

SELECTIVE HIRING AND EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOUR OF NON-TEACHING STAFF IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between selective hiring and employee innovative behaviour of non-teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was 19,477 non-teaching staff in seven in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size 392 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between selective hiring and employee innovative behaviour of non-teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria as moderated by organizational culture. Therefore, the study concludes that selective hiring positively enhances employee innovative behaviour in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. Hence, the study recommends that management of Federal Universities should invest in robust recruitment and selection processes that carefully evaluate candidates for their innovative thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and potential for creativity. This can be achieved through competency-based interviews, assessment centers, and the inclusion of innovative thinking assessments.

Keywords: Selective hiring, employee innovative behaviour, idea generation, idea promotion, idea realisation

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades, globalization and rapid technological advancements have raised a situation where organizations encounter challenges like varying customer demands and increased competition. To keep pace with these changes and to maintain a competitive edge, organizations need to innovate that is to explore

and implement new ideas. Organizations bring innovation in their product, service; introduce new technology, new managerial or administrative practices and bringing changes in other elements of the organization. To build innovative workplace employees are heavily relied upon and must bring innovations in their processes, methods and operations (Ramamoorthy, Patrick, Flood & Sardessai, 2005). In the present scenario, innovation is not confined to specialists, scientists and other research and development professionals but organizations for long-term success to encourage and develop the innovative potential of all of their employees. Innovative work behaviour (IWB) is described as the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, in order to benefit performance (Janssen, 2000). It helps to develop new and creative ideas and to encompass their implementation.

Encouraging employees to be innovative can be beneficial for organizations in many different ways. According Liu (2017) employees who are encouraged to be innovative can “improve the quality of services and operations, enhance the competitiveness of organizations, and increase organizational efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, innovative behaviour can help to foster creativity within the workplace, which can lead to new ideas that can help organizations to improve and grow. Additionally, encouraging innovative behaviour can help to motivate employees, which can lead to increased job satisfaction and higher performance from the workforce. In addition, encouraging innovative behaviour can also help organizations to better adapt to the changing market and customer needs. As Liu (2017:1) states, “innovative behavior can help organizations to adjust to uncertainty, to explore new business opportunities, and to develop new products and services for customers”. This can help organizations to stay ahead of their competitors and to remain relevant in the ever-changing business environment. One way of achieving this is for organisations to adopt lean human resource management practices.

Human resource management has undergone significant changes over the years, with one of the most influential being the development of lean HR management. This management philosophy emphasizes

efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and continuous improvement, while minimizing waste and maximizing productivity. One very important means to achieve the lean human resource management is through selective hiring.

Selective hiring plays a crucial role in shaping employee innovative behavior within organizations. According to Dhar (2015), selective hiring refers to the process of carefully identifying and recruiting individuals who possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and attributes to contribute to innovation within the organization. This process involves evaluating applicants based on their past experiences, educational background, and cognitive abilities. The impact of selective hiring on employee innovative behavior can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, by hiring individuals with a track record of innovative thinking, organizations can create a workforce that is more likely to generate and implement innovative ideas. Secondly, selective hiring ensures that employees possess the necessary competencies and capabilities required for innovation, such as problem-solving skills and creativity. This, in turn, promotes a culture of innovation within the organization as employees are more likely to engage in behaviors that support and foster innovation. Additionally, selective hiring helps to create a diverse workforce, bringing together individuals with different perspectives and backgrounds. This diversity of thought encourages the exchange of ideas and enhances the potential for innovative solutions to emerge. In conclusion, selective hiring has a significant impact on employee innovative behavior, leading to increased creativity, problem-solving abilities, and a culture of innovation within organizations (Dhar, 2015). The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between selective hiring and employee innovative behaviour of non-teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

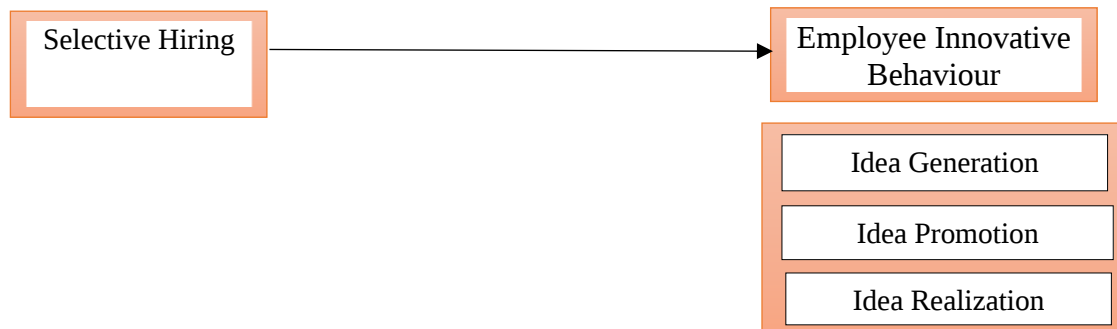


Figure 1: Relationship between selective hiring and employee innovative behaviour.

Source: Desk Research (2023)

The following Research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between selective hiring and idea generation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between selective hiring and idea promotion of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between selective hiring and idea realization of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Resource Based View Theory

The Resource Based View of the Firm was coined by Penrose (1959). RBV regards the firm as a bundle of resources and capabilities that are heterogeneously distributed across firms that persist over time (Ambrosine & Bowman, 2009). Academicians suggest that when a firm has resources which are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable, they can use them to implement value creation strategies that provide a sustainable competitive advantage (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). RBV originates in the strategy literature

(Wernefelt, 1984) which provides a useful framework for examining the development of management. This can be achieved by having critical resources that are firm-specific, valuable to customers, non –substitutable and difficult to imitate (Rugman & Verbeke, 2002).

Resource based view theory was employed with a major focus on how firm's resources and knowledge development affect performance (Kanyabi & Devi, 2012). It assumes that organization to achieve competitive advantage; it has to develop its resources. Other who expanded the theory were Wernerfelt (1984) and Helfat and Martin (2015). RBV emphasized resources and capabilities as the origin of competitive advantage. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) looked at maximizing long run profits through exploiting and developing firm resources. It characterizes resources as valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable. Firms generate rents through differences in information, luck and capabilities. The RBV approach sees firms with superior system and structures being profitable not because they engage in strategic investments but because they have markedly lower cost to offer. It focuses on the rents according to the owners of scarce firm-specific resources rather than the economic profits from market positioning. It puts vertical integration and diversification into a new strategic light (Ambrosine & Bowman, 2009).

Conceptual Review

Selective Hiring

Selective hiring is the act of recruiting candidates from a specific group, such as those with a specific skill set or those from an under-represented ethnicity (Stokes, 2019). Selective or targeted hiring involves developing recruitment strategies that are more proactive in their approach to attract well-qualified candidates with specific skill sets. Recruiting selectively requires more work to be done upfront before meeting with any potential candidates. In selective hiring, organisations begin by conducting a thorough job analysis of the positions they are trying to fill. The recruiter usually involves the hiring manager in the process to fully understand the job and any specific knowledge, skills or abilities that are required (Merkl & Van Rens, 2019).

Selective hiring refers to both recruitment and selection. Recruitment is the process of attracting potential job applicants who have the requisite skills so that they can apply for positions that have been advertised. Selection on the other hand refers to the process of picking the best-suited persons from a pool of applicants. Selective hiring, therefore, is about ensuring that the right people, with the right characteristics and knowledge and who can fit in the culture and climate of the organisation are in the right place (Huselid, 2010). Stokes (2019) opined that selective hiring yields profits boost employee productivity, increases organisational performance and reduces turnover. According to Collins and Clark (2003), selective hiring translates into sales growth. Successful hiring leads to the production of quality products and an increase in economic performance (Paul & Anantharaman, 2003).

In today's knowledge-based workforce, organisations are increasingly trying to fill specialized positions that require unique skill sets. Recruitment no longer consists of collecting resumes at a job fair and calling everyone who appears to meet the basic job requirements. For this reason, Human Resources departments are becoming more proactive through the use of selective hiring (Abduli, 2019). Once the major tasks of the position are identified, the type of candidates needed will become clear. The organisations do not underestimate the power of their current staff. Employee referrals, training and conferences, and networks of former employees can be useful tools to incorporate into the selective recruitment strategy (Butali & Njoroge, 2020).

Concept of Employee Innovative Work Behaviour

A comparatively new dimension of research emerged in the field of innovation in recent years is individual's future oriented and self-initiated behaviours. These actions are aimed at changing or bringing improvement in one's current situation (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006). Such behaviours include proactive work behaviour and innovative work behaviour (Janssen, 2000). The connotation of innovative behaviour is to generate innovative output and benefit to the organization. Employee's behaviours aimed towards making new products, processes and services are included in such behaviour (Scott and Bruce,

1994). Innovative work behaviour is more applied in nature as it is to result in innovative output. The two concepts of creativity and IWB are thought to be overlapped and used interchangeably by many researchers (De Jong, 2006). Innovative work behaviour is defined by De Jong (2006) as Individuals' behaviours directed toward the initiation and intentional introduction of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedure within a work role, group or organization.

Likewise, innovative work behaviour is generally outlined in the context of how individuals could facilitate the achievement of initiation and intentional introduction of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures (Leong & Rasli, 2014). Innovative work behaviour thus includes behaviour of employees that directly and indirectly encourages the development and introduction of innovations on the workplace (Spiegelaere, Gyes, Vandekerckhove, & Hootegeem, 2012). In current working environment, innovative work behaviour is one of the important factors for organizational growth and development in both private and public sectors (Abdullatif, Johari & Adnan, 2016). It is aligned with Hakimian et al. (2016) that innovative work behaviour can be as competitive advantage for an organization.

De Jong (2007) described innovative work behaviour (IWB) as individuals' behaviours directed towards the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organization) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures. According to Baer (2012) and Kanter (1988), IWB refers to the development and initiation of novel and useful ideas and implementing these ideas into new and improved products, services or ways of doing things. Rules and regulations and procedures are not sufficient to ensure effective employee behaviour in the workplace; there is always some need for discretionary innovative actions to adapt to new situations and unusual circumstances (Janssen, 2003). Especially the firms operating in technology domain should be more creative and innovative rather than they did in the past in order to survive, compete, grow and lead (Jung et al., 2003). IWB implies that individuals go beyond the scope of their job requirements to be innovative of their own free will. It includes idea generation as well as the types of behaviour needed to implement improvements that will enhance personal and/or business performance.

The construct of IWB thus captures both the initiation and implementation of ideas. In doing so, IWB differs from more limited constructs such as employee creativity which focuses on the discovery and generation of ideas (De Jong, 2007).

Measures of Employee Innovative Behaviours

Idea Generation

This dimension is premised on the belief that innovative behaviour begins with the ability of an individual to generate an idea (Yesil & Sozbilir, 2013). It is the creation of a new and original idea, which is useful to the organisation. In the views of (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010), idea generation is born out of existing challenges, unfilled gaps, and technological advancement. Scott and Bruce, 1994) opined that idea generation is not a controlled stage of the innovative process, as it is more focused on how to solve the observed problem through new methods. This stage allows for the development and experimenting of conceptualised methods. Janssen (2000) stated that among the determinants of success idea generation is the depth of knowledge and information, experience, and openness. Idea generation is better approached from a multi-access approach, as the problem may not be connected to a single defined and easily identified source (Wisse, Barelds & Rietzschel, 2015). Thus, it demands an in-depth understanding of the work function, the varying segments, and the operational intricacies that require a range of skills (Xerri & Brunetto, 2013). This dimension is the foundation for innovative behaviour and requires a new and distinct way of doing things is evolved to provide a solution to the observed organisational problem.

Idea Promotion

Janssen (2000) stated that secondary to idea generation is idea promotion, indicating that it is a vital component of individual innovative behaviour. It is the information and support stage of innovative behaviour, as at this stage, efforts are made towards ensuring that getting the necessary support for the implementation of the through sharing of the idea (Potočnik & Anderson, 2016). The idea is offered at this

stage and packaged for delivery to the organisation to get support for the acceptance of the idea. Janssen (2000) opined that to promote new ideas, it is expected that employees socialize, meet people higher and lower, little organisational politics, solicit support from friends, and sponsors to accept and key into the idea for acceptance and implementation.

Konermann (2012) stated that there is a need for work engagement to form a coalition and pressure the idea to see its full realization. Messmann and Mulder (2014) observed that at this stage it requires that the idea originator would have done their confirmation of the feasibility of the idea to bring result and as such should be confident of defending the idea. This because the persistence of the idea originator would make the support easy and further confirm the value attached to the idea. Lecturers need not more than their colleagues to support ideas that will make them more innovative. However, they must be ready to carry others along towards actualizing the goal. Once a new idea has been generated, it has to be promoted and championed as it will generally demand a change in the current ways of doing business that can meet resistance. This step implies coalition building (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010), promoting ideas to potential allies (Janssen, 2004) and finding sponsors (Scott & Bruce, 1994). Basically, this stage occurs when a service firm has decided on an idea. This means the idea (new service) will be converted into an actual result with a prior test before launching (De Jong, Den Hartog & Zoetermeer, 2003). The innovative work behaviour at this stage is also known as the convergent innovative work behaviour by De Jong, Den Hartog and Zoetermeer (2003). Furthermore, in this stage, it is necessary for knowledge workers need to become more conversant with results in the process of idea development and implementation (Mumford, 2000). When new service has been taken up and established as a status quo among the knowledge workers, the innovation process is said to have come to a conclusion (Kanter, 1988). Thus, given new idea, it has to be developed, tested and commercialized by the knowledge workers. In this study, implementation stage is defined as a convergent innovative work behaviour that comprised of two intertwined elements which are championing (idea promotion) and application (idea implementation) efforts.

Idea Realization

The final process in the innovative behaviour framework that takes into cognizance the transfer and reprocessing of ideas into expected outcomes that are to the benefit of the individual and the organisation (Janssen, 2000). The idea generated with the right support and promotion is further given life through implementation in the realization stage (Stoffers, Van der Heijden & Jacobs, 2018). The idea is completed at this stage, and it converted to the benefit of the organisation. The realization is the reality of the idea, and the feasibility of its application is known at this stage. Haapasaari, Engeström and Kerosuo (2018) state that there are several organisational issues that, however, hinders innovative behaviour. They indicated that scarce resources, organisational bureaucracy, lack of skilled employees and poor organisational culture are critical factors that often hinders idea realization in the organisation. Idea realization is a fundamental component in the three-stage ladder as the complex innovation process is broken down at this stage of the innovative behaviour in the organisation (Messmann & Mulder, 2011). It is the most demanding of the behavioural task in the innovative process, thus, requiring varying skills set, in-depth knowledge, and widening communications with other individuals in the organisation (Orth & Volmer, 2017).

The final task of the innovation process concerns idea realization by producing a prototype or model of the innovation that can be experienced and ultimately applied within a work role, a group or the total organization (Kanter, 1988 cited in Ömür, 2019). In the final step, implementing new ideas involves producing a prototype or model of the new product, technology or process (Janssen, 2004), testing and modifying the prototype (Scott & Bruce, 1994) and routinizing the new way of doing such that the innovation becomes part of the regular work processes of work groups or entire organizations (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Simple innovations are often completed by individual workers involved, while the accomplishment of more complex innovations usually requires teamwork based on a variety of specific knowledge, competence, and work roles (Kanter, 1988 cited in Ömür, 2019).

Empirical Review

Selective Hiring and Employee Innovative Behaviour

Liao and Chuang (2004) carried out a multilevel investigation of factors influencing employee service performance and customer outcomes. This study examined the relationship between selective hiring practices and employee innovative behavior. Service performance has focused on either organization- or individual-level analysis. This multilevel study of 257 employees, 44 managers, and 1,993 customers from 25 restaurants demonstrated that both individual- and store-level factors were significantly associated with employee service performance. The findings suggested that organizations that employed selective hiring practices were more likely to have employees who demonstrated innovative behavior, which, in turn, had a positive impact on customer outcomes.

Collins and Smith (2006) examined Knowledge exchange and combination: The role of human resource practices in the performance of high-technology firms. This study explored the link between selective hiring practices and knowledge exchange and combination in high-technology firms. A field study of 136 technology companies showed that commitment-based human resource practices were positively related to the organizational social climates of trust, cooperation, and shared codes and language. The findings indicated that organizations that employed selective hiring practices were more successful in fostering knowledge exchange and combination among employees, leading to higher levels of innovation.

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between selective hiring and idea generation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between selective hiring and idea promotion of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between selective hiring and idea realisation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was 19,477 non-teaching staff in seven in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size 392 was determined using Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 Correlations matrix for selective hiring and measures of employee innovative behaviour

			Selective Hiring	Idea generation	Idea promotion	Idea realization
Spearman's rho	Selective Hiring	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.771**	.701**	.828**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	367	367	367	367
	Idea generation	Correlation Coefficient	.771**	1.000	.839**	.682**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	367	367	367	367
	Idea promotion	Correlation Coefficient	.701**	.839**	1.000	.657**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	367	367	367	367
	Idea realization	Correlation Coefficient	.828**	.682**	.657**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	367	367	367	367

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

Source: SPSS Output

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between selective hiring and idea generation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.771 on the relationship between selective hiring and idea generation. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in idea generation was as a result of the adoption of selective hiring. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between selective hiring and idea generation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between selective hiring and idea generation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between selective hiring and idea promotion of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 1 also shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.701 on the relationship between selective hiring and idea promotion. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in idea promotion was as a result of the adoption of selective hiring. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between selective hiring and idea promotion of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between selective hiring and idea promotion of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between selective hiring and idea realisation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 1 shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.828 on the relationship between selective hiring and idea realisation. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the

variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in idea realisation was as a result of the adoption of selective hiring. Therefore, there is a very strong positive correlation between selective hiring and idea realisation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. From the result obtained, the sig- calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between selective hiring and idea realisation of non- teaching staff in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between selective hiring and the measures of employee innovative behaviour in non- teaching staff in Federal Universities, South-South, Nigeria. This finding corroborates the earlier results of the study Liao and Chuang (2004) who carried out a multilevel investigation of factors influencing employee service performance and customer outcomes and found that organizations that employed selective hiring practices were more likely to have employees who demonstrated innovative behavior, which, in turn, had a positive impact on customer outcomes. Moreso, the finding aligns with the previous finding of Collins and Smith (2006) who explored the link between selective hiring practices and knowledge exchange and combination in high-technology firms and found that organizations that employed selective hiring practices were more successful in fostering knowledge exchange and combination among employees, leading to higher levels of innovation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that selective hiring positively enhances employee innovative behaviour in Federal Universities in South-South, Nigeria. By carefully selecting candidates with the right skills, qualifications, and mindset, universities can create an environment that encourages and supports innovation among their employees. This can lead to the generation of new ideas, improved processes, and increased productivity within the institutions.

Therefore, the study recommends that management of Federal Universities should invest in robust recruitment and selection processes that carefully evaluate candidates for their innovative thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and potential for creativity. This can be achieved through competency-based interviews, assessment centers, and the inclusion of innovative thinking assessments.

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