and 4.5% of GDP in Ghana.

According to Mohammed, Choonga, and Thima (2019), effective employment practices like recruitment, selection and placement, working condition, organizational policy and compensation practice are fundamental to bolstering employee productivity. However, Ronconi (2019) stressed that majority of developing economies especially in Africa countries mining industry have experienced indecency in employment pattern, political recruitment, selection and

placement, poor compensation practices, poor working conditions, gender inequality workforce and environmental crisis. According to Onwuemenyi (2017), many mining companies in Nigeria have recorded a drop in employee productivity due to political employment practices which characterize indigenous mining companies in Nigeria. Onwuemenyi (2017) argued that political favouritism in selection and placement has been one of the major problems causing low employee commitment which in turn reduced employee productivity in the Nigeria mining industry. Zirra, Ogbu, and Ojo (2017) pointed that most companies in Nigeria be it mining industry, manufacturing industry, service industry among others, there was high nepotism and favourism selection and placement among employee which have jeopardized the global standard of employment practices thus increase the level of declined in employee productivity and output in the Nigerian mining industry.

Many scholars in the field of human resource management have established that employment practices determine employee productivity (Mallo, 2012; Mmbusa, 2019; Neingo & Tholana, 2016; Roncooni, 2019). However, there is paucity of empirical literature on the direct relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity in the Nigerian mining industry. It is, therefore, on this premise that this research seeks to examine the relationship between recruitment and employee productivity in selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Recruitment Practice**

Kapur (2019) defined recruitment is the process of identifying, screening, shortlisting, and hiring of the potential human resources for the purpose of filling up the positions within the organizations. It is the central function of human resource management. Klug (2017) defined recruitment as the process of selecting the right person, for the right position at the right time. According to Muma (2018) recruitment process is any process for which an organisation seeks applicants and attracts potential employees while selection refers to the process by which an organisation identifies those applicants with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that will help it achieve its goals. The overall aim of the recruitment and selection process is to obtain at minimum cost the number and quality of employees required to satisfy the human resource needs of the organization.

Walker (2009) defined recruitment as a course of action involving identifying and attracting potential employable personnel from inside and outside of an organization before commencing the process of evaluating them for employment through selection by identifying the right personnel. Opatha (2010) also defined recruitment as the process of finding and attracting people that are qualified to apply for available job vacancies in the organization. Afori and Aryeetey (2011) defined recruitment as the process of collecting pool of competent individuals to apply for available employment opportunities within an organization. Henry and Temtime (2009) defined recruitment as the path to attracting the right individuals into an organisation. In his definition, Price (2007) sees recruitment as a process of attracting and retrieving able applicants for the purpose of employment engagement. He stated further that the process requires management decision making and planning to enable hiring the right and most qualified candidate. The involvement of management is stressed for decision to shortlist well equipped applicants that can seamlessly fit into the existing team or team being built (Parry & Wilson, 2009). Muma (2018) is of the opinion that recruitment is a supreme function as the success and failure of any organization hangs on recruitment, but researchers and management have not accorded it its rightful place in formulating organizational strategy. Nevertheless, the success of any recruitment process is largely dependent on its ability to generate enough pool of quality and qualified applicants with the right mix of knowledge, skills and abilities required for

the vacant job position and making the best selection from among the applicants (Murphy & Barham, 2002; Nabi, Linan, Fayolle, Krueger, & Walmsle, 2014).

The recruitment function consists of deliberate scientific processes and activities designed in such a way that filters from the best to the very best and includes manpower planning in the organization, analysing the labour market, advertisement, collation of applications, conducting written test, interviewing and further testing for character through psychometric testing (Louw, 2013). However, keeping to this process has been a challenge in organisations, particularly, medium and small organisations where businesses are managed in more of family fashion (Van-Rensburg, 2011). Recruitment process has the challenge of subjectivity in making judgment of the most suitable candidate but professional and positive approach in handling and treating applicants helps to overcome the challenge (Ekwoaba, Ikeije, & Ufoma, 2015). Ahead of initiation of the recruitment process, job specifications are developed stating the required experience and qualification of the most suitable candidate, following these processes help to drill down to applicant who is the most closely match to the specification. The whole objective is to employ the most suitable applicant with minimum cost (Armstrong, 2006). Kepha, Mati, and Waititu (2014) posited that recruitment strategies should be customized and adapted to specific vacant role to be filled in order to maximize the benefit of recruitment strategy. Silzer and Dowell (2010) posited that recruitment extends beyond selection of candidates but involves sustaining and retaining qualified candidates employed.

### **Employee Productivity**

The Black (2015) and Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2015) defined an employee as someone in employment relationship with an employer, under the control and direction of the employer through a contract of employment that could be written, unwritten, expressed, or implied. An employee works in return for compensation and receives benefits for services rendered to an employer which may include bonus pay, gratuities, stock options, health insurance, housing and other creative social benefits depending on the type of work and sector the employee is working.

Productivity, according to Mohammad and Valiollah (2013), is the mathematical proportion of production in relation to the variability and severalty of the resources utilized in the production process. It is the amount of product produced by each employee within a period of time. According to Syed *et al* (2013), productivity is the real output per unit of labour. Sagimo (2002) defined productivity as a measure of organizational competence which is a collection of the competence of the labour, that is, the employees within the organisation. Employee productivity can be thought of as how effectively organizations and the people working in them produce value from available inputs. According to Joshi and Balyan (2011), employee Productivity also known as labour productivity is known as the output per person or system. Matui (2017) defined employee productivity as the assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers usually evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. Labour productivity is also considered as the value that is added by an employee, in an organization to create wealth through the organization's production process or services provision.

The employee is arguably the most strategic of these resources that the organization could possess. This is because it is the employee that determines how efficiently any of the other resources can be utilized by the organization (Mokaya, Musau, Wagoki, & Karanja, 2013) and by implication, an organization could have excellent resources but would still be uncompetitive if it fails to properly invest in ensuring that its employees are well taken care of. It is believed that organizations can exploit its employees to achieve competitive advantage by increasing their level of productivity (Ataullah & Sahota, 2014). Being productive can help the firm increase and utilize the capacity of the human resources it

has. Most productive companies have happy and healthy employees, which are the basis of a successful organization. Further, when employees are productive the organization is able to realize its goals of shareholders wealth maximization. This as was argued by Mokaya et al (2013) is because employees determine how efficiently other resources in the organization are optimally realized. High productivity levels translate into lower unit costs thereby constituting a major driver of success in the organization (Onyije, 2015). It also helps in motivating workplace culture and boost employee morale, and better company environment (Kalimullah et al, 2010). Motivated employees strive in ensuring that the organization does realize its goal. This therefore suggests that workplace is key to the success of an organization. Highly productive translates to the success of the organization (Ajala, 2012). There are measures that need to be put in place for employees to be productive. These are Human Resource Management initiatives such as recruitment in that sound selection criteria have significant effect on employee productivity and overall organization's performance. According to Onyije (2015), recruiting for positions of higher level from within the organization can be a good way to ensure that employees are motivated to stick around.

### **Empirical Review**

Previous studies have confirmed existing relationship between recruitment and employee productivity. A study carried out by Kepha, Mukulu and Waititu (2014) showed that human resource management practices, particularly, recruitment and selection, are strategically influential to attaining high quality employee performance and productivity. Kanyemba, Iwu and Allen-Ile (2015) in their study recommended that personnel responsible for recruitment and selection should be made to know that a significant relationship exists between recruitment and selection processes, and that high level of productivity comes through the quality of hired employees; HR personnel must imbibe, as well as design an appropriate process to get a desired result. Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma (2015) found that there is significant relationship between selection criteria and organizational performance as expanded and wider selection criteria increases the possibility of recruiting qualified personnel for the job which in turn have corresponding positive impact on organizational performance. Organisational performance in the study depicts productivity. Mufu (2015), in a related study, found that recruitment of personnel in the company was based on a set of criteria in the selection process of the company with considerable sustained employee performance and productivity records.

Jordan, Thomas, Kitching, and Blackburn (2013) in their study of employer perceptions and the impact of employment regulation on productivity, found that work experience and academic qualifications are related to competencies as employers are primarily concerned with finding the best candidate with the right work experience, academic qualification, skill level, training and competencies. However, attracting competent workforce into the organization is somewhat a difficult task, particularly, if the organization is not competitive in the area of pay, incentives, and training, guaranteed hours of work, leave days, sick leave, and terms and conditions of employment that position the company as a brand or preferred employer. These researchers argued that the identified conditions further pose the challenge of retention with the possibility of experiencing high turnover rate of employees. Singh and Mohanty (2012) found negative impact result from high employee turnover as recruitment and training cost becomes increasingly recurrent and ultimately, productivity becomes haphazard (Kepha *et al*, 2014).

Mavis (2014) found that recruitment and selection process of firms in the Ashanti Region of Ghana has a relationship with the performance of the firms' organisational productivity. This was the result of the study on employee recruitment and selection practices in the construction industry in the Ashanti Region. In another study conducted by

Ukpafe (2014) on the effect of recruitment on productivity of manufacturing firms in the Eastern Nigeria Region, findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between recruitment and productivity. Parry and Wilson (2009) in the study of factors influencing the adoption of online recruitment found that that unlike the past, the central function of recruitment and selection operates in conjunction with strategic decision making which aligns with the global corporate strategy of the organization.

Grobler *et al.* (2006) found that it is becoming more challenging to retain skilful employees for a number of new developments like undersupply of skilled labour, fast skill obsolesce, skill shortage, growing aged population, rural-urban migration, globalization, emigration, among others; a situation which challenges the objective of creating and maintaining competitive edge by organizations in the labour market (Louw, 2013; Nzukuma and Bussin, 2011). Continued growth of organisations is found to be linked with the performance of its employees and highly dependent on recruiting and selecting quality workforce at all levels; and so for any organisation to build and sustain competitive advantage, strategic quality recruitment practice is of utmost importance (Djabatay, 2012). Kephah *et al* (2014) recommended strict adherence to job specification during recruitment by recruiters and hiring managers as the outcome of their investigations showed significant correlation between recruitment and employee performance. The gap in literature review shows the need to examine the relationship between recruitment and employee productivity in selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria. In view of the above the study hypothesizes that:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity in selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria.

**The Focus of the Study is illustrated in the Figure 1 below**



**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**

*Source: Adejumobi (2020)*

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey research design aimed at examining the relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity in selected mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria. The survey research design was employed because it largely focuses on vital facts, beliefs, opinion, demographic information, attitudes, motives and behaviours of respondent giving responses to the research instrument. The target population of the study is comprised of 2,191 employees in five (5) mining companies, in the North-Central region of Nigeria, selected for this study. The selected mining companies and their respective number of employees are as follows: Dangote Cement Plc (798), BUA cement (400), Lafarge Plc (757), Tongyi Allied Mining Limited (108), and Spectrum Industries Limited (128). North Central states comprise Kogi, Niger, Benue, Kwara, Plateau, Nassarawa and the Federal Capital Territory. The North-Central region of Nigeria is preferred because the region is known for the most sought-after solid minerals and hosts most large-scale mining

companies in the country. The sampling frame for this study is records from the Human Resources Departments of each of the selected firms. Stratified sampling technique was used because it increases the sampling precision during the process of dividing the population into strata (Kumar, 2005). The Raosoft statistical online software was used to determine the sample size. The factors that are considered in determining the sample size are Margin of Error (ME) at 5%, the Confidence Level (CL) at 95%, the Population at 2,191 and the Response Distribution (RD) at 50%. After a number of sample size analysis, the Raosoft recommended a minimum sample size of 327. Allowing for 30% non-respondents, the non-respondents additional sample size =  $\frac{30}{100} \times 327 = 0.3 \times 327 = 98.1$  Total Sample Size =  $98 + 327 = 425$ . The sample size for this study was four hundred and twenty five (425).

The instrument used for the collection of data in this study is a well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was grouped into two sections: Section A was designed to obtain demographic data of the respondents, while section B was designed to obtain data for the dependent and independent variables. The variables were measured using self-developed instrument which was rated by the employees on a 6-point Likert type scale with anchors ranging from 1 = very low to 6 = very high. The independent variable, Recruitment, has eight (8) items, while the dependent variable, Employee, productivity has seven (7) items. The instrument was validated using content and construct validity through experts' assessments and basic statistical tools. The reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, since the study used multiple item measures. A pilot study was conducted in Trab Industry and Geomineral Limited, in Ilesha, Osun State. A total of 43 copies of the questionnaire were administered among the employees out of which 36 copies were retrieved and analyzed. The results of the reliability test showed that the scales were considered as reliable (Recruitment = 0.806, and Employee productivity = 0.789, Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.70 = 0.8155$ ) and the manipulation checks were valid. This was based on the Nunnally (1978) recommendation value of 0.70 and above. The data collected was summarized and analyzed by the use of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24.0).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 425 copies of questionnaire were administered to the target respondents, while 413 copies of questionnaire were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 97% which is adequate for the study. Table 1 shows the summary Pearson's correlation coefficients that shows the relationship between recruitment practice and Employee Productivity.

The result summary is Table 1 shows that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity ( $r(411) = 0.515, p = 0.001$ ). The corresponding p-value is less than 0.05 implying that the result is statistically significant. This implies that organizations that implement recruitment practice tend to motivate their employee to be more efficient and productive. Therefore, based on the result of the correlation and p-value the study concluded that there is moderate and significant relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity. Therefore, the null hypothesis formulated in this study is hereby rejected.

**Table 1: Pearson' Correlation between Recruitment Practice and Employee Productivity**

		<b>Recruitment Practice</b>	<b>Employee Productivity</b>
<b>Recruitment Practice</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.515**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	413	413
<b>Employee Productivity</b>	Pearson Correlation	.515**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	413	413

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2020)

## DISCUSSIONS

The finding of the study based on the correlation output reveals that recruitment practices have significant positive relationship with employee productivity. The finding implies that, if the mining companies maintain practices that ensure the right candidates are recruited into the companies, employee productivity will improve, and this will in turn leads to the realization of the company's objectives. This finding is in line with Madia (2011) that through consciously designed organizational policies that attract, retain, and compensate employees during their employment life cycle with the organization and when they leave the employment of the company, qualified employees can be attracted to the organization. This finding also concurs with Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma (2015) who found that there is significant relationship between selection criteria and organizational performance as expanded and wider selection criteria increases the possibility of recruiting qualified personnel for the job which in turn have corresponding positive impact on organizational performance. Organisational performance in the study depicts productivity. The findings also resonate with what was reported by Kepha, Mukulu and Waititu (2014) that human resource management practices, particularly, recruitment and selection, is strategically influential to attaining high quality employee performance and productivity. They recommended strict adherence to job specification during recruitment by recruiters and hiring managers as the outcome of their investigations showed significant correlation between recruitment and employee performance. The is also in line with the findings of Mavis (2014) that the recruitment and selection process of firms in the Ashanti Region of Ghana has a relationship with the performance of the firms, organisational productivity.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to establish the relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity with specific reference to mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria. The study employed survey research design, through the administration of structured questionnaire to the employees of five (5) mining companies, in the North-Central region of Nigeria. The findings revealed that there is a moderate, significant, and positive relationship between recruitment practice and employee productivity. The study contributes to the literature on human resource management, by examining recruitment practice and its relationship with employee productivity in North-Central region which is not document in the literature. It can therefore be concluded that recruitment practice positively and significantly correlates with employee productivity of mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria. Specifically, the findings of this study suggest that the management of mining companies in the North-Central region of Nigeria should conduct their recruitment exercises in an unbiased manner to ensure the employment of the right personnel and foster high level of employee productivity. Furthermore, management should appropriately assign responsibilities to all employees based on merit irrespective of the person involved.



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