
**THE DETERMINANTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HRM) PRACTICES OF INDIGENOUS
AND MULTINATIONAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the determinants of human resource management (HRM) practices of indigenous and multinational construction companies in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research population consists of large and medium (MCFs and ICFs) operating within the study area. A preliminary study conducted shows that out of one hundred and fifteen (115) construction firms obtained from the list of registered firms with the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, only seven (7) MCFs and fifty-five (55) ICFs were identified as large and medium construction firms, respectively. Therefore, the sample size for this study is sixty-two (62) construction firms. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Human Resource Management Questionnaire (HRMQ)". The validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation to ensure the validity of the instrument. Data obtained from respondents was analysed using percentages and mean item score to analyse respondents' ranked opinions based on the 5-point Likert scale to assess the level of use of HRM practices and evaluate factors influencing HRM practices of construction firms in the study area. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions, with the Mann-Whitney U-test used to compare the practices of MCFs and ICFs. The Kruskal-Wallis test for this study was determined using SPSS. Based on the findings of this study, it was therefore concluded that in a firm where HRM is characterised by inconsistencies and deployment challenges, workers' productivity will be low. One of the recommendations made in the study was that the top management must consistently and periodically review the results of HR practices in their companies so that these should serve the company's mission statement and quality policy.

KEYWORDS: HRM Practices, Indigenous construction firms, Multinational construction companies and Akwa Ibom State.

Introduction

The construction industry in Nigeria is an upcoming industry, a sector regarded as a catalyst for growth, while its performance serves as an indicator for the nation's economy. However, a study that relates HRM practices to workers' productivity in Nigeria is not apparent; a need therefore exists to explore the correlation between HRM practices and workers' productivity in Nigeria. This is directed towards filling a literature dearth in this aspect and the need to stimulate improvement of productivity through HRM practices. Organizations are increasingly looking at HRM as a unique asset that can provide them with a sustained competitive advantage (Krishnan and Singh, 2007). The organization's philosophy on how to manage its workforce, its practices and policies, therefore needs to be well defined to improve workers' productivity in the construction industry in Nigeria in order to provide it with the required competitive advantage of HRM practices that influence worker productivity in the construction industry in Nigeria.

The state of HRM practices generally in the country leaves room for improvement, especially within the construction industry. Indigenous firms have not had a fair share of major construction activities in the country, as they are often awarded to their foreign counterparts who are considered more technically and managerially superior and efficient in fund acquisition, HRM, and project execution (Ogbebor, 2002; Oseni, 2002; Akintude, 2003). Understaffing, under-capitalization, and poor project performance in terms of meeting completion dates, work quality, and capital management, which has often led to bankruptcy and, in extreme cases, project abandonment, have over the years plagued indigenous firms. Preliminary studies conducted have shown that in Nigeria, a few large companies control a large percentage of the total workload of the construction industry, while a large number of small and medium-sized companies, which make up the class of indigenous firms, share a very low percentage of the construction workload. It is in this vein that this research seeks to review the HRM practices and policies of indigenous construction firms (ICFs) and multinational construction firms (MCFs) operating in Akwa Ibom State, thereby identifying best practices and the level of use adopted by these MCFs to increase the productivity of workers, aimed at aiding the ICFs to enhance their HRM practices for effective project delivery.

Statement of the Problem

One of the main causes of project failure is the lack of effective HRM practices. The HRM practices-ways of handling workers' welfare issues, recruitment and selection, training and development, human resource (HR) planning and workers' skills may determine how the worker copes with temporary work structures that make workers uncertain about their future and lead to reduced productivity and thus poor project delivery. Very little work is available on the level of use of HRM as a guide for companies, especially those in the construction industry in Nigeria. The problem of this study is therefore concerned with understanding the level of use of HRM practices and its influence on construction workers' productivity in Akwa Ibom State.

Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the effect of HRM practices on workers' productivity with a view to enhancing construction projects delivery in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- ❖ Evaluate factors influencing HRM practices of construction firms in the study area

Research Question

- ❖ To what extent do construction firms in Akwa Ibom State use HRM practices?

Conceptual Review

Concept of HRM

HRM history generally reflects that its development can be traced back to the late-eighteenth-century Industrial Revolution in England (Loosemore et al., 2003). According to Mahoney and Decktop (1986), research shows the application of what is now called job design, selection, training, and compensation in the utilization of human resources, which are all sub-functions of the HRM function. The economic and political conditions prevailing after the Second World War of 1939–1945 increased the demand for labour and personnel specialists to lead this era of HRM, viewing people as resources. Though this focus of the concept was voiced out in 1959 by Yoder (1959), it was never exploited in textbooks or in corporate titles (Mahoney and Decktop, 1986). According to this account of the evolution of the concept, the authors add that a shift to HRM in both theory and practice became predominant in the 1980s. As the economic and political influences of the superpower countries took their toll on HRM, this period and the 1990s were periods of radical change in both content and context. Mahoney and Decktop (1986) gave an extensive account of the evolution of this concept, starting from Personnel Administration (PA), through Industrial Relations (IR), Personnel Management (PM), and HRM as it was developing in the 1980s.

According to Udeze (2000), "there has been diversity in business practice in naming the function that is concerned with handling employment relationships." Following the creation of specialised departments in the 1920s and 1930s to handle the administration of the personnel programme, these departments were called personnel departments. The incursion of labour unions in the United States of America in the 1930s and 1940s resulted in this same function being named; many companies adopted the term Industrial Relations. Governments, hospitals, and schools at that time still used the term personnel management. Udeze (2000) defines personnel management as the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of activities involved in the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance, and separation of the human element in an organization. This is also the view of Flippo (1980), as he defines personnel management as "the planning, organizing, directing,

and controlling of the procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance, and separation of human resources to the end that individual, organizational, and societal objectives are accomplished." In the context of this research, human resource management is the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valuable asset, which is its people. In this light, the human resource management function is seen as proactive as opposed to the reactive nature of the personnel management function. Beach (1980) notes that "the basic beliefs and assumptions that management holds regarding the nature of man or the behaviour of people in organised group activity determine the methods and procedures they employ to accomplish organisational objectives." This confirms that managers, including human resource managers, are influenced to take action by their beliefs or assumptions. Subordinates are either trusted and functions are delegated to them or faced with tight control and a centralised decision-making process. The human resource manager here should aspire to get the best workforce through proper recruitment and training. This will result in an outstanding employee being employed; it will also lead to job fit. According to Drucker (1994), motivating workers requires managers to view labour as a resource rather than a problem, a cost, or an enemy to be feared. The implication of Drucker's assertion is that human resource managers should take the responsibility of making human resources effective. To do this, the narrow meaning of personnel management should be changed to human resource management, and the managers should be proactive in addition to carrying out personnel management functions.

Factors Influencing HRM Practices in the Construction Industry

When it comes to human resource management, there are several factors that influence day-to-day operations. As a result, HRM practises differ from one organisation to the next, as well as from one country to the next. Ozutku and Ozturkler (2009) suggest that external and internal factors affecting HR practices differ significantly across countries. There are various factors, internal and external, that have an influence on HRM practices. Some of the major factors which impact HRM practices are:

1. External factors:

According to Kane and Palmer (1995), external factors affecting HRM practices are those pressures on organisations that cannot be controlled and changed as per organisation needs for adapting in the HRM field. It is important to have a close look at external factors as these impact the HRM practices of the organisation. To avoid HR burnout, HR has to be sure that they are paying close attention to external influences. So well-developed strategy for human resources should take into consideration external factors because there is a good chance that these external factors affect the organization's work. These external factors include the following:

(i) ***Economic Conditions/Changes.*** One of the biggest external influences is the shape of the current economy. Not only does it affect the current talent pool in the organization, but it might affect the complete selection, hiring ability, and compensation structure of the organization. Satow & Wang (1994) found that due to the development in the global economy, the international dimension of HR practices has become more and more significant. The economic crisis in 2001 resulted in a decrease in demand, and so manufacturing and employment. Besides, many firms cut the wages and salaries of their employees. Again, in 2008, like many other countries, Turkey was under the influence of an economic crisis in which similar results were observed. HR practice focus has shifted from traditional topics to broad concepts such as globalisation and international competition. Kane and Palmer (1995) cite the economic recession as having resulted in a reduced workforce in Australia. Mello (2006) discusses how economic trends, such as the unemployment rate, would have an influence on any achievement of an organization. Rosman and colleagues (2013) stressed the significant interference of the national economy on HR policies. To cope with the turbulence in the environment, HRM while implementing HR practices should not only know what's happening in the world around them but also create a plan for when there is an economic downturn.

(ii) ***Technological Change/ Advancements.*** Change in technology can provide firms with a better infrastructure and boost business growth. The increase in the number of technological alternatives or innovation in business functions creates a positive image for firms, which further increases their revenues and image in the market. Technology affects HRM to a greater extent because of the high degree of interaction between technology and HRM. Changes in technology can make it possible to have improved human resource functions such as selection, recruitment, educating, training, performance appraisal, observing, determining wages and salaries. Development in HR can be learned and implemented faster. Kane and Palmer (1995) pointed out that recruitment, staffing, the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the workforce are affected by the usage of technology. According to DeFillippi (2002), technology changes the way we work and the roles we undertake. Tiwari and Saxena (2012) argued that technology facilitates the growth of a multinational enterprise and pointed out that technology provides new methods for HRM practices. It provides a series of business advantages. Technological developments alter the context of HR practices and the way they are implemented.

(iii) ***Labour Laws/Government Regulations.*** In all organisations, the human resources department is always under constant pressure to stay within the law and work as per workplace compliance. These types of existing regulations or new changes influence every process of the HR department, including hiring, training, compensation, termination, and much more. All of the policies for human

resource management should be in accordance with legal needs. Without adhering to such regulations, a company can be heavily fined or face other legal actions. Kane and Palmer (1995) pointed out that occupational health, industrial relations, and equal opportunity for all can be influenced by government legislation. Mabey and Salaman (1995) found that for any strategic training and development activities in an organization, government policies and legislation are important. Mello (2006) indicated that legislation and regulation have positive impacts on every function and activity of an organization. Tiwari and Saxena (2012) also indicated that HRM policies and activities' formation and implementation should be in line with the legislation and regulations of countries. Therefore, the differences in HRM practices in various organisations are also due to this legislation and regulations.

(iv) ***Diversity and Discrimination (Workforce Demographics)***: One of the most powerful forces affecting work and organisations is changing worker demographics. Demographics include factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, occupation, seniority, salary level, and marital and family status. The workforce of 2015 will be different than it was in 2005. The age distribution, characteristics, values, and expectations of the new workforce are remarkably different than those of the past. Shenhav & Haberfeld (1992) pointed out that while diversity was always present in the workforce in terms of age and skill, this diversity has grown more over the last two to three decades. The number of women in the work force has increased significantly, as has the proportion of different ethnic groups. Due to these changing workforce dimensions, the human resources department must look for different ways to hire, attract, and retain this new set of candidates. As Pfeffer (1985) suggests, sensitivity to demographic effects can help provide a context to understand organisational behaviour. They have to adopt different ways to hire, offer different types of compensation packages, attractive policies, and a conducive work environment to this new workforce. Gibb (2001) makes a reference to demographic differences in employee evaluations of HRM. Guest (1999) considers demographic differences in relation to the number of HRM practices employed by the organization. Konrad and Hartmann (2002) examined the impact of gender and ethnicity on employee attitudes towards EEO initiatives. Knowledge of employee demographic differences helps HR practitioners in the development of their HRM policies and practices that increase their impact on employees in the long run.

2. Internal Factors

Internal factors that affect HRM practices are related to the events and changes taking place within the organisation. This can include changes in ownership; changes in the internal management structure; mergers; acquisitions; and significant downsizing or hiring trends. The internal environment of organizations strongly affects their HR

practices. According to Zheng and Morrison's (2009) study, various HRM practices at small and medium enterprises are influenced by organizational contextual variables including ownership, age, and size of firms. Milkovich and Boudreau (1991) pointed out that researchers have compiled a list of organizational characteristics which are related to HR practices. The important internal factors are as follows:

(i) **Organisations Size:** The size of an organisation has a greater impact on HR practices. The larger the firm, the more refined and specific the practices are. Organization size plays an important role in explaining the intensity and type of HR practices within the organisation (Gravana et al. 2008). McPherson (2008) suggests that there are large numbers of small firms that do not practice formal HR activities. In large organizations, for each functional area, there may be a need for a different HR department and practices (Jackson et al., 1989; Kaynak et al., 1998). The size of the firms forces the firms to add new dimensions to their HR implementation. The size of an organisation is also significant for managerial style, in terms of being autocratic or participative. Large organisations can be more democratic, so their departments or branches might be more autonomous. For effective management in these types of establishments, decentralisation is a necessity. So, there is less control and more self-confidence. Conversely, small and medium-sized enterprises generally have a centralised organisational structure and, so, managerial practice. Therefore, the human resources of those firms are under the close control of their managers.

(ii) **Project Management Factors:** Sufficient men and materials are not found in some working sites due to this factor. The time period for accomplishing a work is delayed. A good transportation facility should be provided by the firm to the workers (Alum and Lim, 2005). Improper work scheduling, as well as a lack of critical construction equipment or labor, can lead to a loss of productivity. Improper planning of project-initiation procedures generally leads to lost productivity of workers. Additionally, poor site layout can contribute to a loss of productivity. Workers have to walk or drive a long way to lunch rooms, rest areas, washrooms, entrances, and exits, affecting overall productivity (Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering (AACE) International Recommended Practice No. 25R-03, 2004).

(iii) **Unfair wages:** In Nigeria, there is no hard and fast rule concerning the minimum wage for construction workers as different wages are being paid at different sites across the country. This normally prompts the conduction workers to migrate to where they will be better remunerated since there is no job security. The one-of nature of the construction industry has always been a contributing factor, which makes it difficult for the majority of construction workers to join any trade union. This explains why their wages cannot be jointly negotiated, as it is the case in the government establishment (Udeze, 2000).

(iv) ***Lack of Motivation.*** Human potential is boundless, but it requires motivation in order to excel (Schrader, 1972 cited in Fagbenle, 1997; Wachira, 2000). Motivation may come in various forms, such as money, recognition, bonuses, job security, participation in decision-making, finishing and goals. It is therefore the responsibility of the contractor to quickly identify the most demanding motivators for his operatives and make use of them.

(v) ***Language Barrier and Communication.*** For construction workers to be effective, they must clearly understand what is required of them. Human resource managers do not communicate the work plan and/or schedule of work to the workers, and the workers only get to know about the day's work in the morning. The workers, in turn, do not get an opportunity to make any input in this regard, and most of the operatives have a belief that their contributions might be very important. In fact, the truth of the matter is that very few contractors possess the requisite planning.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The research population consists of large and medium (MCFs and ICFs) operating within the study area. A preliminary study conducted shows that out of one hundred and fifteen (115) construction firms obtained from the list of registered firms with the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, only seven (7) MCFs and fifty-five (55) ICFs were identified as large and medium construction firms, respectively. Therefore, the sample size for this study is sixty-two (62) construction firms. The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire titled "Human Resource Management Questionnaire (HRMQ)". The validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation to ensure the validity of the instrument. Data obtained from respondents was analysed using percentages and mean item score to analyse respondents' ranked opinions based on the 5-point Likert scale to assess the level of use of HRM practices and evaluate factors influencing HRM practices of construction firms in the study area. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions, with the Mann-Whitney U-test used to compare the practices of MCFs and ICFs. The Kruskal-Wallis test for this study was determined using SPSS.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question

To what extent do construction firms in Akwa Ibom State use HRM practices?

Level of Use of Human Resource Management Practices by Indigenous Construction Firms

The level of use of identified human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area were collected on a Five-Point Likert Scale and

evaluated using Mean Score. Result of the relative level of use of the human resource management practices by the indigenous construction firms is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area

Human resource management practices	N	Sum	Mean Score (MS)	Rank
Provision of safe working environment	53	214	4.04**	1
Treating employees with respect and dignity	53	213	4.02	2
Good communication among staff and management	53	210	3.96	3
Provision of safety gadgets for the workers while on the job (e.g. safety boot, helmet and gloves etc.)	53	206	3.89	4
Early payment of wages and salaries	53	201	3.79	5
Setting objective or task that the worker is capable of delivering	53	198	3.74	6
Clearly communicating exactly what the firms expectations are to workers	53	190	3.58	7
Recognition of certificate of competency on skills and trainings acquired	53	185	3.49	8
Recognition of worker long-term commitment and loyalty to the firm	53	184	3.47	9
How often are factors like skills, ability and competence considered in your organisation in its recruitment process	53	183	3.45	10
Safety seminars and workshop for workers with safety publicity leaflets	53	183	3.45	10
Management identifying employee's problems and helping to solve them	53	183	3.45	10
Appointment of safety officer who sees to the safety of workers while on the job	53	182	3.43	13
Annual awards for hard working workers	53	181	3.42	14
quarterly meetings, that is open to all workers and management on the company achievements and progress	53	180	3.40	15
Compensation practice	53	178	3.36	16
Implementing workers' input and suggestions	53	178	3.36	16
Fairness of pay (overtime, bonuses, etc.)	53	176	3.32	18
Opportunity to develop skills	53	173	3.26	19
Reward for skills and competencies acquired by individual worker	53	171	3.23	20
How often is job analysis and job design carried out in your organization	53	166	3.13	21

Human resource management practices	N	Sum	Mean Score (MS)	Rank
Clarity of job description	53	164	3.09	22
Regular assessment / evaluation of workers performance on the job at least once a year	53	162	3.06	23
Assessment of workers' capabilities as the source of competitive advantage	53	161	3.04	24
The training on the job	53	160	3.02	25
Accuracy of persons' specification	53	159	3.00	26
Communication of performance data to workers on a routine basis throughout the year	53	159	3.00	26
Workers promotion to positions of higher pay and or responsibility within the firm	53	158	2.98	28
Good orientation/induction training of newly hired workers	53	157	2.96	29
Good recruitment advertisement (advert not misleading in terms of what the organisation actually practices)	53	154	2.91	30
Formulation and implementation of human resource activities in line with overall corporate strategy of the firm	53	148	2.79	31
Provision of first aid, canteen facilities, restrooms and sanitary facilities	53	148	2.79	31
How often does your organisation follow good HRM procedures in its recruitment process	53	144	2.72	33
Fair and realistic appraisal system	53	144	2.72	33
How often does your organisation administer employment tests/interviews	53	140	2.64	35
How often does your organisation carry out team building exercise to ensure that workers blend with each other	53	134	2.53	36
Allowances (canteen, transportation, housing, etc.)	53	126	2.38	37
Provision of sick leave with pay, health insurance	53	125	2.36*	38
Average Mean Score			3.22	

** The highest mean level

* The least mean level

The above table 1 presents the means score analysis of the ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area was identified as "Provision of safe working environment (4.04 means

score) while the lowest rank was “Provision of sick leave with pay, health insurance (2.36 means score).

Level of Use of Human Resource Management Practices by Multinational Construction Firms

The level of use of identified human resource management practices by multinational construction firms in the study area were collected on a Five-Point Likert Scale and evaluated using Mean Score. Result of the relative level of use of the human resource management practices by the multinational construction firms is indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by multinational construction firms in the study area

Human resource management practices	N	Sum	Mean Score (MS)	Ranks
How often is job analysis and job design carried out in your organization	7	33	4.71**	1
Formulation and implementation of human resource activities in line with overall corporate strategy of the firm	7	33	4.71**	1
How often does your organisation administer employment tests/interviews	7	33	4.71**	1
Regular assessment/evaluation of workers performance on the job at least once a year	7	33	4.71**	1
Provision of safe working environment	7	33	4.71**	1
Accuracy of persons' specification	7	32	4.57	6
Clarity of job description	7	32	4.57	6
How often does your organisation follow good HRM procedures in its recruitment process	7	32	4.57	6
Early payment of wages and salaries	7	32	4.57	6
Fair and realistic appraisal system	7	32	4.57	6
Setting objective or task that the worker is capable of delivering	7	32	4.57	6
Provision of safety gadgets for the workers while on the job (e.g. safety boot, helmet and gloves etc.)	7	32	4.57	6
Appointment of safety officer who sees to the safety of workers while on the job	7	32	4.57	6
Good recruitment advertisement (advert not misleading in terms of what the organisation actually practices)	7	31	4.43	14
The training on the job	7	31	4.43	14
Good orientation/induction training of newly hired workers	7	31	4.43	14
Allowances (canteen, transportation, housing, etc.)	7	31	4.43	14
Clearly communicating exactly what the firms expectations are to workers	7	31	4.43	14

Human resource management practices	N	Sum	Mean Score (MS)	Ranks
How often are factors like skills, ability and competence considered in your organisation in its recruitment process	7	30	4.29	19
Fairness of pay (overtime, bonuses, etc.)	7	30	4.29	19
Communication of performance data to workers on a routine basis throughout the year	7	30	4.29	19
Assessment of workers' capabilities as the source of competitive advantage	7	30	4.29	19
Provision of first aid, canteen facilities, restrooms and sanitary facilities	7	30	4.29	19
Good communication among staff and management	7	30	4.29	19
How often does your organisation carry out team building exercise to ensure that workers blend with each other	7	30	4.29	19
Opportunity to develop skills	7	29	4.14	26
Reward for skills and competencies acquired by individual worker	7	29	4.14	26
Implementing workers' input and suggestions	7	29	4.14	26
Treating employees with respect and dignity	7	29	4.14	26
Compensation practice	7	28	4.00	30
Provision of sick leave with pay, health insurance	7	28	4.00	30
Safety seminars and workshop for workers with safety publicity leaflets	7	28	4.00	30
quarterly meetings, that is open to all workers and management on the company achievements and progress	7	27	3.86	33
Recognition of certificate of competency on skills and trainings acquired	7	25	3.57	34
Workers promotion to positions of higher pay and or responsibility within the firm	7	23	3.29	35
Recognition of worker long-term commitment and loyalty to the firm	7	22	3.14	36
Management identifying employee's problems and helping to solve them	7	21	3.00	37
Annual awards for hard working workers	7	20	2.86*	38
Average Mean Score			4.23	

** The highest mean level

* The least mean level

The above table 2 presents the means score analysis of the ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by multinational construction firms in the study area. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest ranks of the

level of use of human resource management practices by multinational construction firms in the study area was identified as “How often is job analysis and job design carried out in your organization” (4.71 means score) while the lowest rank was “Provision Annual awards for hard working workers” (2.86 means score).

Discussion of the findings

The result of the data in table 1 presents the ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area, the result proved that the highest ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area was identified as “Provision of safe working environment” (4.04 means score) while the lowest rank was “Provision of sick leave with pay, health insurance” (2.36 means score). The result was in agreement with the findings of Mabey and Salaman (1995) who found that for any strategic training and development activities in an organisation government policies and legislation are important.

The result of the data in table 2 presents the ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area, the result proved that the highest ranks of the level of use of human resource management practices by multinational construction firms in the study area were as identified as each of the following “the frequency at which job analysis and job design is carried out in the organization, formulation and implementation of human resource activities in line with overall corporate strategy of the firm, the frequency at which the organisation administer employment tests/interviews, regular assessment/evaluation of workers performance on the job at least once a year and provision of safe working environment” (4.71 means score) while the lowest rank was “annual awards for hard working workers” (2.86 means score)., the result was in agreement with the findings of Zheng and Morrison (2009), that various HRM practices at small and medium enterprises are influenced by organizational contextual variables including ownership, age and size of firms.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that in a firm where HRM is characterised by inconsistencies and deployment challenges, workers’ productivity will be low. Also, the level of use of human resource management practices by indigenous construction firms in the study area was identified as "provision of safe working environment." While the level of use of human resource management practices by multinational construction firms in the study area were identified as each of the following: "the frequency at which job analysis and job design are carried out in the organization; formulation and implementation of human resource activities in line with the overall corporate strategy of the firm; the frequency at which the organisation administers employment tests and interviews; regular assessment and evaluation of

workers' performance on the job at least once a year; and provision of safe working environment."

Recommendations

1. The top management must consistently and periodically review the results of HR practices in their companies so that these should serve the company's mission statement and quality policy.
2. The indigenous construction companies should improve on their human resource management practices at least up to the level of the multinational companies so that they can get the best from their workers.

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