TALENT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATIVENESS OF TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between talent management and organizational innovativeness of Telecommunication companies in Rivers State. The Resource-advantage theory was adopted as the base line theory to underpin the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable, and the cross sectional research design was used for the study, while the study elements were twenty four (24) managers drawn from four (4), major telecommunication companies in Rivers State. The census method was adopted as the sampling procedure; hence, the population size was also the sample size. The study used primary data, which was collected with the questionnaire instrument administered to 24 managers of the GSM telecommunication companies, and was analysed with the descriptive and inferential statistics, more specifically, the Spearman Ranking Order Correlation Coefficient was used to analysed the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable. From the test of the hypothesis, it was found that, there is positive significant relationship between talent management and product innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State and also there is a significant relationship between talent management and process innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State. And based on the findings, it was concluded that it was concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between talent management and organizational innovativeness of telecommunication companies in Rivers State, and hence it was recommended that telecommunication Companies in Rivers State should put more emphasis on the human capital approach to gain innovativeness in their industry

Keywords: Talent management, organizational innovativeness, product innovativeness and process innovativeness.

INTRODUCTION

The company wants employees who work seriously with their abilities to get good work results. Without good performance from all employees, success in achieving goals will also be difficult to achieve. Understanding performance (performance) is a description of the level of achievement of the implementation of a program of activities or policies in realizing the goals, objectives, vision, and mission of the organization as outlined through the strategic planning of an organization. Therefore, without the goals and targets set in the measurement, then the performance of a person or organizational performance may not be known if there is no benchmark for success. (Moeheriono, 2014: 95).

The process of implementing good talent management will certainly have a positive impact on the development and growth of employee performance in the field approach applied theory employee performance development is needed to produce good organizational performance as well. According to Sedarmayanti (2017), performance is not a characteristic of a person, such as talent or ability, but is the embodiment of talent or ability itself. This opinion shows that performance is an embodiment of ability in the form of real work. In implementation in the field, optimizing employee performance is needed in order to maintain the existence of the company in the long term and sustainably.

The practice of talent management itself includes three aspects of organizational activities consisting of working culture, working conditions, and talent development (Benitez-amado, Llorens-montes, & Fernandez-perez; 2015). The success of the organization in building the three aspects of talent management has an impact on increasing the work ability of employees (Van Zyl et al., 2017). Thus, the implementation of talent management will have an impact on increasing competence an employee.

A company's ability to innovate is the most important factor in competitive advantage in highly volatile market conditions. The digital capabilities of innovation lead organizations to develop innovations continuously to respond to the changing market environment and are embedded with all the strategies, systems and structures that support innovation in an organization (Gloet & Samson, 2016). Digital innovation capability is the ability to develop products or services in accordance with market demand by implementing processes appropriately and quickly in response to technological changes and unexpected opportunities by competitors.

Innovative organizations must be able to improve digital innovation capabilities both in terms of individuals and the organization itself. One of the impacts of digital innovation capabilities is a change in the type of innovation (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2017). Baldwin (2015) in his research states that larger companies are more innovative than smaller companies, because they have more ease of access to financing, can spread fixed costs of innovation in aspects of organizational activity consisting of working culture, working conditions, and talent development. Benitez-amado, Llorens-montes, & Fernandez-perez; 2015).

Innovativeness is instrumental to the success of organizations especially where individuals in the firm go out of their way to identify the best way to satisfy the needs of their customers. Darroch and McNaughton (2002), asserts that innovativeness offers the best tools that can help firms to remain competitive in the ever-evolving business environment. Today's customer is demanding unique products that have been customized to meet individual needs and sales solutions that create a long-lasting relationship.

It is imperative that telecommunication companies that have incompetent managers, technicians and successors are already doomed for failure. Therefore, it is important for these companies to understand the concept of talent management, its process (which includes talent acquisition; talent development and; talent retention), its benefits and its challenges (Beheshtifar & Nekoie-Moghadam, 2011; Ahmadi, Ahmadi & Abbaspalangi, 2012; Tetik, 2016; Wahba, 2016). It is also important for these companies to compare predetermined organizational goals and objectives with the output and potentials of supposed successors through performance management to select those who are good enough to hold critical positions in the organization. In this process, there arises the need to plan, monitor and evaluate workers' performance to determine and reward the under-performers, average-performers and over-performers (Qureshi *et al.*, 2010). Having proper knowledge of these dimensions of succession planning therefore has its effect on business leaders, especially in the aspect of preventing those who do not possess the skills, ability and behaviour that are required to lead, utilize information and (or) make rational decisions from occupying critical positions in the organization. Despite the place of succession planning in the dynamics of organizational innovativeness, most telecommunication companies in Rivers State seem not to be actively taking part in planning for their succession and this could account for many dead firms after the death of their founding fathers.

Though several empirical studies have been done on talent management, for instance, Tunje (2014) examined the relationship between talent management and employee performance in Kenya's major media firms. Eshiteti (2013) investigated how talent management programs in Nigeria sugar companies influenced staff retention and performance. Chikumbi (2012) researched on talent management and worker retention at the Bank of Zambia. Nicholas (2012) investigated on the relationship between people management methods, talent management also, Lempaka (2018) looked into the effect of talent management on employee retention and Festus (2017) Investigated on talent management and Organizational Competitiveness of telecommunication companies in Rivers State. However, none of this empirical investigation researched on talent management and Organizational Innovativeness of telecommunication companies in Rivers State, which has created a lacuna in literature, hence, in order to fill this gap, the study examined the relationship between talent management and organizational innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State. From the purpose of this study, the researcher’s study objective is to examine the relationship between talent management and two identified measures (i.e. product and process innovativeness) of organizational innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

In line with the purpose the study and research objective, the following research questions were raised:

i. How does talent management relate with product innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State?

ii. How does talent management relate with process innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework showing the relationship between Talent Management and organizational Innovativeness of Telecommunication companies in Rivers State as in figure 1.

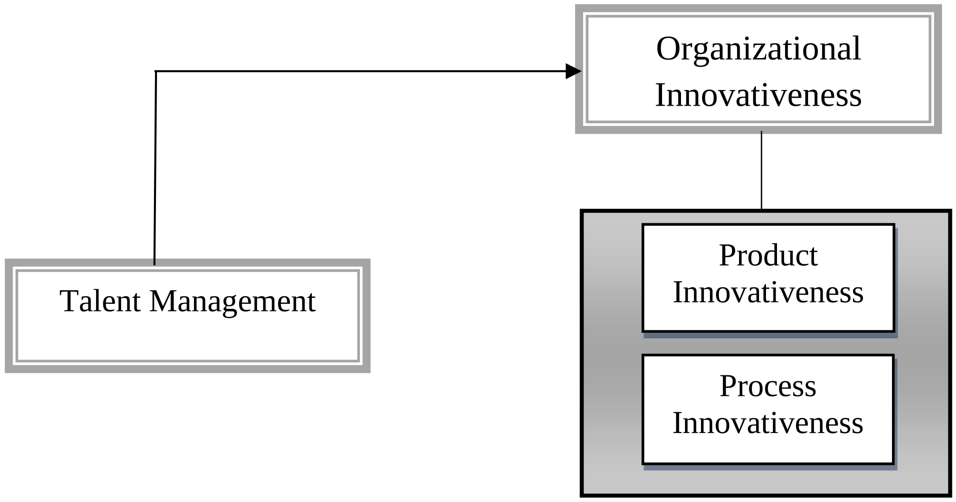

Figure: 1: Conceptual Framework of Talent Management and Organizational Innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State

Source: Desk Research (Hall *et al*., 2009; Roman *et al.,* 2012 and Chuang (2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Reviews

Since the major variables of this study are talent management and organizational innovativeness, the researcher adopted the Resource Advantage Theory of Competition as the baseline theory of the study.

Resource Advantage Theory of Competition

Resource-advantage theory as proposed by Hunt & Morgan, (1997) is articulated to management, marketing and other social sciences and it is drawn from the resource-based view of the firm (Hunt & Morgan, 1997). Implicit in this theory is the fact that competitive advantage of the firm is derived from resource heterogeneity and that the value of a resource to a firm is seen in terms of its potential to yield competitive differentiation to enhance performance outcomes (Hunt, 2000). Griffith and Yalcinkaya (2010) indicates that organizational resources which are capable of influencing competitiveness and performance are of two categories which are the 'tangible entities' and the 'intangible entities'. The tangible resources therefore include financial resources, physical resources and legal resources while the intangible resources include human resources, organizational resources, informational resources and relational resources.

Relational resources are the firm's stock of relationships with task factors such as customers, suppliers, competitors, unions and governments; organizational resources are the firm's policies, cultural routines and innovativeness such as marketing competency, research and development capabilities and learning capabilities; and lastly, informational resources refer to a firm's information regarding its own products, production processes and market, as well as those of its competitors, hence, the resource advantage theory enables organizational innovativeness.

Conceptual Review

Talent Management

The awareness of talent management has grown substantially over the last two decades due to changing trends in the corporate world; it is now considered as one of the most future-oriented practices by Human Resource researchers and practitioners (Ganaie & Haque, 2017). It is imperative that when people are fit into positions that they do not have enough competence to handle the results are usually negative, leading to more hiring, training and spending on the part of the organization. (Deshmukh, 2012).

A definition of the construct by Rothwell (2008), is a process of attracting the best people, developing the best people and retaining the best people. According to Berger and Berger (2003), talent management is a process of proactively identifying, selecting and nurturing key performers, the sourcing, development and allocation of replacements for key personnel and the allocation of resources to key talent, contingent on their potential value to the firm. Another definition of talent management sees it as the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing individuals to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent people and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

The concept of talent management lacks a definite framework and as such many researchers have proposed models for it. Ahmadi *et al.* (2012) posits that different perspectives of talent management have been produced which include; the culture perspective which goes beyond a certain way of thinking within a set of activities, the process perspective which refers to a set of processes required for promotion of individual competence within an organization and the human resources planning perspective which refers to the talent for identifying right individuals, adjusting them with right jobs, in a right time and for doing right things. Other talent management perspectives include the competitive perspective which is based on ideas emanating from the talent management impression of talent diagnosis, the development perspective which is focusing its attention on the models for high-potential employees' rapid development and the change management perspective which is used as a tool in favour of talent management within every organization.

According to Beheshtifar and Nekoie-Moghadam (2011), an important point of talent management is that its formation is different at organizational levels. At the lower level, no strategy, policy or formal developed activity exist. While at a higher level, there is an increased need for talent management strategy which is specified through the organization's strategy and by so doing, individual and group talents are identified at this level. Deshmukh (2012), proposed that talent management involves the interrelationship between manpower planning, performance management, rewards and incentives, motivation, succession planning, and leadership development. In another view, talent management systematically involves talent acquisition, talent development and talent retention (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2012; Tetik, 2016; Wahba, 2016). Lastly, Ganaie and Haque (2017) opined that talent management entails competency focus, talent pooling, talent investment and talent retention. This study will however focus on the framework used by Ahmadi et al. (2012), Tetik (2016) and Wahba (2016) because it has a broader scope that accommodates traits of the other two frameworks.

Organizational Innovativeness

Schumpeter (1934), defines innovation as encompassing the entire process, starting from an idea continuing through all the steps to reach a marketable product that changes the economy. He saw innovation as a process that takes an invention and develops it to a marketable product and service that changes the economy. Considering the definition given above, Schumpeter took into account only a few products to be innovative. It implies that innovation only revolves around product innovation ignoring other services that can actually contribute positively to the organization and the economy as a whole. This definition is less relevant to the public service and other services providing firms that deal with intangible products. Schumpeter proposed five issues of innovation in his definition (Vyas, 2009): (1) creation of new products or high quality improvements in existing products; (2) use of a new process: (3) new market openings: (4) development of new sources of raw-materials and other inputs; as well as (5) new forms of industrial organizations. The literature on innovation has a very long history. The early research on innovation was intended to address the organization’s ability to respond and adapt to internal and external changes, Burn & Stalker 1961; Hull & Hage, 1982). Later works on innovation focused more on pro-active innovation and distinguished between types of innovation. Emphasis was on organization’s ability to promote both process and product innovation, regardless of an immediate need for change (Kanter, 1988).

Innovativeness is instrumental to the success of organizations especially where individuals in the firm go out of their way to identify the best way to satisfy the needs of their customers. Darroch and McNaughton (2002), asserts that innovativeness offers the best tools that can help firms to remain competitive in the ever-evolving business environment. Today’s customer is demanding unique products that have been customized to meet individual needs and sales solutions that create a long-lasting relationship.

Innovativeness is the mean and process through which innovation is achieved and known as a determinant of performance (Pesamaa, Shoham & Ruvio, 2011). Rogers described “innovativeness is the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than any other member of the system and as such "innovativeness" indicates behavioural change. The long-term success of firm depends on its capability in maintaining sustainable innovation. However, there is gap in literature about what constitute innovation capabilities in organization and how it can be developed and made sustainable.

Measures of Organizational Innovativeness.

Product Innovativeness.

Product innovation is the introduction of a good or service that is new or significantly improved regarding its characteristics or intended uses; including significant improvements in technical specifications, components and materials, incorporated software, user friendliness or other functional characteristics (OECD Oslo Manual, 2005). Damanpour (1990) defines product innovation as the introduction of a new or significantly improved product or service that advances the range and quality of the product that is offered currently. Product innovation is considered an obvious means of generating revenue and thus improving performance.

Camison and Lopez (2010) state that product innovation not only acts as a means of improving and safeguarding quality but also for cost saving. It is further lauded for retaining and growing the competitive position of a firm, as well as retaining a strong market presence. Products that are constantly improved are particularly important for long term business growth and performance (Bayus, Erickson & Jacobson, 2003). Product innovation is prevalent among new entrants in any industry as it has been used to boost their popularity in the market in a surprising short time (Hult *et al.*, 2004). It is used as a business strategy for any business trying to acquire a larger market share too as product innovations are believed to attract diverse customers with varied needs (Oke *et al.*, 2007). Some enabling factors of product innovation have been identified in literature. Marketing orientation, defined as the firm's culture that creates the necessary behavior for the creation of superior value for buyers and continuous superior firm performance is said to positively affect innovation as it boosts innovation (Cano, Carrillat & Jaramillo, 2004). In the works of (Elbaz et al., 2014), Product innovation, as the name suggests, "reflects change in the end product or service offered by the organizations, whereas process innovation represents changes in the way firms produce end products or services" (Utterback cited in Cooper, 1998).

Product innovation is the introduction of a good or service that is new or has significantly improved characteristics or intended uses. In SMEs, not only the R&D staff but also the owners may play a major role in acquiring and applying the new knowledge for product innovation (Migdadi, 2009, Omerzel & Antoncic, 2008). Product innovation requires appreciation of customer needs, design and production while innovation process is linked to the application of technology to improve efficiency in the development and commercialization of the product, (Alegre *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, theories of organizational innovation argue that information imported from sources outside an organization facilitate the creation of new ideas and enhance product innovation.

Process Innovativeness

Process innovation focus on the processes by which the products/services are created or delivered. Therefore, it consists in the implementation of new or improved ways of production and delivery services. In business, it can be based on the idea to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, either a diversification or cost leadership strategy. Over the years we have seen how process innovation influences business, for instance the famous term "Lean manufacturing" implemented by Toyota, the world's largest automaker, and which consists in incrementing customer value by reducing their seven kinds of waste.

Process innovation is the introduction of a new method of production, not yet tested in the industry (Schumpeter, 1934). Process innovation has also been defined as the process of reengineering and enhancing the internal operation and capabilities of business process (Rosli & Sidek, 2013). Such processes involve manufacturing, technical design, management and commercial activities. It includes new procedures, policies, organisational forms and knowledge embodied in products, distribution channels, applications as well as customer expectations, preferences and needs (Rosli & Sidek, 2013). According to Kiveu (2017), process innovation involves "the implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software in auxiliary support activities, like purchasing, accounting, computing and maintenance. Such innovations can involve significant changes in the equipment and software used in services-oriented firms or in the procedures or techniques that are employed to deliver services. Process innovations are intended to decrease unit costs of production or delivery, to increase quality, or to produce or deliver new or significantly improved products (Kiveu, 2013).

A process innovation facilitates methods, procedures, designs and techniques to produce quality goods (output) from inputs resources. Norman (2012) noted that there is no product that is produce that will not follow an established standard. This standard could refer to the method, design or specification that the raw materials will go through before it finally comes out as products. We can say that the outcome of any product is determined by the process adopted to create or product such goods. Kotler (2011) argued the process that brings a product should be robust enough to ensure quality products at the final production stage. The ability of the organizations to produce goods that will appeal to customers remains a very fundamental challenge. Organizations can thrive or fail at this point should there be uncontrollable failure in the production process (Gabriel, 2017). A typical production process involves three elements of inputs, transformation and output. The inputs may comprise men, machine, materials, money and information. The transportation may comprise conversion methods, techniques and factory configuration and packaging (Gabriel, 2017).

Empirical Review

Talent Management and Organizational Innovativeness

Talent management is considered a form of investment because talented individuals are viewed as the core source of innovation and social development (Bradley, 2016). The practices of talent management are positively associated with improving innovation of institutional performance. These practices play an essential role in nurturing the appropriate conditions for channeling and motivating employees towards the improvement of innovation activities (Alma, Al-Shalabi & Aljamal, 2013). The attraction, development and retention which are key practices of talent management are strategically the keys of innovation to growth and success, as a competitive advantage can be maintained by attracting, developing and retaining highly qualified individuals in key positions (Gateau & Simon, 2016). According to Alma *et al.* (2013), talent management can affect and adjust the behaviours and abilities of individuals to innovate. Talented individuals have become a competitive weapon and resource of innovation for institutions in obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage (Chadee & Raman, 2012). Highly qualified employees constitute a critical resource of creativity, innovation and therefore future revenues for institutions (Kim, Williams, Rothwell & Penaloza, 2014). In addition, increase in the strategic importance of human resources management for competitive advantage can be achieved by talented individuals and as a result, innovation is a complicated task, which requires high professional ability in knowledge-intensive positions (Kong, Chadee & Raman, 2013). Hence, talented individuals play a significant role in an institution's survival and innovation in a dynamic environment (Kong, Chadee & Raman, 2013).

Mohammed, Hafeez-Baig and Gururajan (2018) studied talent management as a core source of innovation and social development in higher education and found that higher education institutions are aware of innovation sources that are currently used in managing talent in their divisions and faculties. These were (1) talent attraction (social domain and organisational excellence), (2) talent development (performance management, coaching talent and leadership development) and (3) talent retention (benchmarking, employee motivation, employee empowerment, nonmonetary rewards and job satisfaction). As a result, those individuals contribute significantly to a university's performance by attracting new students and securing funds for further research. These themes are positively associated with innovation speed of the higher education institutions. From the foregoing, it will be hypothesized that:

H_{01}: There is a significant relationship between talent management and product innovativeness of telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is a significant relationship between talent management and process innovativeness of telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the cross sectional research design which is a one shot study, for the purpose of data collection in the aforementioned area. According to Simon and Goes (2015), cross sectional studies are used when the researcher's intention is to collect data once at a time. It simply means seeking to figure out if two or more variables are related and, if so, in what way. The target population of this paper comprised of were twenty four (24) managers, which comprised six (6) managers drawn from each of the four (4) GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State. Each manager was drawn from human resource department, operations department, administrative department, sales department, marketing department and finance department, for each organization. The census method was adopted, hence, the entire population size was adopted as the sample size of the study. The primary data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that featured closed- ended questions on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The research questionnaire was validated using the content validity technique while reliability was tested with the use of Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient with coefficients of talent management, product innvovativeness and process innovativeness as 0.971, 0.986 and 0.974 respectively. The study applied both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis with hypotheses tested with the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient with aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Univariate Analysis

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for talent management.(n=23)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Talent Management	23	1.00	5.00	4.6941	1.03275
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Source: Research Data April 2023 and SPSS output version 23.0

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for talent management with mean scores of 4.6941 and standard deviation of 1.03275, depicts a moderate response.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Innovativeness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Product Innovativeness	23	1.00	5.00	3.7232	1.26916
Process Innovativeness	23	1.00	5.00	3.7232	1.26916
Valid N (listwise)	23				

Source: Research Data 2023, (SPSS output version 25.0)

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics for organizational innovativeness, which are product innovativeness, process innovativeness, and market innovativeness, with mean scores of 3.7232 and 3.7232, , respectively. Which implies that most of the respondents were in the agreed range of the measurement scale.

Bivariate Analysis

Relationship between Talent Management and Organizational Innovativeness

Table 3: Relationship between Talent Management and measures of Organizational Innovativeness

			Talent Management	Product Innovative-ness	Process Innovative-ness
Spearman's rho	Talent Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.545**	.798**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	23	23	23
	Product Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.645**	1.000	.834**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	23	23	23
	Process Innovative-ness	Correlation Coefficient	.798**	.834**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	23	23	23

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.02 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2023 and SPSS output version 23.0

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between talent management and product innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

From table 3, the correlation coefficient (r) shows that the correlation coefficient (*rho* value) is 0.545, which indicates that there is a moderate positive relationship between talent management and product innovativeness. And also, p 0.000<0.05, father affirm this relationship, indicating a significant relationship between talent management and product innovativeness. Therefore, based on this empirical finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between talent management and product innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between talent management and process innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

From table 3 the correlation coefficient (r) shows that the correlation coefficient (*rho* value) is 0.798, which indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between talent management and process innovativeness. And also, p 0.000<0.05, father affirm this relationship, indicating a significant relationship between talent management and process innovativeness. Therefore, based on this empirical finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between talent management and process innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The correlation matrix as displayed in table 3 revealed that talent management has a positive and moderate relationship with innovativeness with rho = .545 and p 0.000<0.05 significant level. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between talent management and product innovativeness of Telecommunication Companies in Rivers State. This implies that organizations that seek for future leadership and therefore engage in talent management activities invariably project themselves to come up with new products. In this case, having a deep talent pool would even increase the organization's chances of being inspired or creative with new ideas and product. In relation with the trait theory of leadership, according to Vaeyens *et al.* (2009); Ahmadi *et al.* (2012), getting the best people for a particular role involves identifying the interests and passion of the individual and properly motivating them to perform, through which work becomes as easy as play.

This talent management practice therefore rebounds in enabling the worker perform his/her duties effortlessly in a minimal time frame and in challenging work environments. In reality, people who are very much interested in shouldering responsibilities would therefore be the perfect people to be called upon when there is a need to make decisions in difficult situations. Given the correlation coefficient between talent management and product innovativeness, smart companies are beginning to customize their jobs to fit into the modern flex- time and flex-place trends through talent management. This finding supports the view of Biro (2013) which states that many organizations are beginning to customize their employee working environment to enable the creation of new products.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results generated from the tested hypotheses and the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is a significant and positive relationship between talent management and organizational innovativeness of telecommunication companies in Rivers State, and that the adoption of talent management by telecommunication companies has resulted to improved innovativeness. Hence, based on the conclusion, it was recommended that telecommunication Companies in Rivers State should put more emphasis on the human capital approach to gain innovativeness in their industry because the 'human capital' represents a creative force of any organization. Also, that talent management should be given priority in order to mitigate the negative effects of attrition and to enhance workers' capabilities to generate ideas that will improve organizational prod

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