



Research Paper

Exploring Talent Management Practices in Nigeria's Public Sector: Antecedent and Consequence

Austin Ogogo

Abstract

Talent management is essential for organisations to attract, develop, and retain professional and highly skilled employees. In the context of the Nigerian public sector, attracting, identifying, developing and retaining a motivated, productive and exceptional workforce is critical to building a high-performance sector where service delivery is significantly impacted and national development effectively realised as a result. This article explores the antecedents and consequences of talent management practices in Nigeria's public sector. Drawing on existing literature and empirical evidence, the factors that influence TM practices within the sector, their impact on competitiveness and service provision and, the relevance of talent identification and retention to the sector are highlighted to make a case for effective public sector TM practices in today's Nigeria where her sector organisations are looking to compete with the rest of the world.

Keywords: Talent Management, Nigerian Public Sector, Talent Management Practices in Nigeria, Talent Management Practices in Nigeria Public Sector, Talent Identification and Retention, Talent Identification and Retention in Nigeria

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I. Introduction

Talent Management and the Nigerian Public Sector: An Overview

Talent Management ensures public sector performance (Afolabi, et al., 2022). Organisation scientists have long considered human capital a strategic asset that contributes to organisational effectiveness (Carmeli, 2004), and as effective government performance is central to the creation of market-oriented economies, productive populations, and democratic political systems (especially) in developing countries, capacity building to improve public sector performance constitutes an important focus of development initiatives (Grindle and Hilderbrand, 1995).

The most critical problem facing Nigerian public sector organisations today and one that continually poses a challenge to effective service delivery to the citizens, is hiring, retaining, training, and motivating professional talents (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017). Successive governments have attempted to address this challenge but despite their responses at tackling such issues as poor service delivery by formulating and implementing reforms like the Udoji award, privatisation, outsourcing, performance-based management and more (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017), Onwuka, et al., (2015), in their study to investigate the relationship between talent management and employee productivity in select public sector firms found that, the capabilities required to embrace change in Nigerian public sector organisations are ailing and human resource management in the sector needed to be skilled up talent-wise.

The public sector is any business owned by a country and run on behalf of the people (Shimawua and Adejoh, 2018), and the Nigerian Public Sector has been found to be the largest employer of labour and at the heart of the development of the nation (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017). Referring to the gamut of services organised around the state, the public sector in Nigeria consists the upstream core ministries, military and paramilitary bodies, and the downstream sub-national governments and decentralised administrative entities like the state and local governments and their respective agencies (Ogwola and Uranta, 2022). The Civil Service, Institutions of Learning, Research Institutes and other allied systems, Parastatals, Federal and State corporations, Crude oil, Solid minerals and the Banks, therefore make up the Nigerian public service sector (Shimawua and Adejoh, 2018).

Globally, the public sector is differentiated from the private sector by its large size and the fact that it is a continuously growing sector of several countries, which implies that, an improvement in service provision

there has the potential to confer large benefits directly and indirectly (Fox, 2002). Its different ownership types and forms also makes the sector special as, while private sector firms are owned by their stockholders, public sector entities are owned by the public on whose behalf the state acts. Thirdly, differences in objectives and constraints facing managers in both sectors, is another characteristic that differentiates the public from the private sector, for, while private sector managers are saddled with profit-maximisation and a liberty at decision-taking and making, public sector managers are not hardwired at optimising profit but however face constraints when it comes to the amount of power handed them to make core managerial decisions around the running and functioning of the organisation (Fox, 2002). Public sector characteristics can therefore be summarised as state ownership, state control, public accountability, autonomy and coverage (Kuma, n.d).

All over the world, public sector organisations are plagued by the typical issues and problems of their political nature, their lack of autonomy, their mission to handle problems rather than take advantage of opportunities, their inherent conflicts between general principles, professional groups and stakeholder interests and, an extensive demand for transparency (Pallas and Fredriksson, 2016). In Nigeria, the workforce serving in the public service at all government levels have been found to be mostly bloated, un-widely and ineffective (Ofili, et al., 2021), with sector workers found to be unproductive as a result of either poor educational background of the worker, lack of regular or effective training culture within the organisation, poor communication between the leaders and flow of information within the organisation to motivate the staff, a lack of participative management where workers can communicate concerns about their jobs to their superiors, poor compensation of workers and, wrong choice in delegating, where the wrong people are put in positions of authority (Shimawua and Adejoh, 2018).

The notion of Talent Management (TM) became popular in Nigeria's public sector in its aspiration to realise its development agenda (Fatile, et al., 2020). However, owing to a lack of planning and implementation of management policies, processes and programs which have a positive impact on the process of acquiring, developing and retaining talents to sustain organisational competitive advantage, talent management systems have failed in most organisations today (Kehinde, 2012). As stated by Younger et al., (2007), the development and implementation of a talent management strategy requires high quality management and leadership from the top and from senior managers and the HR function.

Talent management can be defined as the implementation of integrated strategies or systems to increase productivity in the workplace by developing improved processes to attract, develop, retain, and utilise people with the skills and abilities necessary to meet current and future business needs (Kehinde, 2012). It encompasses the process of hiring people to retain and develop individuals, to, connoting a systematic process of hiring a suitable and qualified individual, assisting to develop both the skills, competencies and know-how of the individual to correspond with the needed vacancy and making efforts to retain the individual through adequate compensation plans, to achieve organisational goals and objectives (Olufemi et al., 2020). Talent management is therefore the strategic management of the flow of talent through an organisation with the purpose to assure that a supply of talent is available to align the right people with the right jobs at the right time based on strategic business objectives (Duttagupta, 2005).

Extant research reveal that there is a positive relationship between effective talent management practices and employee and organisational performance in Nigeria's public sector (Ile et al., 2023; Afolabi et al., 2022; Eseferuo et al., 2022; Igweh and Kifordu, 2022; Olufemi, et al., 2020; Onwuka, et al. 2015; Wurim, 2012).

In his study to evaluate the impact of TM on employee productivity in the sector, Wurim (2012) found that proper talent management processes in Nigerian public organisations (where they existed), significantly impacted employee productivity.

Examining the impact of talent management on organisational performance in the Nigerian Public Service, Eseferuo et al., (2022) would note that implementing capacity building and skill development practices within the service had the potential of making significant investments in organisational performance. Ile et al., (2023) in analysing TM practices and organisational performance of state-owned universities in South East, Nigeria, identified that employee engagement and talent acquisition and retention had significant positive relationships with graduate employability and institutional visibility of state-owned universities in Nigeria's South East. Lastly, Igweh and Kifordu (2022) in their study to review talent management and the mass exodus of youths in Nigeria's Federal health sector, found a statistically significant relationship between their research's objectives and the mass exodus of youths from the Federal health sector. Talent management was identified as a vital aspect of employee commitment to service which subsequently, enhanced service delivery and performance within the health sector of the country.

According to Gberevbie (2009), there is a need to secure and manage a competent work force in Nigeria's public sector owing to the demand for effective and efficient delivery of goods and services to the citizens.

Nigeria's public sector has witnessed several administrative reforms overtime as a result of expansion (Akinsanmi, et al., 2022), with these reform programs aimed at restoring public confidence and turning around

these organisations back to profitability (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017). But despite these reforms and the recommendations by various committees, the service is still plagued with inefficiencies and service delivery ineffectiveness (Akinsanmi, et al., 2022).

The experience of Nigeria in public sector management shows that the country's bureaucracy is wobbling and merely achieving sustainability owing largely to bad governance, declining professionalism and declining discipline among its technocrats (Ogwola and Uranta (2022). Weak organisational structures, corruption, poor remuneration and working conditions, and erosion of values among others, deepen the challenges even further (Akinsanmi, et al., 2022).

As a company's success is dependent on the performance of its employees, who form the team that is critical to the organisation's success in achieving the organisation's goals (Eseferuo et al., 2022), no organisation can compete effectively in today's market without investing continuously in their human capital (Eseferuo et al., 2022).

The assumption underpinning the practice of talent management in the public sector therefore is that people are the organisation's key resource, and organisational performance and productivity largely depends on them (Wurim, 2012). In order then to manage this special human capital, organisations are and should be, putting their attention on developing efficient systems and procedures for talent management, as well as methods for evaluating current talent development initiatives, identifying opportunities and gaps, and creating integrated action plans that are results-oriented and can be matched with their particular structure and long-term objectives (Ile et al., 2023).

As the Nigerian public service sector is growing in nature and scope by the day in response to the immediate and external sociopolitical and economic developments in the content and context of globalisation and the Millenium Development Goals (Shimawua and Adejoh, 2018), meeting their increasing responsibilities therefore demands responsive and well-equipped workers in terms of necessary knowledge, attitudes and adequate skills for effective and efficient service delivery on the parts of their employing public sector units (Oladunni 1998). An appropriate range of talent management processes and policies planned, developed and implemented effectively would therefore not only impact employee productivity and the organisation's performance (Wurim, 2012), Nigeria's public sector in Nigeria could also win back the confidence of the citizens in their government and compete favourably with public sectors in developed climes.

This article explores the antecedents and consequences of talent management practices in the public sector in Nigeria to highlight process challenges and potential outcomes of having those challenges effectively addressed.

What Is Talent Management In Nigeria

According to the Nigerian Institute of Production Management (NIPM) 2023, talent management is a key determinant of an organisation's performance and talent development is adding value to an individual by building and improving the innate abilities, knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes of people for desired performance objectives of the organisation.

Identifying high-potential employees and finding ways to maximise their unique strengths and talents for career growth and development, is a necessity and talent development and evaluation of current and future human capital needs and putting in place systems/processes to generate and preserve a pool of talented employees are required towards achieving the plans of the organisation today and in the future (NIPM, 2023).

As viewed by Wobodo, et al., (2020), talent management can be summed up as the corporate strategy geared towards attracting, developing and retaining a pool of skilled individuals such that organisations do not ever experience a shortfall in expertise in the future.

According to the authors, having employees with impressive talents is a rare commodity in the knowledge-based and globalised world of today, thus, talent management is a management function that if effectively implemented, will among other things, contribute significantly in preserving the organisation's core competencies through knowledge sharing between the experienced leaders and the discovered talent pool in the organisation (Wobodo, et al., 2020).

Talent management is this the process of anticipating the human resources that an organisation will need and making plans to fill such gaps (Agbo, et al., 2022). As organisations must continually source, hire, develop, maintain, and promote employees while also satisfying their needs, they are engaging in the process known as talent management, and it goes beyond simply luring top candidates from the sector (Agbo, et al., 2022).

According to Ogbari, et al., (2018), despite this increasing reputation talent management has been receiving all over and has enjoyed over the years, the idea behind TM is still vague. The concept is beset with misunderstandings, doubts and lack of clarity, implying that the subject is not grounded in practice and thus reinforcing why it is viewed by many experts as a puzzle (Ogbari, et al., 2018).

Okebaram and Ruby (2016), highlight the ten traps in talent management that managers/administrators have to avoid while implementing the policy within their organisations. These 'traps' include; paying lip service to a talent management strategy, no clear definition of leadership, confusing talent management with succession planning, shrouding the process and ground rules in mystery, waiting for the 'cream' to rise, using subjective data to make crucial decisions about talent, ignoring quirks of personality in promotion decisions, lazy thinking about development solutions, ignoring the team mosaic and, assuming your managers at all levels are talent leaders.

It is believed that by intentionally watching out for these traps in order to avoid them, talent management as a critical workplace concept can be carried out effectively.

The main objective of the public sector in Nigeria is to provide and serve as catalyst for affordable and quality service delivery to the citizens (Darma and Ali, 2014). In order to achieve this, the government is mandated through the constitution to direct its policies towards ensuring that suitable and adequate basic and essential services are provided for all citizens (Darma and Ali, 2014).

Thus, the provision of public services in the country is the primary responsibility of the government, complemented only by the private sector, and the financing of projects for the provision of these services is usually through annual budget allocations. However, the distribution/delivery of public services in Nigeria like several other developing economies is often fraught with discrimination, low quality and access, lack of fairness and more (Darma and Ali, 2014).

According to Nkogbu and Offia (2015), the public sector is a concept used to describe organisations, institutions, and departments of State saddled with the responsibilities and functions of implementing the policies and programmes of government and are otherwise made up of the MDAs; the Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government.

Public service on the other hand, connotes the civil service of the federation and the state as well as the public services of the federation and of the states. From the federal and state civil services to the local governments, the Nigeria police, armed forces, judiciary, educational institutions established or financed mainly by federal and/or state governments to companies or enterprises with full or majority ownership by either the federal or state government, the public service refers to all organisations that exist as part of government machinery for implementing policy decisions and delivering services that are of value to the citizenry. (Nkogbu and Offia, 2015).

Owing to a lack of records kept and data available on performance within the public sector unlike it is obtainable in the private sector, public sector performance in Nigeria is usually measured by the quality of the service it delivers to the citizens as opposed to the private sector where performance is usually measured by profitability (as seen in Osawe, 2015; Ogohi, 2014; Adejuwon, 2014)

Service quality is defined as the extent to which an organisation meets or exceeds expectations of customers or beneficiaries (Parasuraman et al., 1998), however, because the success of an organisation to achieve its objectives and goals heavily depends on its workforce (Motlokoa, et al., 2018), evaluating talent management practices within the sector, here the Nigerian public sector, becomes key towards understanding how deeply it impacts performance, service delivery and its workforce outcomes.

Antecedents of Talent Management Practices in Nigeria's Public Sector

Public sector talent management refers to the application of key human resource (HR) practices that facilitate staff who possess both the required dexterities and the context's values in fulfilling the sector's overall goal for the common good (Kravariti and Johnston, 2020). While the importance of management and leadership are increasingly recognised in the public sector nonetheless, talent management in this context is a relatively new development (Boselie and Thunnissen, 2017).

The public sector is one of the most heavily people-centric industries (Unit 4 Human Resource Communications, 2012) but regardless of this, public sector organisations are confronted with the intensifying competition for talent and suffer from a chronic shortage of talented people (Thunnissen and Buttiens, 2017). Talent management practices according to Rani and Kumar (2014) therefore, are the end-to-end processes of planning, recruiting, developing, managing and compensating the employees throughout the organisation.

In their study to identify the factors that affected TM and its practice in organisations globally, the authors would find that age, seniority and education levels, salary and benefits, working environment, succession planning, training and development, organisational culture, organisational commitment, job security, job satisfaction, identifying and differentiating talented employees, provision of meaningful and challenging work, leadership, communication, motivation and superior-subordinate relationship, impacted TM in many ways (Rani and Kumar, 2014).

Talent management practices in the Nigerian public sector can be said to be shaped by similar factors as above, with organisational culture, leadership styles, HR policies and practices, government regulations and

socio-cultural influences shaping it to a large extent (as seen in Afolabi et al., 2022; Akinsanmi, et al., 2022; Onwuemene and Oni, 2017; Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015; Gberevbie, 2009 and 2010).

1.1 Organisational Culture and Leadership

It is a given that an organisation is only as strong as its workforce and as a result, human resources should be well motivated as it plays a key role in the growth of business and in enhancing the effectiveness of the public sector workplace (Jamoh, 2021).

As an antecedent of talent management, organisational culture has a positive impact on TM practices (Rivai and Syahrul, 2023). It is found to be one of the factors that influence employee talent management (Sariwulan et al., 2021), as a strong organisational culture contributes to the effective management of talent within an organisation (Bermeo and Perez, 2022).

Organisational culture is also identified as a factor that positively influences employee performance and commitment sustainability (Setyawan, 2021). By fostering a culture that values and supports talent therefore, organisations can attract and retain skilled employees, enhance job satisfaction, and improve overall performance (Mishra, 2022).

In summary, an organisational culture that promotes talent management encapsulates a strong talent value proposition inclusive of a compelling organisational and employment brand and a properly assembled talent career life cycle (Saurombe 2017). A healthy organisational culture is therefore essential for both employee and public sector outcomes (Zain-UI-Abidin et al. 2020).

According to Jamoh (2021), leadership on the other hand is a critical factor that drives organisational growth. It is extremely important in talent management as, effective leadership is essential for identifying and developing talent within an organisation and leaders who prioritise talent management can create a culture of excellence, foster innovation, and inspire employees to perform at their best (Shahi et al., 2020). As cited in Masale, et al., (2021), leadership and organisational culture are two concepts that are many times used interchangeably, but the fact that the type of leadership exercised in public sector institutions is essential for improving service delivery, remains key.

In their study to examine how leadership styles influenced organisational efficiency in both private and public sector organisations in Nigeria, Jamoh (2021) found that leadership still constituted a critical missing element to effectively drive the crucial objective of organisational growth in both sectors owing to corruption and a lack of innovation.

In analysing the effect of talent management on competitive advantage through workplace culture moderation in the top ten deposit money banks in Lagos State, Egwakhe, et al., (2023), found that the effect of talent management on competitive advantage was significantly moderated by workplace culture. Thus, workplace culture moderated the relationship between talent management and competitive advantage in the selected deposit money banks in Lagos State.

1.2 Recruitment and Selection Practices

Another factor shaping talent management practices in the public sector in Nigeria is the recruitment and selection of talented employees.

According to Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., (2015), the availability of a competent and effective labour force does not just happen by chance but through an articulated job analysis and recruitment exercise. Personio (n.d) notes that, an effective recruitment and selection process allows companies to source, attract and identify the best candidates for every open role, and this can help to reduce attrition, increase productivity and even improve the company's bottom line.

Recruitment is therefore the process of discovering or selecting and hiring the best qualified candidate from inside or outside of an organisation for a job opportunity (Hamza, et al., 2021) and the process entails examining the necessities of work, drawing employees to that occupation, screening and selecting candidates, contracting, and coordinating the new employee to the association (Hamza, et al., 2021). Selection on the other hand, is the process of evaluating and interviewing candidates for a particular job and selecting the right person for the right position (Hamza, et al., 2021). Although constituting two different stages in the hiring process, a well-designed recruitment and selection process allows organisations to both attract a wide pool of applicants and narrow the selection down until they have found the perfect candidate for every opening (Personio, n.d).

Recruitment and selection in the Nigerian Civil Service is carried out based on the provisions of the Civil Service Reorganisation Decree, No. 43, Section 9 (1)d of 1988 (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., (2015). The provision allows for each ministry to undertake the appointment, promotion and discipline of its staff under general and uniform guidelines to be provided by the Federal Civil Service Commission, and each of these ministries or departments is expected to have its own Personnel Management Board that is supported by different Committees (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015).

While the Civil Service Commission appoints senior personnel on salary grade level 08-10 to reflect Federal Character, its underlying ministries appoint junior officers on grade level 01-07 under the supervision of the

Civil Service Commission Decree 43 (1988) with senior and junior eligible candidates for appointment to be interviewed by the appropriate personnel management board or committee (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015). This process has however been seen by many to enable favouritism and nepotism within the service (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015), resulting in a weak pool of existing staff.

1.3 Training and Development Opportunities

Training and Development constitute one of the most critical activities to improve productivity in an organisation and give it competitive advantage (Noe, et al., 2014). It also constitutes another factor that shapes how TM is practiced in the public sector in Nigeria.

Training and development according to Beardwell and Claydon (2007), is an educational activity to improve performance at the workplace. It is also the process of imparting job knowledge and skills to employees (Aguinis, et al., 2008).

According to James (n.d), training touches every element of talent management to include; recruitment, performance management, leadership development and succession management, and any company looking to strengthen their talent management must by necessity implement and own good training practices.

Playing an important role in talent management, training helps build loyalty and motivation which increase employee productivity, it answers to the yearnings of the talented employees in the organisation who desire career advancement, it corrects systematic weaknesses within the business and it supercharges top performers (James, n.d).

Training and development opportunities in the Nigerian Public Sector have been found to be lacking, with challenges associated with employee training and their development often linked back to the selection process of candidates at the start, which is considered poor. According to Adiele and Ibietan (2017), despite the recognised importance of training for improved productivity within the organisation, manpower training in the public sector is threatened despite emphases on development because, the various reforms in the sector have not considered it necessary to initiate definite and continuous training programmes that will increase employee productivity. This implies that, when training need is recognised and resources and time are committed, the training exercise can still be inadequate in addressing the productivity deficit. Additionally, the training exercise is haphazard or lopsided in design, implementation and participation (Adiele and Ibietan, 2017). Public sector managers do not also appropriately recognise and reward employees who have participated in training programmes to acquire additional skills and knowledge by offering a salary increment, promotion, or deploying them to departments where their newly acquired skills could be put to relevance (Adiele and Ibietan, 2017). Finally, job enlargement within the sector are performed without adequate regard to the skills and capabilities of the staff, which may result in low morale and frustrate other employees desiring further training of their own and these managerial attitudes towards manpower training within the public sector can result in progressive degeneration of the capabilities of employees to cope with challenges arising from the social, economic and technological changes ((Adiele and Ibietan, 2017).

In their study investigating the effect of human capital development on employees' performance in Nigerian public hospitals, Okafor et al., (2019) found that there were currently no cautiously planned career support programs geared towards transferring specific knowledge and skills within Nigerian federal medical hospitals, and the attitude from top professionals to subordinates to fill identified knowledge, skill, and attitude gaps, wasn't enabling. Hospital employees were only posted to fill existing vacancies. They were never prepared and trained for career support to acquire requisite knowledge, skills and attitude to improve their performances in their new roles (Okafor et al., 2019).

While examining the relationship between training and development and organisational effectiveness in the Nigerian Immigration Service, Ololube et al., (2011) found that the major reason for low productivity and organisational ineffectiveness within the service was as a result of poor training and development. Here, immigration officers were often compelled to perform other tasks other than the ones for which they had been trained to do.

Funding inadequacies, poor coordination of training activities, faulty training needs-assessment and inappropriate methodology for delivering training programmes were found by Adiele and Ibietan (2017) to be major impediments to public sector productivity, in their study to investigate the impact of manpower training on productivity in the sector, as well.

According to Ololube et al., (2011), recent studies show that many workers leave their organisations because management does not identify and provide for their training needs.

As no organisation is ever guaranteed a permanent place at the top of the highly competitive economy of today, and no manager can be effective unless they keep their business competitive, training and development activities are (and should) no longer be luxuries, which organisations indulge in in prosperous times only (Ololube et al., 2011).

1.4 Performance Management

Performance management, another factor and antecedent of TM practice, is a HR function and a specific aspect of talent management that focuses on evaluating, monitoring, and developing the performance of employees (Kaikhosroshvili, 2024). Differing from TM in scope, goal, timeframe and approach, performance management and talent management are nonetheless done together as it sets expectations for performance output and defines criteria for measuring how well employees meet their goals (Kaikhosroshvili, 2024).

All high performance organisations, public or private, are, and must be, interested in developing and deploying effective performance measurement and performance management systems as it is only through such systems that they can remain high-performance organisations (Agboola, 2018).

Performance Management in the public sector is a central tool for a management style that takes decisions not primarily based on (financial) input, but focuses on outcome and output (Buschor, 2013). It is therefore defined as the systematic process for improving organisational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams (Armstrong, 2012).

As a means of getting better results by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standard and competency requirements (Armstrong, 2012), performance management covers all aspect of a business (Fryer, et al., 2019), helping with employee career growth and development, productivity and profitability of the organisation. (Kaikhosroshvili, 2024).

Armstrong (2012) further elaborates that processes exist for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved and for managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that it will be achieved in the short and longer term. Therefore, performance management focuses people on doing the right things by clarifying their goals, allowing for the provision of feedback, and the assessing of progress by creating a high-performance culture of continuous improvement (Kaikhosroshvili, 2024).

In their study to examine the moderating effect of an effective performance management system on the relationship between talent management and organisational performance on the public health sector, Ahmad, et al., (2020) found that a performance management system moderates the relationship between talent management and organisational performance, implying that performance management systems could be employed as strategies to identify talented employees, integrate, re-strategise and strengthen management-employee relationship to improve their organisational performance.

In examining the issues of objectives, accountability, effectiveness and outcomes around performance management in the Nigerian public sector, Agboola (2018) noted that, although performance measurement has become an increasingly prevalent performance-evaluation activity at all government levels, and that the adoption of performance-based management will make public servants to be efficient and effective that is it will turnaround the Nigerian public servants and enables it to achieve their desire objectives and goals, most public administrators/managers still struggled with the fundamentals of what to do with performance measurement data when they had it. Management teams, among other things, desired to know how these data could be incorporate into their management and decision-making processes. This, needed to be addressed.

In surveying 63 MDAs in North-Eastern Nigeria to evaluate some antecedents of the performance management practice and how these antecedents influenced public sector organisational performance, Abubakar, et al., (2016) found that, performance measurement and institutional culture had significant positive relation with the performance of public sector organisations. Thus, performance measurement was vital for stimulating organisational growth and institutional culture, which is the pattern and style with which public sector organisations are created and are infused with a particular cultural norm, promoted organisational performance.

Talent management practices in the Nigerian public sector are shaped by a number of factors. Organisational culture and leadership, recruitment and selection practices, training and development and performance management constitute a few of the various factors that influence how TM is practiced in the sector. By addressing inadequacies here and improving and strengthening existing structures with developmental potential, the sector's performance can be enhanced significantly.

Effects and Consequences of Talent Management Practices in the Nigerian Public Sector

This section of the article examines the consequences of talent management practices as an essentiality towards understanding their impact on public sector performance and employee outcomes.

In their pioneering study toward providing a conceptual model around the antecedents and consequences of TM practices, Jyoti (2016) posited that successful TM implementation yielded a sustainable competitive advantage for organisations as ideas generated by high potential employees were exclusive and inimitable. This kind of exclusivity generated financial benefits such as high profit ratio, increase in market share, return on investment, return on shareholders' value, and enhanced goodwill of the organisation (Jyoti, 2016).

Effective TM practices were also found to be extremely beneficial for internal organisational environment such as organisational commitment especially the affective commitment. It helped enhance

employees' motivational levels, increased their commitment, improved their work quality, enhanced productivity, enlarged employees' trust towards their leaders/mentors, increased employees' morale, their perception about career success, and increased their intensity of job satisfaction (Jyoti, 2016).

According to Collings and Mellahi (2009), effective talent management practices therefore involves aligning human resource strategies with organisational goals, promoting a culture of continuous learning and development, providing opportunities for growth and advancement, and recognising and rewarding high performing individuals.

As the aforementioned practices are designed to create an engaging work environment that fosters employee commitment and satisfaction (Thunnissen, Boselie, and Fruytier, 2013), the following highlight the consequences of effective talent management practices in Nigeria's Public Sector;

2.1 Employee Engagement and Retention

Talent management has been recognised by several authors as an important human recourse practice in the retention of employees and retaining talented employees has become one of the major priorities of organisations and the key differentiator for human capital management (Mburu, et al., 2017).

Employee retention is a process where employees are encouraged to remain with the organisation for the maximum period of time (Das and Baruah, 2013). It is the process of inviting, attracting, engaging and retaining talented personnel (Creelman, 2004), and, as aptly put by Stockley (2013), talent retention is the mindful, thoughtful approach embark on to fascinate, improve, attract and retain people with the skills and abilities to meet current and future contingencies of the organisations.

Retained employees therefore mean retained valued skills within the organisation (Acton, et al., 2003).

Engagement on the other hand is defined as the individual's involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work (Macey and Schneider, 2008). It is the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Kumari and Yelkar, 2022).

Engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organisations and highly involved in their jobs with a great enthusiasm for the success of their employers (Markos and Sridevi, 2010).

In examining TM and employee retention in select manufacturing firms in Ogun State, Nigeria, Aremo and Olanipekun (2023), concluded that incorporating talent management strategies and effectively communicating same to those concerned, was to be made foundational as performance management and career development significantly impacted retention of workers in the manufacturing firms.

Job satisfaction and talent retention were significantly and positively related among employees of Ceramic firms in Kogi State in a study by Faruna (2018) to determine the relationship between talent management and employee performance. Lastly, in exploring the impact of talent management on employee attitudes in select Nigerian Federal teaching hospitals, Obum and Kelana (2013) would find that talent retention and talented employees' organisational citizenship behaviour were the most crucial components and indicators of the success of an effective talent management implementation in the healthcare industry in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, employee engagement and retention empirically constitute a positive outcome of effective talent management practice in Nigeria's Public Sector.

2.2 Organisational Performance and Effectiveness

Measuring performance in public-sector organisations, according to Ysa and Sierra (2019), has many benefits as it allows managers to set up mechanisms to evaluate, control, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate and improve their strategic decision-making.

The quest for high performance in public sector programs is stemmed from the concerns of politicians, administrators and the public about economy, efficiency and productivity in government organisations (Caiden and Caiden, 2004), nevertheless, the performance of an organisation is dependent on the calibre of its workforce (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2015).

In examining the effect of talent management practices in State-owned tertiary institutions in Enugu State, Nigeria, (Okonkwo et al., 2022) found that, when employees were promoted within the organisation, research output in the institution increased significantly and engaged employees were motivated to meet work deadlines. Thus, effective talent management practice was found to positively influence the performance of the tertiary institutions owned by the State government.

In their study to determine whether talent management impacted service quality in public sector organisations, Jimoh et al., (2022), would find that talent attraction impacted service quality, talent retention affected service quality, and a reward strategy affected service quality. In conclusion, improvements in service quality was influenced by attraction and retention of talent.

Lastly, Afolabi et al., (2022) discovered a positive and significant relationship between talent management, workforce planning and public sector performance in their study on talent management and public sector performance in the Anambra State Ministry of Finance.

2.3 Innovation and Knowledge Management

Talent management has a significant impact on innovation (Norasyikin, 2023; Almomani et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022; Ibrahim and AlOmari, 2020).

In the fast-paced, highly competitive 21st century, talents have become one of the most important pillars for organisations to achieve their strategic vision (Norasyikin, 2023). The rapid growth of technological, economic, sociological and political systems, around the globe generates challenges and problems for public sector organisations, requiring them to respond in a very sophisticated manner (Ahmad, 2019). Without such an effective and efficient response, their progress and development will remain in a continuous threat from the modern global environment (Ahmad, 2019).

Talent management plays a role in driving innovation by identifying and recruiting talent who are creative thinkers, as such talent can bring forth new and creative solutions, products and services to the organisation (Lee et al., 2020). Creativity and innovation can lead to greater efficiency, better quality, and more successful outcomes in the workplace (Lee et al., 2020).

Knowledge management on the other hand, can be said to be the conscious process of defining, structuring, retaining, and sharing the knowledge and experience of employees within an organisation (Valamis, 2022).

Knowledge management happens when a staff retires. Rather than leave the organisation with all that wealth of expertise, an effective knowledge management process put in place can help mine this knowledge and transfer it to another to prevent a disruption in work and bridge workforce knowledge gaps (Valamis, 2022).

KM also happens when a staff is to be promoted or transferred, when the company is about to be merged or acquired by another and, when there is a need to train new employees who have just been recruited. In the instance of a transfer or promotion, an effective KM process helps the staff transition seamlessly into their new roles or department (Valamis, 2022).

According to Whelan and Carcary (2011), knowledge management is also useful during employee turnover as, "knowledge loss resulting from employee turnover - whether through competition headhunting, redundancies or retirements --exposes an organisation to considerable risks".

In the realisation of the importance of knowledge management in the workplace, Mejri and Aldoghan (2021) would further posit that, knowledge management is important because it boosts the efficiency of an organisation's decision-making ability, allows innovation to grow within the organisation, customers benefit from increased access to best practices, and employee turnover is reduced.

According to the authors, as organisations of all kinds are witnessing dramatic changes in business environment, technology-related changes as well as growing competitive pressure makes it necessary to manage knowledge, therefore, knowledge management needs to be applied to all the organisation's functions to include talent management as this represents a critical area that has to be continually improved on in such environment (Mejri and Aldoghan, 2021).

Indeed, as stated by Whelan and Carcary (2011), several of the challenges faced by knowledge management can be addressed with the integration of talent management initiatives.

In studying the relationship between talent management and competitiveness in Oil drilling and Well servicing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria (Festus and Asawo, 2020), data was gathered from 36 top and middle level managers of the firms and results revealed that talent management positively and significantly impacted competitiveness in the oil industry in terms of flexibility and innovation. An emphasis on human capital as an inimitable organisational asset was once again made, and talent management was concluded as a precursor to competitiveness of any organisation.

Abbas and Cross (2018), in evaluating talent management and its role on the competitive advantage of organisations, noted from their findings that, employees, especially talented ones, contributed to the achievement of competitive advantage in their organisations because they were innovative in their fields and had the ability to make the right decisions towards achieving the given goals. It was found that if the right tools to develop them with were made sufficiently available, this category of employees would remain loyal to the organisation and stay.

Ekeke (2011) attempted to investigate how knowledge is transferred in the Nigerian public service, the features of its bureaucratic culture, as well as, the effects that this culture has on knowledge transfer. By interviewing and surveying key players of the public service covering to include senior, and junior and management/directorate staff in seven ministries in the Bayelsa state public service, the study found that there was knowledge transfer in the Nigerian public service based on the available mechanisms used for the transfer of knowledge.

There was reasonable awareness amongst public servants about knowledge and its sources that is needed to run the public service, the study finds, but, access to knowledge, particularly tacit knowledge by authorised staff was difficult. In the end, the study revealed that public servants desired that government made

concerted efforts to establish a knowledge transfer culture within the service so that knowledge was readily available (Ekeke, 2011).

Pepple, et al., (2022), in employing a qualitative approach to studying how knowledge management was conceptualised and implemented in the asset management departments of organisations in the Nigerian public sector found that, while knowledge management practices were implemented, they were only at the beginning stages within the various critical institutions and organisations investigated, which left a lot more to be desired.

Employee engagement, higher productivity, enhanced organisational competitiveness, innovation, knowledge transfer and increased retention have been found to be some of the outcomes of an effective TM practice within the Nigerian public sector. By intentionally working to implement more effective TM processes, the Nigerian government positions the public sector for growth akin to those found in more developed climates.

Relevance of Talent Identification and Retention to the Public Sector

The business environment globally is now more dynamic and there is a need for flexible, innovative and a rational approach to the management of human capital, with emphasis on high talent professional employees (Wurim, 2012).

Davis and Frolova (2017) in their extensive review study on understanding talent identification initiatives in African public sector organisations, cite Davies and Davies (2010) as defining Talent identification as the processes and activities undertaken in order to identify and discover the sources of talent in an organisation.

In other words, talent identification is the identifying of talented individuals within the organisation often through past performance and future potential of the employee (CIPD, 2023). It involves the assessment of employees' performance and potential, and the subsequent inclusion of high-potential, high-performing employees into the organisation's 'talent pool' (Becker et al., 2009). This develops talent pools of individuals who could step into business-critical roles when the need arise (CIPD, 2023).

Retention of key employees on the other hand, is critical to the long-term health and survival of any organisation as retaining top talents ensures customer satisfaction, increased product sales, satisfied colleagues and reporting staff, effective succession planning and embedded organisational knowledge and learning, (Igomu, et al., 2022).

Worldwide, retention of skilled employees has been of serious concern to managers in the face of ever increasing high rate of employee turnover (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). According to the authors, employee turnover occurs when employees leave their jobs and must be replaced, and replacing exiting employees is costly to organisations and destructive to service delivery (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009).

According to Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2012), organisations rely on the expertise, knowledge, skills, and capital resource and capacity development of their employees in order to compete favourably and gain competitive advantage in the international market. However, studies show that retention of highly skilled employees has become a difficult task for managers as this category of employees are being attracted by more than one organisation at a time with various kinds of incentives.

This, according to the authors, behooves on management to create an enabling and sustainable critical culture to work out retention systems for their existing core employees in these contemporary organisations (Nwokocha and Iheriohanma, 2012).

Onwuemene and Oni (2017) note that Nigerian public sector workers are notoriously poorly compensated, but,, despite the low compensations paid them as compared to workers in some private organisations, studies show that public sector employees in Nigeria have high employee retention on average.

One reason for this is the high perception of job security in the sector (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017). Job security is a potent retention strategy in the public sector that encourages employees to stay in the employment of the sector organisations, creates self confidence in employees and allows them contribute maximally to the organisational goals (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017).

Others retention strategies employed by Nigerian public sector organisations include training, career development, free staff transportation services, provision of food through subsidised canteen services, subsidised staff quarters, staff welfare services like medical services for staff, their spouses and four children, and, some regular promotion of employees to motivate and retain personnel for performance (Onwuemene and Oni, 2017; Nwokocha and Iheriohanma, 2012; Gberevbie, 2009).

These measures have however been found to be inadequate, grossly under-implemented or too far in between as globalisation begins to play a role in the labour market (as cited in Nwokocha and Iheriohanma, 2012). According o to Gberevbie (2010), globalisation has enhanced the mobility of labour, and has also

accelerated the rate of employee turnover in both private and public organisations in Nigeria. In addition, factors such as inequity in the compensation packages of organisations, employees' dissatisfaction and autocratic managerial pattern have affected employee retention in most Nigerian public organisations, with the effects of this turnover being a disruption in production, cost of training new employees, recruitment and selection cost and knowledge lost.

Gberevbie (2010) offers suggestions to minimise the rate of employee turnover and catch up with the current demands of global economic needs and organizational performance, to include the Nigerian public sector organisations intensifying their critical sustainable retention trends such as establishing a strategic plan, involving employees in decision-making process, initiating personalised compensation plan, installing mechanisms for career planning, training and development and building flexible work programs especially for critical knowledge – employees.

In investigating talent retention in the Nigeria Banking Sector, Bamigboye and Abdulazeez (2023) would note that, poor remuneration, non-flexibility in work arrangements, poor performance management processes, increased workload, and increased stress levels, resulted in increased turnover intentions by talents in the Banks.

Impediments to the implementation of some of the retention strategies created by the banks were identified as poor service delivery, especially in the areas of Internet banking and mobile applications, employee resistance to change, non-commitment of the management team, and budget constraints.

When these impediments are addressed, the authors note the potential for significant productivity.

Ubah and Ibrahim (2021), in their study on the effect human resource planning has on the performance of public sector organisations in Nigeria with a focus on the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, Abuja, found that effective human resource planning in terms of projected demand for workforce and recruitment and selection, enabled institutions attract the right kind of people in the right numbers, improve employees' expertise, talents, and abilities, and keep them in the business.

Their findings also revealed that in the projected demand for workforce within the Ministry, the recruitment and selection process account for the highest contribution to organisation performance. The authors would go on to recommend that the recruitment and selection process should be open and transparent with little or no political interference to allow for the selection of applicants with the right expertise and skills into the workforce (Ubah and Ibrahim, 2021).

The severe shortage of employees, students and talent drain and attrition, poor quality graduates, poor global ranking, poor-quality research, necessitated a study by Praise and Kah (2020), that examined talent management practices in institutions of higher learning in the country and the impact of recruitment and culture on employee performance.

Using quantitatively obtained data, the authors found a positive relationship between talent management practices and employee performance, implying that for institutions of higher learning to achieve efficiency, they must continue to invest in TM by selecting employees based on qualification, experience, and competence across all cadres; implement salary increment meritoriously; maintain transparency and not politicise promotion guidelines, among others.

Similarly, in investigating the impact of brain drain and loss of experienced academics in Nigeria higher education institutions, a challenge that usually led to a disruption of academic service delivery, Osigwelem (2017) in his study, proposed a talent management strategy based on application of Profile theory to manage the fallout of a talent void in the Academic sector and to helpwith talent positioning in the higher education institutions in Nigeria in order to cope with evolving workforce.

According to the author, the profile theory modeled candidates' characteristics/attributes for talent identification and made distinctive talent identification where ties occurred based on capability and compatibility.

The study contributed to the body of existing knowledge and literature by demonstrating how Talent Management approach could mitigate the impact of brain drain and other forms of employee turnover in the higher education institutions, and by demonstrating howthe profile theory tool could be applied in filling talent void and allocating duties as a strategy for talent positioning within academic institution (Osigwelem, 2017).

Lastly, Adisa, et al., (2017) in their paper to examine the perception of managers on employee resourcing (ie recruitment and selection process) in Nigeria, reveal the Federal Character Principle, the Quota

System Policy, favouritism, ethnicity, age, gender discrimination, as well as corruption significantly inhibited the recruitment and selection process in Nigeria. Also, the ability to hire the best workers to improve competitiveness was also hampered.

In their recommendations, it was suggested that institutional and cultural variations require a nuanced approach in the recruitment and selection process in order to enhance organisational competitiveness (Adisa, et al., 2017).

According to Olufemi et al., (2020), the Nigerian public sector can benefit from nurturing a talented workforce and prioritising its valuable, non-substitutable, rare and difficult to imitate employees by enhancing its competitive advantage, maintaining its core competencies, reducing employee turnover intentions, enabling commitment, increasing productivity, and lowering recruitment costs.

Strategic talent management which is talent management strategy that align with strategic business or organisational objectives, has the added benefits of building a high-performance workplace, fostering a learning climate, adding value to the employer brand, and improving diversity (CIPD, 2023).

The key challenge in talent identification however, is often in determining who should be included in the (typically highly exclusive) talent pools created within the organisation (De Boeck et al., 2018). This proves especially true in Nigeria where only high-ranked staff are often considered the talents in several establishments (Ogbari, et al., 2018).

MaRS, an online Market Research website in their online publication titled; "Talent management: How do I identify top talent among employees?" assert that, while a startup, company or organisation's top talent are typically those with the best performance ratings, defining top talent should go beyond this single measure, and the following key characteristics that could help managers identify the top talent among their employees today include; a positive energy/attitude, an entrepreneurial spirit, innovation or creativity, a commitment to the startup's culture and mission, effective communication skills, integrity, teamwork, focus, leadership, potential for growth, job expertise and skills, commitment to deliver, a strong work ethic and, decision-making skills (MaRS, n. d).

According to Clarke and Scurry (2017), in creating these pool of talents in the first place, organisations typically employed the strategies of identifying the talents within the existing workforce, focusing primarily on external selection, headhunting of senior profiles, or recruiting 'high-potential' students from respected graduate programs.

As organisations are today therefore realising that people, intellectual capital, and talent are ever more critical to their success, it is recommended that they become developers of this talent rather than become poachers of them (Ibidunni, et al., 2015). However, drawing from the findings in their study on TM and public sector performance in Nigeria, Olufemi et al., (2020) would note that, regardless of the quality and quantity of resources spent on skills sharpening, career support, innovation, training, and more, if adequate strategies were not developed to manage those talents, more resources would be spent on talent acquisition regularly without corresponding results in the sector.

Therefore, the importance of identifying and retaining talented employees in the public sector helps it achieve its short and long-term aims and objectives a lot more easily, as well as develop the skills and competencies of the employees to take up successive leadership roles within the organisation in the future or when the need arises (Olufemi et al., 2020).

Role of Human Resource Management in Driving Talent Management Practices in the Nigerian Public Sector

According to Opatha (2009); "Human Resource Management (HRM) is the efficient and effective utilisation of human resources to achieve goals of an organisation." As organisations are economic and social entities composed of groups of people interacting with each other for the purpose of achieving a common goal, human resources are employees who work for the considered organisation, and efficient utilisation is the optimum use of employees by minimizing wastage; and effective utilisation is the use of HR for organisational effectiveness, which is the extent to which goals of the organisation have been realised (Opatha, 2009).

According to the author, HRM exhibits the following characteristics: it is a field of study, hence an academic discipline, it is a practice, a function occurring within an organisation, a function that focuses on managing people, a function that deals with managing people who make up the organisation, a function performed to obtain, develop, reward, maintain, and retain unique employees, a function that deals with the efficient and effective utilisation of human resources to ensure that organisational goals are achieved, a function that is concerned with human relationships within an organisation, the human side of business administration dealing with all aspects of the employee including psychological and social aspects, a strategically oriented, managerial driver of competitive advantage and, the fundamental to all management functions, among others (Opatha, 2021).

Human Resource Management is therefore “the function within an organisation that focuses on the recruitment of, management of, and providing direction and guidance for the people who work in an organisation” (Hearthfield (2019).

According to Adeyemo (2011), HRM organisational functions can be grouped into; Personnel Utilization (which covers Recruitment, Selection, Deployment, Promotion, Appraisal, Training and Development), Personnel Motivation (covering Job Design, Job Satisfaction, Remuneration, Fringe Benefits, Consultation, Negotiation and participation) and, Personnel Protection (which deals with the Working Condition, Welfare Services and Safety of the employees in the organisation).

Human Resource Managers are saddled with the responsibilities of managing every activity revolving around the employees of the organisation and must therefore be individuals and leaders who are inventive and innovative in nature, competent in terms of managing grievances among workers and proactive in detecting intra-conflict among the staff and be to deal with the issues so those do not affect the performance and productivity of the employee in question, and hence increase profit (Oladimeji and Olushola, 2020).

The role of HRM in talent management is such that, HR performs a key responsibility in shaping talent management strategies, by helping develop, monitor and implement strategies to obtain and improve the talent of the company's workforce, ensuring employees are successful (Cooke, 2023). HR applies effective talent management strategies to help the organisation identify the specific skills and qualities they need in new hires, making the recruitment process more efficient and effective (Vulpen, n. d). In addition, when employees feel valued, supported, and invested in, they are more likely to speak positively about their employer and this helps organisations enhance their reputation and employer-brand and attract new talent (Vulpen, n. d).

According to Varma and Chavan (2019), the initial role and function of HRM in its early days had been its focus on recruitment, training and development, employee relations, compensations and benefits and compliance, however, the changing business environment has seen it move from this to increased importance by developing future leadership and organisational competence, to actively participating in strategic framework formulation and implementation as a strategic business partner.

In the public sector, the functions of human resources management according to Yahiaoui, et al., (2015) is to provide public sector employees with the capability to manage healthcare, record keeping, promotion, benefits, compensation, and more, to create a management system to achieve long term goals and plans, study, target, and last but not least, to execute long term employment goals.

As further elaborated by the authors, public sector HRM is seen to be associated with softer norms and the ideal of “model employers” thus setting training and equal opportunities standards in the workplace, and it is seen to differ from the “hard” (more formal and “calculative”) mode of HRM obtainable in the private sector (Yahiaoui, et al., 2015).

Indeed, one key challenges of HRM in the public sector as aptly pointed out by Brunetto and Beattie (2019) suggests that; "public service organisations tend to be more pluralistic than corporate organisations with a wider range of stakeholders to satisfy including: national government, elected or nominated members, professional organisations, trade unions, key client groups and the wider public. Such a range of stakeholders is challenging for public sector leaders to manage as power is not equal between stakeholders, power is also dynamic in particular shifting as different coalitions emerge depending on issues."

In Nigeria, HRM has been found to play a key role in public sector productivity, with modern day HR practice leading to greater output and improved quality of products despite its numerous challenges in the sector (Benm, et al., 2022). HRM was found to be an effective tool for employee productivity in the Civil Service of Delta State in the study by Ogholaja (2023). HRM practices were found to determine and predict components of employee outcomes according to Onikoyi, et al., (2023) in their study to investigate the impact of HRM practices on competence, commitment, job satisfaction, motivation, cooperation with management, cooperation with co-workers, employee presence and compliance in the manufacturing sub-sector of South – Western Nigeria. Lastly, Abosede, et al., (2018) found that, human resource management significantly affected banks' non-financial performance in their study to examine the effect of human resource management (measured by: Reward management, Employee performance management and Employee resourcing) on non-financial performance of banks in Nigeria (measured by: market share, employees' satisfaction, efficiency, productivity and service quality).

When it comes to its role in driving TM practices, Varma and Chavan (2019), posit that, HR can promote talent management practices in the following ways; by recruiting the right candidates at the right time for the right position, by assessment of organisational competencies and cultivating them for higher results, by taming and aligning talent according to organisation strategy and the organisational culture so as to make right fitment, by finding talent management process gaps and taking corrective measures, by ensuring that talent management is not short term but rather with long-term mission with the future of organisation in mind, by ensuring accurate and fair performance evaluations, by anticipating, planning and adapting to the changing

business environment, by engaging employees and maintaining employee relations, and lastly, by developing retention strategies.

HRM in the Nigerian public sector is however not flawless. Some of its features according to Bem, et al., (2022), are that it is still in its infancy stages and fraught with several challenges, its practices in Nigeria are also a mix with western-inspired, with the evidence of cultural and institutional influences on it, the importation of new technology to enhance its implementation is allowed by the country but training managers on how to use those technologies is still lacking, several public sector organisations are highly unionised hampering some of its initiatives and, untrained office workers to carry on self-evaluations themselves as part of self-developmental HR among others, suggest that HRM in Nigeria still needs deliberate and committed attention in the area of development so it effectively discharges its functions to the public.

II. Conclusion

According to Olowu and Adamolekun (2005), it is becoming essential to secure and manage competent human resource as the most valuable resource of any organisation owing to the need for effective and efficient delivery of goods and services.

The Nigerian public sector plays a vital role in the running of the nation as it controls critical core infrastructures of the economy from education, to healthcare, social insurance, housing, security, technology, diplomatic relations just to mention a few (Ogwola, and Uranta, 2022). These directly impact the lives of the citizens (Ogwola, and Uranta, 2022).

This article highlighted talent management and the factors that shaped its practice in this sector of the country. This was to emphasise its importance on the sector's performance when practiced effectively.

To enhance talent management practices in the sector therefore, this article proposes measures tailored to the Nigerian public sector context. Such measures include minimising bureaucratic bottlenecks during recruitment, proactively promoting a performance-driven culture, investing in regular training and development programs, developing strong administrative competencies, fostering a culture of innovation, leveraging technology for transparency and accountability, engaging, challenging and motivating staff, improving staff compensation package and grooming leaders with a talent management culture. Each of these strategies is backed by evidence-based research.

As posited by Ojogiwa and Qwabe (2021), while effective talent management practices are essential to the attainment of public sector strategic objectives, public organisations should align their TM strategies with the requirements of the organisation while incorporating them into a strategic human resource management initiative.

To further advance the understanding of talent management in the Nigerian public sector therefore, this article recommends that future research focus on exploring the impact of talent management practices on organisational performance, investigating the role of leadership in driving talent management initiatives, examining the impact of institutional and socio-culture on talent management implementation the the sector and assessing the effectiveness of talent retention strategies in the gradually digitising/globalising public service in Nigeria today.

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