

RECRUITMENT OUTSOURCING AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study adopted cross-sectional survey design. The population of the study comprised of four (4) licensed telecommunication firms in Nigeria operating in Rivers State. The entire population was studied using census method of sampling. Data for the study was generated through primary source. The main data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire. To ensure the validity of the instruments for this study, the content and face validity was adopted in ascertaining the extent to which the instrument can be said to be accurate and precise in the measurement of the variables under investigation. The reliability of the instrument for the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The bivariate analysis was carried out using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. It was concluded that recruitment outsourcing enhances sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that recruitment outsourcing and selection in an organization is the best for choosing high competent employees to work in an organization in order to improve the overall environmental, economic and social sustainability of the organization.

Keywords: Recruitment outsourcing, sustainability, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, social sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, organizational sustainability has become one of the most discussed topics in evaluating organizations, their activities, and environments. It refers to an actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). Organizational sustainability involves assessing activities, monitor growth and make the strategic changes that will subsequently lead to the realization and achievement of corporate goals. Increasing global competition has resulted in the need for organizations to outsource. With the dynamic environment, recruitment outsourcing turns to be an important tool as strategic management of firm (Leavy, 2024). Recruitment outsourcing refers to a procedure to transfer recruitment and selection activities to an external provider. The recruitment outsourcing activities are advertising, job fair hosting, applicant tracking and some of selection process such as extensive skill testing, organization and background testing.

Outsourcing is relatively a new phenomenon which is becoming very popular in modern organizations. It was established that Outsourcing Recruitment process is mainly used to increase the efficiency of the organization through managerial time saving along with the cost (Corbett, 2014). Additionally, a great advantage of HR recruitment outsourcing is a new way of acquiring talent. In most research it is assumed that recruitment outsourcing will support modernize business's recruitment job and make it integrated and been efficient. It is very critical aspect of recruitment outsourcing which directly affects business quality and performance (Braun & Pull, 2011). In addition, Elsaid (2013) suggested that outsourcing of recruitment process can create competitive advantage for business operating in Nigeria. Previous studies show that recruitment outsourcing can be significantly reduced costs (Seth & Sethi, 2011). Recruitment outsourcing is aimed at enhancing organizational efficiency through saving managerial time and costs (Corbett, 2014).

Several researches have been conducted on outsourcing activities locally and internationally. For instance, Kiptum (2014) analyzed the effects of outsourcing on organizational productivity. On focus were selected parastatals in Kenya. The findings revealed that contracting out was the most common method used in outsourcing in surveyed parastatals. Jamil and Naeem (2013) assessed the impact of outsourcing external recruitment process on employee commitment and loyalty. The study findings indicated that outsourcing external recruitment agency had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty. The overall shortage of literature and mixed result on the nature of the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and organizational sustainability is problematic as organizations are confronted with divergent opinions and unsubstantiated claims on how employees perceive outsourcing activities. However, studies hitherto conducted have failed to clearly outline the implication of outsourcing manpower activities on organizational sustainability. It is in light of this that this study was carried out to examine the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The specific objectives for the study were to:

- i. Examine the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and environmental sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii. Determine the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and economic sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and social sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

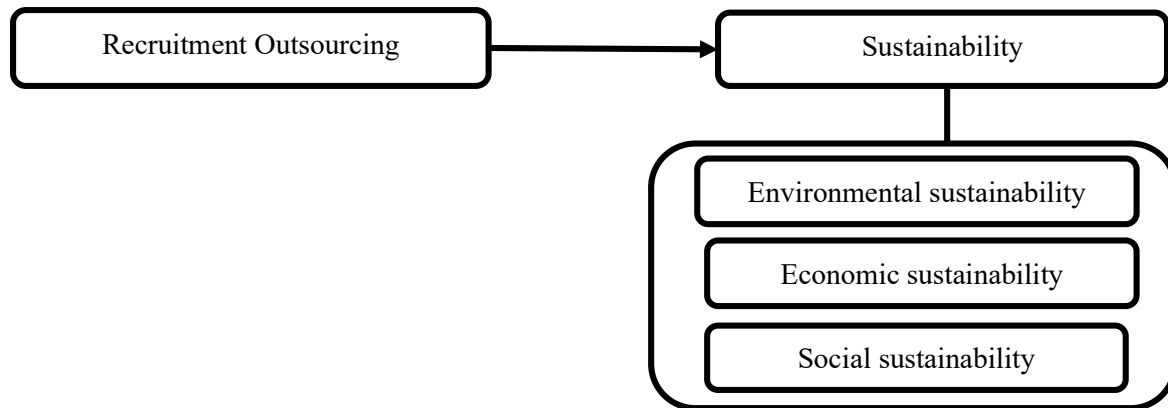


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and sustainability

Source: Desk Research (2025), with measures of sustainability adapted from the work of Richard *et al.* (2009).

Research Questions

In the effort to accomplish the objectives of this research work, the following research questions were put forward to help the researcher achieve its set goals:

- iv. What is the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and environmental sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- v. What is the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and economic sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- vi. What is the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and social sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were given in null form so as to arrive at a logical conclusion and to achieve its stated objectives.

- Ho:1** There is no significant relationship between recruitment outsourcing and environmental sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:2** There is no significant relationship between recruitment outsourcing and economic sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- Ho:3** There is no significant relationship between recruitment outsourcing and social sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

This study was guided by the Resource-Based View Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

Resource-Based View Theory

This theory was propounded by Wernerfelt, (1984). The theory argues that a firm has the ability to achieve and sustain competitive advantage if it possesses resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable. Not all resources are strategically relevant within an organization. The goal of an organization is to ensure it has access to and control of valuable resources by developing and securing all the relevant resources either internally or externally. If a firm possesses critical resources that have strategic value, it is better to retain the activity in-house. Achieving a sustainable competitive advantage lies at the heart of much of the literature in strategic management and strategic marketing. The resource-based view offers strategists a means of evaluating potential factors that can be deployed to confer a competitive edge. A key insight arising from the resource-based view is that not all resources are of equal importance, nor do they possess the potential to become a source of sustainable competitive advantage. The sustainability of any competitive advantage depends on the extent to which resources can be imitated or substituted. Barney and others point out that understanding the causal relationship between the sources of advantage and successful strategies can be very difficult in practice. In the resource-based view, strategists select the strategy or competitive position that best exploits the internal resources and capabilities relative to external opportunities.

This theory was relevant to the present because recruitment outsourcing activities will contribute to a firm's sustainability. Through recruitment outsourcing, the oil and gas companies will be able to ensure proper attraction; development and retention of qualified and experienced staff with desired skills and knowledge. This will give the oil and gas firm a competitive edge over other firms which might be competing for the same category of employees.

Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory was put forward by George Casper Homan (1958). The social exchange theory explains interpersonal relationships by positing the economic cost benefit analysis as precondition for social engagement and exchange. The theory presupposes that the exchange of resources (material or social) is a basic form of human interaction. Social exchange is an ongoing reciprocal process in which actions are contingent on rewarding reactions from others (Gottschalk and Solli-Saether, 2005).

Social exchange theory emphasizes the importance of interpersonal trust in alliances and information exchange (Gulati, 2010). A social exchange takes place within the employment relationship when a psychological contract is created containing the perceived commitments or promises that employees believe their organizations have made to them. The concept of "breach" described by (Morrison and Robinson, 2010) is "the cognition that one's organization has failed to meet one or more obligations within one's psychological contract in a manner commensurate with one's contributions." The possibility of a breach of contract may negatively impact employees' feelings, attitudes, and behaviors.

The above theory is applicable to the study as it highlights the need for the organization to enable its resources meet two of the outlined characteristics. For an organization to remain competitive and thus improve its performance, its employees must be well managed so as to become valuable and costly to imitate. There is a need therefore for an organization to enable its employees which is the most important resource that they have, to meet the criteria. This can only be achieved through employing of effective employee development so as to make them different and unique from the employees of other organizations.

Conceptual Review

Recruitment Outsourcing

Recruitment outsourcing refers to a procedure to transfer recruitment and selection activities to an external provider. The recruitment outsourcing activities are advertising, job fair hosting, applicant tracking and some of selection process such as extensive skill testing, organization and background testing. It is a form of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) where an employer transfer all or part of its recruitment processes to an external service provider (Valerie, 2018). Recruitment outsourcing is also a strategy by which businesses employ an external agency to oversee and conduct the recruitment of their personnel. According to Sophie (2021) recruitment outsourcing is a type of outsourcing through which an organization outsources some part or all of its recruitment processes to an external agency. It is primarily an extension of a human resources department for your business. Joana (2022) posited that recruitment outsourcing (RO) is a workforce solution in which a business transfers all or part of its permanent recruitment to an external provider. An RPO provider is responsible for the management of the permanent recruitment within a business, and typically has outsourced recruiters based onsite — embedded within the HR or people function of the business. Recruitment outsourcing (RO) involves an employer turning the responsibility of finding potential job candidates over to a third-party service provider. Recruitment outsourcing method is designed to bring qualified candidates to a potential employer with minimal involvement from HR staff (Fiona-Sophie, 2015).

Recruitment outsourcing is aimed at enhancing organizational efficiency through saving managerial time and costs (Corbett, 2004). As such Jamil and Naeem (2013) assessed the impact of outsourcing external recruitment process on employee commitment and loyalty. The telecommunication sector of Pakistan was considered for the study. Questionnaire survey was used to collect data. The study findings indicated that outsourcing external recruitment agency had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty. It was therefore generally concluded that outsourcing recruitment process had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty.

Sustainability

Sustainability is one of the most imperative measures in evaluating organizations, their activities, and environments. It refers to an actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). Sustainability is “an economic, social, and ecological concept Boudreau and Ramstad (2015).

Organizational sustainability involves assessing activities, monitor growth and make the strategic changes that will subsequently lead to the realization and achievement of corporate goals. Richard et al. (2009) organizational sustainability focuses on three major areas: (a) financial performance and investment; (b) shareholder expectation and economic value; and (c) production capability. Organizational Sustainability (OS) is broadly defined as an overall

proactive strategic stance of firms towards the integration of organizational economic, environmental and social objectives and practice in their strategic, tactical and operational levels (Singh, Chakraborty, & Roy, 2016). There is little in terms of how to systematically articulate these concepts so they become organizational actions and decisions (Munck, Munck, & Souza, 2011). As such, a set of tools become a necessity for the adequate management of OS, and the organizational competence approach has proven to be sufficient, as demonstrated in other empirical works (Souza, 2010; Bansi, 2013).

Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability can be defined as the combination of several organizational competencies or the overall performance of the organization to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the products (Lam and Lai, 2015). The implications of four primary natural resources, including air, water, soil, and minerals, as well as energy resources, are being monitored (GRI, 2012). Environmental sustainability lays emphasis on ecosystem integrity, carrying capacity and biodiversity. Serageldin (2013) averred that environmental sustainability demands maintaining natural capital as both a provider of economic inputs referred to as ‘source’ and an absorber known as ‘sink’ of economic output called ‘waste’. Goodland (2015) opined that at the ‘sink site’, waste sent out or produced from industrial operation must be controlled so that they don’t exceed the capacity of the environment to absorb them without impairment. Organizations aligned with Environmental Sustainability only consume natural resources at a rate below its natural regeneration capacity, or below the production rate of substitutable resources (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2022).

Leading thinkers suggest that to stand any chance of achieving environmental sustainability, businesses including MSMEs, need to move with a sense of right mindsets, to exploit the natural environment to a worldview of mutual interdependence and radical eco-innovation. Many organizations are now taking on this challenge. The environmental sustainability encompasses the prevention of the impacts created by the organization on the natural system composed of living and non-living beings (Emetuei & Ahaiwe, 2018).

Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability is defined as the maintenance of non-dealing reduction capital stocks (Spangenberg, 2015; in Kalua, 2015). But in relation to this study, the meaning of economic sustainability as defined by Stavins et al. (2013), will be more meaningful. They defined economic sustainability as “the maintenance of the present well-being by paying attention to inter-temporal distributional equity, dynamic efficiency and international equity”. Azapagic (2012) argued that, achievement in economic viability serves as the most important part of organizational sustainable development’ since benefits that comes from job growth will afford society and the organization the possibility of improving their living conditions. Economic sustainability is one of the measuring indicators of sustainability (IISD, 2015).

Economic sustainability, according to Doane and MacGillivray (2011) is integrally linked to the environmental and social outcomes an organization achieves. All three overlap and they interact. While a good financial and broader economic performance might mean that firms survive in the short-term, it does not necessarily secure a long-term economic future, nor does it guarantee positive environmental or social outcomes. Consequently, those firms that can effectively manage their environment and the social will also help make themselves economically sustainable (Doane & MacGillivray, 2011).

Social Sustainability

Social sustainability is a process for creating sustainably, successful places that promote wellbeing, by understanding what people need from the places in which they live and work (Woodcraft, 2015). Social sustainability encompasses the notions of equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation, sharing, cultural identity; and institutional stability (Singh, Chakraborty, & Roy 2016). Wanamaker, (2018) assert that it is a process of framework that promotes wellbeing within an organization's own members while also supporting the ability of future generations to maintain a healthy community. Social sustainability encompasses the impact of corporations on people and society - whether corporate, public sector, educational or nonprofit, it improves the lives of their employees, stakeholders, customers and the community in which they operate (Benjojo, 2010).

Modern companies are paying special attention to the social aspects of sustainable development due to the pressure from stakeholders ranging from environmental to societal issues (Yawar and Seuring, 2017). Aspects of social sustainability can address both internal and external human resource concerns. Internal human resources may include job security, accommodation, health and safety, and capacity building (Ahmadi et al., 2017).

Empirical Review

Recruitment outsourcing is aimed at enhancing organizational sustainability through saving managerial time and costs (Corbett, 2014). As such Jamil and Naeem (2013) assessed the impact of outsourcing external recruitment process on employee commitment and loyalty. The objective of the study was to determine how external recruitment process enhances employee commitment and loyalty in telecommunication sector. The telecommunication sector of Pakistan was considered for the study. Questionnaire survey was used to collect data. The study findings indicated that outsourcing external recruitment agency had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty. It was therefore generally concluded that outsourcing recruitment process had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty. This study is different from the present study as it is carried out in the oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. However, the study will utilize the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (R^o) in testing the relationship between the dimensions of manpower outsourcing and measures of organizational sustainability

Sunita and Sudhinder (2017) studied the impact of recruitment process outsourcing on the human resource planning and development of an organization. Objectives of the study were to determine the impact of recruitment process outsourcing on the human resource planning and development of an organization. Exploratory type of research was adopted followed by descriptive type of research. Stratified probability sampling technique was used for the identification of a representative sample. The researcher used questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was sent to 110 professionals using RPO, 65 responded, only 38 were found relevant for the study undertaken. The questionnaire had close ended and open-ended questions both. The collected data were statistically analyzed by using Chi-Square test and SPSS statistical package. The researcher also calculated the percentages of the responses given by the respondents. The result indicated that there is a significant impact of recruitment process outsourcing on the human resource planning and development. It was concluded that there is a significant impact of recruitment process outsourcing on the human resource planning and development. This study is different from the present study as it adopted a correlational design. However, the study will utilize the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (R^o) in testing the relationship between the dimensions of manpower outsourcing and measures of organizational sustainability.

Syamsir (2019) analyzed the influence of integrity on employee performance in Koto Tengah Sub-District, Padang City, West Sumatra. This study uses a quantitative approach. The population in this study consisted of 80 respondents and was used as a sample using saturated sampling techniques. The type of data consists of primary data and secondary data. Data were collected through a questionnaire with a Likert scale measurement and analyzed with simple linear regression. The results of this study indicate that employee integrity has a significant positive influence on employee performance in Koto Tengah Sub-District, Padang City.

Syamsir (2020) analyzed the influence of integrity and loyalty on employee performance in the secretariat office of Sijunjung, West Sumatra. This research used a quantitative approach that aims to determine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. Population in this study consisted of all civil servants at the secretariat office of Sijunjung, West Sumatra. The sampling technique in this study was a random sample with a sample of 120 respondents. Data were collected through the questionnaire, and then the data were analyzed with regression test. The results of this study indicated that integrity and loyalty both partially and simultaneously, had a significant and positive effect on employee performance at the secretariat office of Sijunjung, West Sumatra.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The target population of this study consisted of four (4) licensed telecommunication firms in Nigeria operating in Rivers State. The entire population in the study was studied as sample size using census method. The research data for this study was collected mainly from the primary source. The questionnaire was adopted as the primary data collection instrument for this research. The study adopted both content and face-validity. The reliability for the study was determined using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the stated hypotheses formulated for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section is concerned with the analysis and discussion of the findings for the empirical assessment of the relationship between recruitment outsourcing and environmental sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Relationship between Recruitment Outsourcing and the Measures of Organizational Sustainability

Table 1: Correlations Matrix for Recruitment Outsourcing and the Measures of Organizational Sustainability

			Recruitm ent outsourci ng	Environm ental sustainabil ity	Economic sustainabil ity	Social sustainabil ity
Spearman 's rho	Recruitment outsourcing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.763**	.883**	.671**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	20	20	20	20
	Environmen tal sustainabilit y	Correlation Coefficient	.763**	1.000	.680**	.669**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	
	N	20	20	20	20	
	Economic sustainabilit y	Correlation Coefficient	.883**	.680**	1.000	.720**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	
	N	20	20	20	20	
	Social sustainabilit y	Correlation Coefficient	.671**	.669**	.720**	1.000
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	
	N	20	20	20	20	

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

Source: Research Data 2025 and SPSS Output version 27.0

Table 1 illustrates the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results are stated below:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between recruitment outsourcing and environmental sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between recruitment outsourcing and environmental sustainability of telecommunication companies in

Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that recruitment outsourcing is significantly associated with environmental sustainability (where $\rho=.763$ and $P<0.05$). The finding suggests that recruitment outsourcing enhances organizational sustainability which is measured in terms of environmental sustainability. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between recruitment outsourcing and economic sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between recruitment outsourcing and economic sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that recruitment outsourcing is significantly associated with economic sustainability (where $\rho=.883$ and $P<0.05$). The finding suggests that recruitment outsourcing enhances organizational sustainability which is measured in terms of economic sustainability. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between recruitment outsourcing and social sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

The result as depicted in table 1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between recruitment outsourcing and social sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The data indicates that recruitment outsourcing is significantly associated with social sustainability (where $\rho=.671$ and $P<0.05$). The finding suggests that recruitment outsourcing enhance organizational sustainability which is measured in terms of social sustainability. Hence on the basis of the result, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternate accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The result as depicted in table 4.1 revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between recruitment outsourcing and the measures of organizational sustainability (environmental, economic and social sustainability) of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State with ρ value of .763, .883, .671 at $P<0.05$ respectively. This result is in line with the study of Sunita and Sudhinder (2017) who studied the impact of recruitment process outsourcing on the human resource planning and development of an organization. The researcher used questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was sent to 110 professionals using RPO, 65 responded, only 38 were found relevant for the study undertaken. The result indicated that there is a significant impact of recruitment process outsourcing on the human resource planning and development. The study findings indicated that outsourcing external recruitment agency had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty. It was therefore generally concluded that outsourcing recruitment process had no impact on employee commitment and loyalty.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that recruitment outsourcing enhances sustainability of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This implies that an integrated recruitment outsourcing reduces recruiting and selection costs. This is so through elimination of unsuitable applicants early in the right place at the right time and focuses on promising candidates.

It is therefore recommended that recruitment outsourcing and selection in an organization is the best for choosing high competent employees to work in an organization in order to improve the overall environmental, economic and social sustainability of the organization.

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