

Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Performance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Strategic human resource management focuses on unique strategies at facilitating the management and implementation of organizational architecture to enhance the use of the human capital to drive business performance. Strategic human resource management aligns strategic employment policies, and practices with the requirements of the business strategy in order that the later will be achieved and the business will be successful. It strives on the assumption that the human element as a resource is responsible for co-ordinating all the other resources of the productive system to enhance enterprise effectiveness. Eighty six individuals participated in the study that employed the exploratory research design. Data generated and analyzed through statistical methods found that strategic human resource management has strong positive association with business performance. The study left the door open for further study to examine the role of labour-management relationship in talent retention in Nigerian organizations, and based on the result of the study, it was suggested that analyzing and designing jobs will help organizations in matching the right man with the right job to enhance business performance.

Keywords

Strategic HRM, Strategic HRM Inventory Model, Realization of Enterprise Goals, Organizational Architecture, Business Performance

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1. Introduction

A major aspiration of most business organizations is profitability. For this to be achieved in the expected quantum there must be a balance between the aspiration and those of the people working in the organizations, because the human resource in organizations influences the degree of profitability or loss in the them. Human resource management involves the creation of systems and situations in which human beings in organizations can make their best contributions to achieve their individual goals and also to develop the enterprise. According to Torrington, et al [1] the basis of management is always the same: getting the people of the business to make things happen in a productive way, so that the business prospers and the people thrive. To this extent, strategic human resource management (SHRM) is be

involved for the effective management of all the people of the business and not only those who are directly employed within the organization itself. SHRM is issue-based, rather than the formulation of a complete integrated strategy. It is different and distinct from a formal human resource strategy which is the intentions of the corporation both explicit and covert, towards the management of its employees, expressed through philosophies, policies and practices. SHRM rather follows the processes of strategic thinking, strategic decision-making, and strategic-orientation necessary to achieving the most realistic enterprise expectations and business performance, as reflected by productivity and profitability. The SHRM process hinges on the basic understanding that strategy is a process which is not necessarily rational and top-down, but a practical and evolutionary process. For example, strategy is *formed* rather than *formulated* and any intended strategy is changed by events, opportunities, the actions of

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the employees and others, so that the realized strategy is different from the initial vision. Furthermore, strategy can only be identified in retrospect and is best seen in the ultimate behavior of the organization. While human resource strategy focuses on human resource policies, SHRM focuses on strategies at facilitating the management and implementation of human resource architecture. The critical perspectives of SHRM on business performance are founded on the concept that good management of people is needed to improve business performance. It also believes in the imperative to align employment policies and practices with the requirements of business strategy in order that the latter will be achieved and the business will be successful. Torrington, et al, [1] also state that a more recent view of SHRM is derived from the resource-based view of the business and the perceived value of human capital. They argue that this view focuses on the quality of the human resource available to the organization and ability to learn and adapt more quickly than competitors. This perspective supports the need to secure a fit with ultimate business strategy and focus on long-term business sustainability of the organization through the pool of capable human capital. This approach is related to policy goals, strategic integration, commitment, flexibility and quality, expected to produce desirable organizational outcomes [2]. According to Jones and George [3] SHRM refers to the process by which management designs the components of a human resource management system so as to be consistent with each other, with other elements of the organizational architecture, and with the organization's strategy and goals. According to them, the objective of SHRM is the operation of human resource management (HRM) system that enhances an organization's *efficiency, quality, innovation, and responsiveness to customers*, which form the four building blocks of competitive advantage and business performance [4-10].

1.1. Research Problem

The survival of business organizations will for many years to come depend largely on the quality of its human resource and how they manage the enterprises. Business organizations as social systems require the competence to maintain the structures, technology and the environment in which they operate. The common denominator among these three is people. The human element is involved in the designing, building and the operation of organizational structure. The human resource is involved in the development and use of appropriate technology for achieving corporate goals. The challenge is for the business organization to design and select appropriate strategies for the recruitment, selection, development, compensation and maintenance of its human resource as the catalyst for business performance. The human

person is a critical resource in the productive system, and in view of increasing globalization as well as complexity in the business environment, SHRM architecture has become crucial for enterprise growth, and survival. Business organizations often employ huge financial resources, physical resources, but without commensurate investment in the management and development of human capital. This approach frequently gives room for lack of capacity to monitor and control the other resources necessary for business survival. Other misconceptions arise from the inability to distinguish routine personnel functions from HRM functions, and to understand the critical imperatives of SHRM in relation to enterprise performance. Although the prescriptive approaches of human resource strategy and strategic human resource planning (SHRP) bring value to the organization, the SHRM perspective focuses on the strategic aspects of business performance to drive a high-commitment, high-performance approach to business strategy. Business performance will remain in serious jeopardy without appropriate SHRM approach that would ensure the satisfaction of people and the accomplishment of corporate objectives. The management has the challenge of putting human energy to productive use to ensure organizational success. Among other challenges of SHRM include: monitoring the influence of the environment on the business, monitoring labour legislation in all ramifications, human resource accounting and audit as well as human resource planning. These problems must be overcome so as to reduce disenchantment and disillusion that could lead to dysfunctional behavior and poor business performance. Literature on SHRM and business performance in Nigeria is very minimal, and the author acknowledges the effect of this limitation on this work. It is therefore, envisaged that the present work will wake up the spirit of more local researchers to do more work in these areas to help in building business sustainability in Nigeria [11-13].

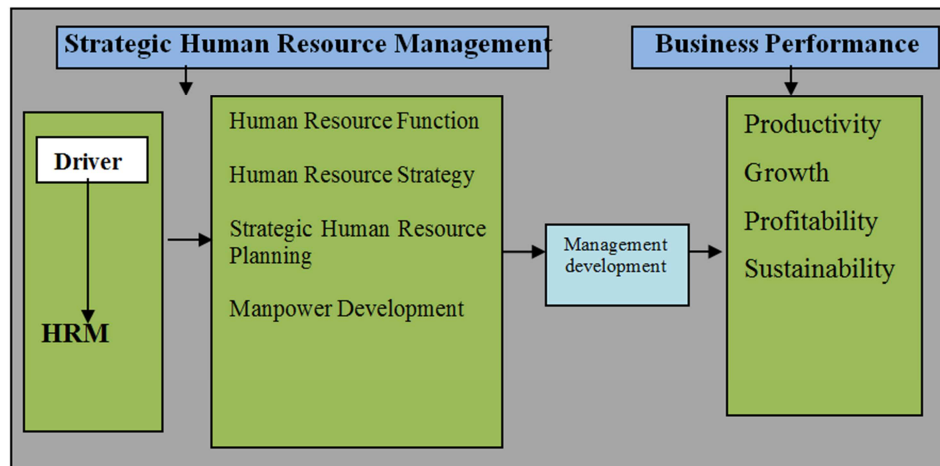
1.2. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework shows the structure of the study and the relevant variables. It is often expressed as a model [14]. The model for the present study is shown in figure 1.

It is believed that the field of management arose out of an economic need to satisfy unlimited human wants with scarce resources. According to Akanwa [15] the focus of HRM is people since every organization is human-oriented, a factor without which the organization is reduced to nothing, the process of acquiring human services, developing skills, motivating them and ensuring that their loyalty in the organization are vital instruments for achieving objectives. Therefore, HRM drives effective SHRM. SHRM thrives on the basis of sound human resource function, human resource

strategy (HRS), strategic human resource planning (SHRP), manpower development as well as human resource administration. Ivancevich [16] believes that HRM is the basis for organizational effectiveness. He also explains that human beings deserve attention because they are a significant factor in top-management strategic decisions that guide the organizational future operations. HRM activities determine organizational effectiveness or ineffectiveness, and SHRM is as an important key to business performance. It is also noted that HRS is important in guiding the path of SHRM for enterprise survival. Gomez-Mejia and Balkin [17] opine that

the ultimate objective of SHRP is a sustained competitive advantage. This emphasizes that the corporation must have the right kinds of people so as to meet its objectives or goals at any given time. Also, accurate manpower level is necessary for business performance. These factors ensure that all aspects of SHRM through manpower development is delivered to enhance organizational or business performance. The conceptual nature of this work hinges on the belief that SHRM remains a critical measure of managing people and other resources, in an organization, with the ultimate aim of growth and business performance [18-23].



Source: Author Designed (2020).

Figure 1. Strategic Human Resource Management and Business Performance Model.

1.3. Research Objective

The study was designed to examine the relationship between SHRM on business performance (BP) in Nigeria.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The result of the study will help in improving the understanding of students, researchers, managers, employers and policy makers on the relevance of SHRM in BP in Nigeria.

1.5. Research Questions

1. Does SHRM help in monitoring labour legislation in a country?
2. Is SHRM important in manpower development?
3. Can SHRM contribute to BP?
4. Do you think SHRM is imperative for employee motivation?
5. Do you believe that SHRM is not part of top management activity?

1.6. Hypothesis

To guide the course of this study the following hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 degree of significance.

Ho: There is no relationship between SHRM and BP.

Hi: There is a relationship between SHRM and BP.

2. Literature Review

SHRM is concerned with the management of labour which is the most important and mobile factor of all the factors of production. Its focus is on the effective acquisition, utilization and maintenance of the human resource of the organization. This primarily involves putting the human energy to productive or optimal use while ensuring that the workforce is adequately remunerated and with adequate incentive formulated to encourage optimal level BP. HRM activities and organizational competencies are influenced by the complexity and dynamism of enterprise operations. Often three competencies are particularly important to the organization. The first is organizational learning, the ability to acquire new technological or marketing skills across the whole organization. Second is continuous improvement, the ability of the enterprise to continuously improve the quality, cost and delivery parameters of its products or services. The third is competitive culture, the ability to focus the energy of the people inside the organization on the task of winning in

the market place. Linkages between organizational activities and these critical organizational competencies are influenced by the dynamism of SHRM. In a more generic sense, the three important organizational competencies are all centered on the accumulation of invisible assets: information based organizational skills that are essential for the execution of flexible strategies in global markets. All these invisible assets provide value to the organization. They cannot be purchased, they are embedded in people in the organization and can be developed only through experience and training. Therefore, it is because of the centrality of the human element that the SHRM practices play vital role in acquiring and enhancing these competencies to improve BP. SHRM enhances the core value of organizational learning which is the enhancement of the long-term strategic capability of the organization. The objective is to foster creativity, entrepreneurship, and autonomy, and building elements for supporting proactive and flexible business competitive advantage. The Overall activities of SHRM encompasses other strategic functions such as HRS, SHRP, manpower planning (MP) and human resource administration (HRA) [24-27].

2.1. SHRM and Management Development

SHRM and Manpower development are interrelated because to a high degree they seek to obtain and upgrade human resource through education, training and development for the achievement of organizational goals. Manpower training and development are thus very necessary for both the employees' motivation and higher organizational performance. The human resource as the person possessing defined skills, knowledge and desired work attitude stand ready to change and take up higher responsibilities to enhance business performance more than any other factor in the production system. SHRM practices ensure that the organization has the right caliber of people capable of engineering operations to meet the challenges of competition. Today, organizations are faced with intense competition, to remain relevant in the global market. They require nothing less than competent manpower to ensure that quality goods and services to match increasing sophistication in customer demands and tastes are available. For example, in today's organizations, it is the manager or administrator, as the case may be, who determines the appropriate technology required and the best way to effectively and efficiently utilize all types of organizational resources for the growth and sustainability of the business. To this extent, SHRM therefore, encompasses, management planning, manpower budgeting, manpower development among others, required for the promotion of BP. Through the recruitment process, SHRM reinforces the organization's commitment to its values. This is foundational because the core values of an organization are frequently reflected in its overall strategic goals, business model, the type of employees recruited and the

way and manner the employees relate with each other and the outside world. SHRM and management development ensure that enterprise objectives are operationalized through the development of a unique business model with clear intentions and strategic objectives for management consideration and implementation. This presupposes the need for the recruitment of people who are highly committed to organizational objectives and also share similar values with organizational core values. SHRM is paramount in BP, and today there is increasing and greater public awareness of the relevance of human knowledge and talent to the success of any human organization. It is now an irrevocable truth that it is the people who initiate and drive the goals, vision and mission of all organizations. Consequently, organizations are emphasizing effectiveness, putting more emphasis on recruiting and developing the right employees. And for BP and sustainability, organizations are in turn demanding from their employees; quality performance, greater innovation, initiative as well as professionalism in the performance of their duties. A competent employee is one who possesses an identifiable combination of skills, knowledge, experience, trait, attitude and capacity necessary to perform a job efficiently and effectively. SHRM addresses issues of collective bargaining which involves all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers' organizations on the one hand, and one or more workers' organizations on the other. According to Idowu [28] this is specifically for determining working conditions and terms of employment, and/or regulating relations between employers and workers', and regulating relations between employers or their organizations and workers' or workers' representatives [29-30]. SHRM recognizes that cordial labour-management relationship is inevitable for BP. Through SHRM and management development managers are groomed to enhance BP. [31]. HRM relates to a particular approach to the management of people that is necessary to serve the modern business more effectively. Human resource practices influence employee rewards, policies and job satisfaction as well as the retention of employees. It involves the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of the human efforts and is wholly predicted on the fact that the human element is most crucial in organizational performance. Also, manpower planning is the process by which the enterprise ensures that it has the right number of people who possess the proper skills at the right time for performing jobs which are useful to accomplish enterprise objectives. SHRP involves manpower planning, auditing and budgeting. It is a SHRM approach for creating a viable method for forecasting human resource requirements, analyzing the labour market and developing strategies for meeting human resource shortages to enhance operational performance. Noe, et al [32] emphasize that SHRM contributes to such important measures of an organization's success story

as quality, profitability and customer satisfaction. They state that SHRM ensures analysis and design of work, employee retention, training and development, performance measures, compensation and support for organizational strategy. Gomez-Mejia and Balkin [17] suggest that the ultimate aim of SHRM is a sustained competitive advantage. According to them, a commonly held view of SHRM is based on the *contingency* theory notion that no human resource strategy is good or bad in itself but rather depends on the situation or context in which it is used. Explaining this SHRM view, they state that the consistency or compatibility between human resource strategies and other important aspects of the organization which is known as *fit* leads to better business performance and that lack of *fit* creates inconsistencies that reduce performance. Hassan [2] opines that the formulation and implementation of sound SHRM policies lead to increased business performance [33-38].

2.2. SHRM and Strategic Management

Strategic management is a process, an approach to addressing the competitive challenges an organization faces. It can be thought of as managing the *pattern or plan that integrates an organization's major goals, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole*. It can be either the generic approach to competing or the specific adjustment and action taken to deal with a particular situation. Therefore, business organizations engage in generic strategies that often fit into some strategic form. To this extent, Noe, et al, [39] opine that SHRM is the pattern of planned human resource development and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals. For SHRM to succeed, it must adopt the strategic management process. For example, during strategy formulation, the strategic planning groups decide on a strategic direction by defining the organization's mission and goals, and during implementation, the organization follows through on the strategy that has been selected. This consists of structuring the organization, allocating resources, ensuring that the organization has skilled manpower in place, and developing them and reward systems that align employee behaviour with the organization's strategic goals. It is also envisaged that the strategic management approach must be performed effectively. They recognize that in recent history that the success of strategic management process depends highly on the extent to which the human resource function is applicable. Organizations adapt to changing and challenging environmental forces as they attempt to formulate and implement strategic policies. It is usually through strategic planning and implementation that organizations aim to improve business performance. Strategic management approach is needed in organizations to focus effort to promote co-ordination and business performance. It is specifically concerned in deploying organization's internal

strengths and correcting any weaknesses to maximize business performance. According to Ukeje, et al [40] strategic planning is also the determination of the future posture of an organization with particular reference to its profitability, rate of innovation and its relationship with its employees and other external institutions. A major purpose of strategy is to build and strengthen an organization's competitive position in the market place. It also provides a formidable defence against external threats to the organization's performance and survival. It is often believed that organizations that embark on strategic planning and management survive in the long-run and if the contrary is the case, failure becomes almost inevitable. The resource-based view of strategic management advocates that an organization should try to exploit existing business opportunities using its present resources to enhance and sustain its competitiveness, and business performance [41-52].

3. Research Methodology

This explains the procedure of the study.

3.1. Research Design

The empirical research design was used for the study. Empirical research is exploratory and historical in nature and does not usually require a large sample or a structured questionnaire. It involves identifying the factors to be studied, getting the relevant data, analyzing them, and drawing conclusion from the result of data analysis. Empirical research could involve simple qualitative analysis of the data or it could also involve quantitative data analysis as the case may be [53].

3.2. Population, Sample and Size

The population comprised all the people in Nigeria. The sample was selected through the probabilistic sampling design, and the size of 86 determined by the simple stratified sampling technique. This method was found most suitable to ensure that all the different categories of people were representatively captured [54].

3.3. Area of the Study

The study was carried out in the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria, comprising of 5 states out of the 36 states in Nigeria. It is believed that the opinion of the people in the zone will adequately represent the opinion of the entire people in Nigeria based on the 1/10th principle [55].

3.4. Sources of Data

Data were generated through primary and secondary sources. Each type of data collection method has its merits and demerits, but it is always better to adopt the mixed method of

data collection because it enables the researcher to explore the research problem from multiple perspectives.

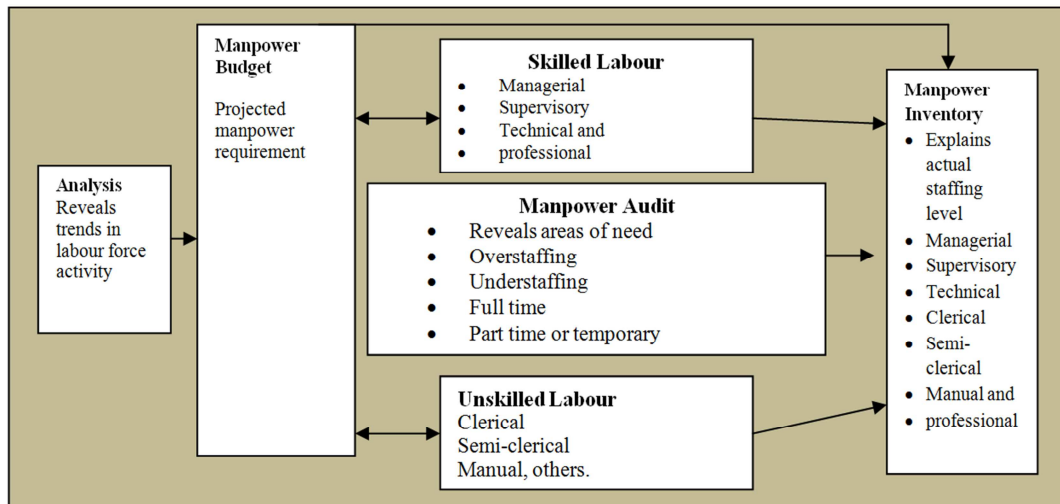
3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through the descriptive and regression statistical methods, and result presented in figures and tables.

3.6. Decision Rule

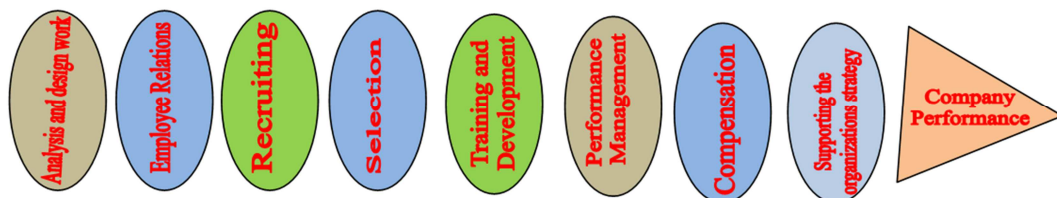
Decision rule for the cut-off point in the frequency analysis was at 3.50 points [56].

4. Presentation of Result



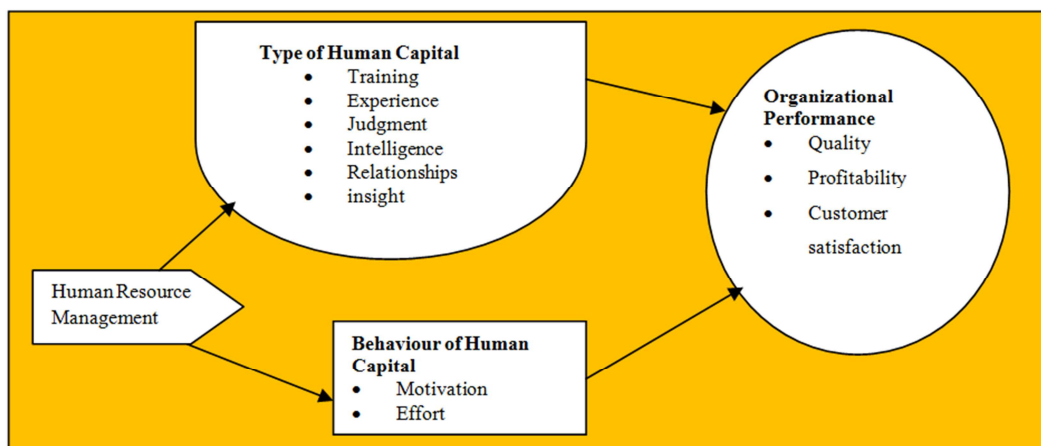
Source: Fieldwork (2020) adapted from Noe, et al (2004).

Figure 2. Strategic HRM Inventory Model.



Source: Fieldwork (2020) adapted from Noe, et al (2004).

Figure 3. Strategic HRM and Company Performance Model.



Source: Fieldwork (2020) adapted from Noe, et al, [32].

Figure 4. HRM and Organizational Performance Model.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n=86).

S/N	Description	Category	Total	Percentage
i	Gender	a) Female	30	34.88
		b) Male	56	65.12
ii	Education	a) Diplomas	20	23.26
		b) Degrees	40	46.51
		c) Others	26	30.23
iii	Age	a) 18-35 years	25	29.07
		b) 36-60years	32	37.21
		c) 61- above	29	33.72
iv	Experience	a) Less than10 years	35	40.70
		b) over 10 years	51	59.30
v	Status	a) Low	22	25.58
		b) Middle	44	51.16
		c) High	20	23.26

Source: Fieldwork (2020).

Table 2. Analysis of Frequencies, Mean, Decision Mean and Grand Mean for Responses to Research Questions.

S/N	Restatement of Research Questions	Scores					Rowsc ores	No of Resps.	Mean	Decision mean @ 3 points	Grand mean
		SA	A	N	D	SD					
		5	4	3	2	1					
i	SHRM helps in compliance with labour laws	50	15	2	4	15	339	86	3.94	Accepted	3.65
ii	SHRM helps in manpower development	8	15	3	10	50	179	86	2.08	Rejected	
iii	SHRM practices enhance business performance	54	10	2	2	18	338	86	3.93	Accepted	
iv	SHRM is critical to employee motivation	50	15	3	8	10	345	86	4.01	Accepted	
v	SHRM is part of top management activity	55	20	1	2	8	370	86	4.30	Accepted	

Source: Fieldwork (2020).

Table 3. Model Summary.

R	R Square	Adjusted RSquare	Std. Error of the Estimate
.891a	.794	.642	3.31805

- a. Predictors: (Constant), SHRM.
- b. Dependable variable: BP.

Table 4. ANOVA.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	124.469	12	24.894	2.001	.018b
Residual	220.189	15	11.009	11.009	
Total	344.657	37			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), SHRM.
- b. Dependable variable: BP.

Table 5. Coefficients.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.556	.018	.441	.670	.018
	Workers performance	.601	.025	.321	.801	.017
	Productivity	.599	.044	.245	.591	.015
	Loyalty	.679	.089	.361	.491	.000
	Organizational performance	.654	.079	.355	.671	.004
	Strategic planning	.434	.054	.371	.348	.020
	Budgeting	.409	.066	.381	.421	.034
	Revenue					

- a. Predictors: (Constant), SHRM.
- b. Dependable variable: BP.

4.1. Discussion

SHRM is issue-oriented and concerned with effective management of enterprise human resource and collaborating with management to enhance organizational performance. It is a process that recognizes the importance of manpower in

the productive process and ensuring that there is adequate supply in the right quantity and quality to drive management objectives. Figure 1 as the conceptual framework of the study was used to demonstrate that HRM drives SHRM with the major components, including management development, that

lead to BP. It supports evidence in the literature that SHRM is important in BP reflected by productivity among other factors. The strategic HRM inventory model in figure 2 showed the necessity for environmental analysis to determine actual staffing levels to ensure management and enterprise effectiveness. The strategic HRM and company performance model in figure 3 revealed that analysis and design of work, employee retention, performance management, compensation, among other activities of SHRM are essential ingredients for company performance. As showed in figure 4, harnessing organizational human resource through adequate training, relationships, intelligence, motivation, developing critical competencies, experience, among other relevant human qualities lead to organizational performance. Table 1 summarized the background of the participants, and confirmed that they were qualified to make meaningful contributions to the achievement of the research objectives. Table 2 explained the responses of the participants to the research questions. With a grand mean score of 3.65 over a decision score of 3.00 the analysis showed that SHRM explains BP. Also, the regression result in tables 3-5 support the findings in table 2, specifically as in table 3. For example, the coefficient of correlation of the model R, is.891 which showed that there is strong relationship between dependent and independent variables used in the model. Coefficient of determination R^2 , is.794 which showed that the independent variables explain about 80 percent variance in the dependent variable. The goodness-of-fit test of the model is also good with the adjusted R^2 value of.642. The F-test and t-test confirm the adequacy of the regression model. Therefore, H_0 : was rejected and H_1 : accepted. This new result supports the earlier findings of Noe, et al [32] among others, that strategic HRM leads to organizational performance. This is the objective of the study.

4.2. Scope for Further Study

Further study should examine the role of management-labour relationship in talent retention. This may help in determining the basis for retaining high quality talent in Nigerian organizations.

4.3. Recommendations

- i. Organizations should constantly conduct environmental analysis to explore the need for high quality manpower necessary for business performance.
- ii. Organizations must use good strategic HRM inventory to reduce the frequent cases of overstaffing and understaffing which negatively affect both organizational and economic growth.
- iii. Analyzing and designing job help in matching the *right man* with the *right job* and should be employed for desirable business performance.

5. Conclusion

Business survival or profitability rests on the quality of its human capital which is responsible for co-ordinating other resources for the optimal enterprise performance. This is so because the human resource ultimately engineers the use of the applicable information and communication technology (ICT) needed for the achievement of corporate objectives. SHRM is a business strategy that focuses on long-term sustainability of the business through the use of capable human beings in the organization. It is a strategy that enhances the recruitment, selection, development, compensation and maintenance of people to serve as a catalyst for business performance. 86 individuals participated in the study that employed the exploratory research design. Data generated and analyzed found that SHRM has strong positive association with BP. This is the interest of the study.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Biography



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