PERCEIVED INFRASTRUCTURAL FACTORS AFFFECTING ADOPTION OF E-RECRUITMENT AMONG HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HRM) PRACTITIONERS IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The emerging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a vital tool in the conduct of staff recruitment. The process of conducting staff recruitment with the emerging ICT is referred to as e-recruitment and it offers a lot of benefits to Human Resource Management (HRM) Practitioners. Studies abound in the more developed societies on the level of adoption of e-recruitment and the infrastructural factors promoting the level of adoption, but there are only a few studies in this area in Nigeria. This study was, therefore, undertaken to investigate the perceived infrastructural factors affecting adoption of e-recruitment among HRM practitioners in South West Nigeria. The study was anchored on World System Theory and was conducted among HRM Practitioners in South West Nigeria. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire administered on 1032 respondents and the conduct of 20 In-Depth-Interviews. Data collected were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

The study identified technology dependence (84.6%), low internet penetration (86.0%), cost of acquisition, maintenance and upgrading of software (90.0%) and inadequate power supply (88.4%) as perceived major infrastructural factors affecting level of adoption of e-recruitment in South West Nigeria. It is recommended that Government and other stakeholders should improve the technological landscape of the country by providing relevant technological infrastructure; local investors should also design software that will be suitable and affordable to HRM Practitioners.

Key words: Information and Communication Technology, Adoption, e-recruitment

INTRODUCTION

The emerging Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the major features of the increasing technological change in the society today and it constitutes a major driving factor in the process of globalization. . ICT refers to development of innovative techniques of communicating faster than before. Innovations in information technology have created a digital revolution that is changing the way the world works, learns, communicates and transacts business (Al-Gore 2000; Awodun & Otokiti, 2001). In the contemporary world, the internet and the web have transformed every facet of human economic and social endeavours. Websites, chat rooms, instant messaging systems, e-mail, electronic bulletin boards and other internet-based communication systems have made it much easier for people with common interests to find each other, exchange information, and collaborate with each other.

More specifically, ICT tools have revolutionised commerce, creating entirely new ways for retailers and their customers to make transactions, for businesses to manage the flow of production inputs and market products; the news industry has also been dramatically transformed by the emergence of numerous internet-enabled news-gathering and dissemination outlets; education at all levels has been transformed by communication, educational, and presentational software (Al-Gore, 2000). At the level of organisational operations, most activities have been transformed

by the utilisation of information and communication technology. One of such is the Human Resource Management (HRM) function of recruitment, selection and placement, ordinarily referred to as staff recruitment (Etomi, 2002).

Staff recruitment is a very important organisational function handled with all seriousness, because the profitability and survival of organisations depend, to a great extent, on the quality of the staff and the process through which they are brought into organisations. In the past, organisations depended on simple technologies such as handbills, radio, television services, manual typewriters and so on, to conduct their recruitment functions. But recently, the recruitment function has undergone dramatic changes as a result of information and communication technologies such as the computer, computer software, webcam, internet, websites, telephone/cell phone, e-mail, video-conference and so on, leading Kay (2000, cited in Sign & Finn, 2003) to remark that few markets have been hit as hard by the power of the web and e-commerce as the recruiting industry and that while there are still changes underway, it is clear that the web has quickly and dramatically changed the way recruiting industry works. Torrington, Hall and Taylor (2005) argued that the use of the internet for recruitment purposes is undoubtedly the most striking recent development in the field. The process of using these modern technological tools for staff recruitment functions is referred to as e-recruitment (electronic recruitment), online recruitment or internet recruitment.

Electronic recruitment is the process of personnel recruitment using electronic resources in particular the internet. Many organisations and recruitment agents have moved much of their recruitment process online so as to improve the speed by which candidates can be matched with live vacancies. Using database technologies and online job advertising boards and search engines, employers can now conclude their recruitment activities within a very short time. Also, using an online e-recruitment system saves the employer time and they can, more quickly, rate the candidates, while several persons in HR can independently review candidates (CIPD 2003). In general, e-recruitment offers a number of advantages which include simplicity of the recruitment process, speed, ease and comfort, cost saving, accuracy of processes, access to more applicants.

Moreover, studies and statistics abound especially in the more developed societies on the level of adoption of e-recruitment and factors promoting such level of adoption (Gill, 2001; CIPD, 2003, 2005; Greenspan, 2003; Lee, 2005; McCurry, 2005; Aitchison, 2006; Reilly & Barber, 2006) but there is dearth of statistics on the level of usage and factors promoting or militating against effective usage. In Nigeria, many organisations make use of the electronic enabled recruitment process whereby they only make use of the electronic methods for applicants to submit their application after this, unfortunately all other aspects of the process are handled manually. This suggests a low level of adoption of e-recruitment. This study was, therefore, undertaken to investigate the perceived infrastructural factors affecting adoption of e-recruitment among HRM practitioners in South West Nigeria.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning of e-recruitment

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become inevitable tools in the conduct of staff recruitment, selection and placement in organisations. The use of ICT has been categorized into two namely: (i) Soft or non-intensive use which involves the use of ICT tools such as the computer for storing information on applicants' records, conduct of written tests and so on, without the use of core hardware. (ii) Hard or intensive use which involves the use of the more sophisticated ICT tools such as the internet, websites, video conferencing, all of which require installation of core software. Using the emerging ICT tools for staff recruitment has led to the emergence of the concept e-recruitment or online recruitment.

Armstrong (2012) defined e-recruitment as a process that uses the internet to advertise or post vacancies, provide information about the jobs and the organisation and enable e-mail communication to take place between employers and candidates. It involves candidates searching for job information and completing at least some part of the application process online, even if that is only reading a position describing or finding instructions for applying. It ranges from the applicant interface for advertising vacancies and making job applications, to the back office processes, which allow a liaison between human resources (HR) and line managers to set up a talent pool or database of potential recruits. E-Recruitment originated in the form of independent job sites Bulletin Board Systems in the 1980s. Initially only the United States Universities and the Military had access to internet facilities. However the PC revolution that embraced the world in the early 1990s changed the corporate landscape completely. In 1994, United States launched Monster.com with 20 clients and 200 job openings (Anderson, 2003). Monster.com pioneered e-recruitment and today is the leading internet recruitment portal globally. The emergence of E-recruitment as a strategy of cost and time saving mechanism coincided with the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) in the Public Sector geared toward addressing institutional and structural problems afflicting public bureaucracies in both developing and developed countries (Snell, Stueber and Lepak, 2002). In 1991, British scientist Tim Berne's Lee introduced the World Wide Web (www) to academic scientists. This is a harbinger to internet recruiting. Later, Netscape revolutionalized the concept of web browsing by making the internet accessible to the public. In 1997, KPMG established a career website at www.KPMGcareers.com in order to remain competitive and to enhance its image as a world class e-recruitment specialist.

The reason for the shift towards online recruitment activities, and use of Web 2.0 technology for more Human Resource Management functions is mostly due to the inadequacy of the paper-based process. Most hiring managers and line managers mention the lack of systematic log of information and improper storage of paper applications leading to inevitable delays in application processing time. This increases the time to hire and thus cost to hire, while compromising the quality of hire due to incompetent practices (Depardieu and Islam, 2008).

According to Depardieu and Islam (2008), automated systems greatly increase efficiency of the traditional recruitment methods and selection tools. Due to the growth of the Internet, and the

obvious benefits that Applicant Tracking Systems bring, more and more organisations are streamlining their recruitment process with e-recruitment software. The e-recruitment software is usually integrated at all the stages of Recruitment and Selection functions. The increasing utilisation of ICT for staff recruitment is an aspect of the Human Resource Information System (HRIS) which involves the use of ICT not just to cover the recruitment cycle but more widely to embrace the whole HR processes in such a way that the HR processes will be integrated and together, tailored and aligned with the corporate structure for strategic reasons. This way the Chief Executive and top level officers could be linked together to play the role of participant observers, but without tampering or disturbing the HR processes. A major reason for this is that since HR activities cut across all departments, there is need to ensure best practices which will translate to effective management of the human resources. It also provides opportunity to transform HR function into a customer-focused and responsive function and regular management information (Ensher, 2002; Kettley & Reilly, 2003; Storey, 2007).

Advantages of e-recruitment

According to Mathis and Jackson, (2006), major advantages of the use of the hard core ICT, otherwise known as internet recruitment include cost saving, time saving, generation of expanded pool of applicants, and global catchment opportunity. Other scholars (Newell and Shackleton, 2000; Taylor, 2002; IRS, 2002b; Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2005) argued that advantages derived include: It lowers costs to the organisation; Posting jobs online is cheaper than advertising in the newspapers; It does not involve intermediaries; There is reduction in the time for recruitment (over 65% of the hiring time); It facilitates the recruitment of right type of people with the required skills; It enhances improved efficiency of recruitment process; It gives a 24 hour access to an online collection of resumes; It helps the organisations to weed out the unqualified candidates in an automated way; Recruitment websites also provide valuable data and information regarding the compensation offered by the competitors which helps the HR managers to take various HR decisions on promotions, salary trends in industry and so on.

In a related manner, Armstrong (2012) argues that much of the evidence supporting the use of e-recruitment points to time and cost savings: The speed with which several steps of the recruitment process can be carried out online reportedly leads to a shorter recruitment cycle. Applications can be processed and delivered within minutes rather than weeks, saving both organisations and job seekers valuable time. Additionally, organisations can save considerable amounts of money when recruiting online. Job seekers have a greater access to more job advertisement and have the possibility through the company's web site to research their potential employer and make a more informed choice in selecting the jobs they are interested in. Employers have a wider choice if more applications reach them in time. In addition to this, by not having hard-copies, both employer and applicant save on time, printing costs and postage. Soft-copies can be deleted or stored at little expense.

Similarly, research on U.S. Federal Government recruitment methods found that e-recruitment can serve several recruitment purposes, including improving an organisation's image through branding, educating applicants about the organisation and its career opportunities, and making it easier for applicants to update their resumes and contact information. Other benefits according to Torrington et al, (2005), Storey, (2007) and Onyeonoru & Omolawal (2013), include the fact that there are no strict space constraints for position announcements posting online, which allows publishing comprehensive advertisements with links to job descriptions, applicant specifications, and job previews. Furthermore, information about open positions and applicants can be updated quickly and efficiently. E-recruiting allows hiring executives to publicize a job opening widely and

almost immediately by typing a job description into the e-recruitment system. The system can post the opening on thousands of Web sites, including general job-search sites, niche sites devoted to specific industries, and professional association sites. Sites may be free to both the hiring organisation and the applicant, or may require the hiring organisation to pay a fee to post jobs (Williams, 2010)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The world system theory developed by Wallerstein perceives the world as a social system which is self contained with a set of boundaries held together by variety of forces. Wallerstein (1974) identifies two major world forces: the metropolis (developed countries) and the periphery (less developed countries). To him, the countries of the world belong to either of the two categories. The more developed countries (metropolis) are more advanced and more capable of responding to their internal needs, whereas the less developed countries (periphery) have a reflex type of development and are constrained by their incorporation into the global economic system. This constraint results from adaptation to the requirement of the expansion of the metropolis.

The core or metropolis, according to the theorists, are technologically advanced, utilise modern technology for their production, exchange and consumption, pay higher wages, have relatively free markets and have higher standard of living. The periphery on the other hand is characterized by low technology, low wages, weak and fragile states and lower standard of living. The above situation therefore tends to increase economic inequality and sustain the digital divide between the rich and the poor countries of the world. As such the periphery will continue to support the core with cheap labour, raw materials and provide markets for their finished goods whereas the core will also support the periphery with technology, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and so on.

The adoption of the theory is justified on the ground that many institutions and organisations in the metropolis have benefitted and are still benefitting from the effective use of technology especially for their production processes and information communication. This is because these technologies depend on easy mode of acquisition, availability of fund and reliable infrastructure, conditions hard to meet in Nigeria and other less developed countries, whereas these conditions may not be challenges for the metropolis from where the technologies originate. The world system theory therefore provides the basis for diffusion of technology from the metropolis to the periphery (Wallerstein 1974; Bosewell 1989; Ritzer 1996; Offiong 2001; Bussiek 2005).

METHOD

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design, with a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The study location was the south west geo-political zone of the country comprising of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo and Ekiti states; and the zone was chosen by virtue of the fact that it is home to many big manufacturing and service organisations regularly engaged in staff recruitment. Furthermore, the zone occupies a vital and leading position in the link with other nations of the world through early adoption of western education and technology.

The study was conducted among 1052 Human Resource Management Practitioners in south-west Nigeria. HRM practitioners refer to individuals or officials involved in human resource management in the Civil and Public services, Organised Private Sector and Unorganized Private Sector such as HR Consultancy, Recruiting Agencies and so on. They were identified and located through the membership records of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria (CIPMN), the only body licensed to promote, develop and regulate the practice of HRM in Nigeria.

The primary data were collected with the aid of structured 109 item questionnaire administered on 1032 respondents selected through total enumeration technique; and in-depth-interviews conducted with 20 respondents who were purposively selected by virtue of their positions in their various organisations and length of involvement in staff recruitment. Data generated through the study instruments were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Every attempt was made to observe and respect relevant ethical issues associated with research work in the social sciences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

(a) Selected socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Frequency Distribution on selected socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Sex	**Freq (N=1032**	**%**
Male	634	61.4
Female	398	38.6
Marital status	**Freq**	**%**
Single	142	13.8
Married	738	71.5
Others	152	14.7
Educational Qualifications	**Freq**	**%**
HND	134	13
First degree	346	33.5
Master's degree	482	46.7
Ph.D	24	2.3
Others	46	4.5
Nature of Employment	**Freq**	**%**
Paid employment	832	80.6
Self employment	200	19.4
Sector in paid employment	**Freq**	**%**
Private	602	72.4
Public	230	27.6
If private, status of organisation	**Freq**	**%**
Limited Liability	119	19.8
Public Liability	426	70.8
Multi-national	57	9.4
Total	602	100
Mode of self Employment	**Freq**	**%**
Management Consultancy	36	18
HR Consultancy	62	31
Recruiting Agency	102	51
Total	200	100
Nature of business	**Freq**	**%**
Service	501	48.5
Manufacturing	510	49.5
Others	21	2.0
Staff Grade	**Freq**	**%**
Junior Management	42	4.1
Middle level management	293	28.4
Senior/Top management	602	58.3
Director	95	9.2

In terms of sex, the results indicated that majority of the respondents, (61.4%) were male compared with their female counterparts (38.6%). This result was expected considering the lower level of women in the formal sector in Nigeria, especially at the top positions and vital sections of

formal organisations. The finding therefore supports existing literature and statistics on male dominance in the formal sector (Awe, 1990; Udegbe, 1997). On the marital status of the respondents, (71.5%) were married, while others were single, divorced, separated or widowed.

In terms of educational qualification, majority of the respondents, (49%) had post graduate qualifications. None possessed a qualification below Higher National Diploma (HND) while 2.3% of them possessed doctorate degrees. In addition, 76.5% of the respondents possessed additional professional qualification, and this was expected because as professionals, they were expected to possess the qualifications of the relevant body regulating the HR profession and in fact, be registered with such a body. These findings are very revealing and suggest a high level of educational attainment among the respondents. This high educational qualification coupled with the professional qualifications they possessed would in no small measure account for their statuses and positions in their various organisations, and would also enhance their performance in the discharge of their duties.

On the nature of employment, majority of the respondents (80.6%) were in paid employment, while the rest were self employed. Among the 832 respondents in paid employment, 72.4% were in the private sector. Among the respondents in the private sector, 70.8% were in public liability companies, while the others were in limited liability companies (19.8%) and multi national companies (9.4%). Among the respondents who were in self employment (200), 51% were Recruitment Agencies while others were Management Consultants (18%) and HR Consultants (31%).

Furthermore, among the total respondents, a narrow majority (49.5%) was in the manufacturing sub-sector closely followed by those (48.5%) in the service sub-sector. This suggests a wide diversity among the respondents and such will enhance a more holistic analysis of the topic of the study, and will also provide a basis for comparisons between the two sectors. On the staff grades, majority (58.3%) were in Senior/Top management cadres, while just 4.1% fell into the junior management cadre. The majority position suggests that unlike in the past, the Human Resource Managers in contemporary Nigeria have come to occupy vital positions in organisational hierarchies and are now seen as strategic partners as argued by Oni (2003).

(b) Perceived infrastructural factors affecting adoption of e-recruitment

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by perceived infrastructural factors affecting utilisation of ICT for staff recruitment

Technology Dependence	**Freq. N=1032**	**%**
No	109	10.6
Yes	876	84.8
No Response	47	4.6
Low internet penetration	**Freq**	**%**
No	97	9.3
Yes	888	86
No Response	47	4.6
Cost of acquiring and upgrading of software and hardware	**Freq**	**%**
No	77	7.5
Yes	929	90
No Response	26	2.5
Lack of public utilities like power supply	**Freq**	**%**
No	78	7.6
Yes	42	4.1
No Response	912	88.4
Problem about integrating of e-recruitment with HR system	**Freq**	**%**
No	786	76.2
Yes	225	21.8
No Response	21	2.0

The Table above presents data on the perceived infrastructural factors that affect adoption of e-recruitment in South West Nigeria.

The study revealed that technology dependence is a major factor affecting adoption of e-recruitment as indicated by most respondents (84.6%). This finding confirms scholars' view that depending on imported technology will continue to be a challenge to this nation especially in the context of using technology for economic activities (Nduka, 2006). There is some local production and improvisation but the bulk of ICTs necessary for effective adoption of e-recruitment are imported as finished products. This creates a technological dependency for the actual technologies and services. A principal actor in the telecom sector in Nigeria (quoted in Obong, 2007) said "undue reliance on foreign companies" severely "upsets the successful implementation of the (digital) revolution." Another ICT actor (also quoted in Obong, 2007) in the Federal Ministry of Information in Abuja, the federal capital, agreed that the lack of basic infrastructure as well as the over-reliance on imports negatively impacts on the country's ability to achieve its ICT-related goals. In support of the above, a respondent describes the situation thus:

> *As at today, we still depend largely on foreign technology. Nigeria has not demonstrated that she can develop her own technology or even maintain the ones imported. That is why our markets are filled with goods, both new and fairly used imported from Asia and other countries. This dependence negatively affects the rate of development.*
> ***(IDI/Male HR Practitioner/Ibadan/2012)***

This result is a confirmation of the argument of the World system theorists on level of technological development of societies but what is of concern is that with the abundant natural and human resources in Nigeria and having gained independence over 50 years ago, the nation ought to have moved from the periphery to the core zone as classified by Wallerstein (1974).

Finding from the study indicated also that low internet penetration negatively affects the level of adoption of e-recruitment in Nigeria as confirmed by 86% of the respondents. This again shows a worrisome situation about the state of social and economic development of the nation especially as it affects the issue of technology. This confirms the view of scholars (Awe, 2010; Ben, 2010) that apart from the cities and state capitals, possession of computer is still seen as luxury which only few can afford. With the current internet usage in Nigeria compared with other more developed countries, there is no way such a low penetration level will not negatively affect the level of adoption of e-recruitment in Nigeria.

The state of the infrastructure – especially telecommunications infrastructure – poses a major hindrance to the use of ICTs in Nigeria, with Nigeria having one of the lowest teledensity in sub-Saharan Africa even as the rate increased exponentially between 2002 and 2006. In 2001 there were 0.43 main telephone lines for every 100 inhabitants, with a total cellular phone subscriber base of 330,000 (or 0.28 per 100 inhabitants). By August 2006, there were more than 1.5 million connected fixed lines and almost 27 million cellular phone lines in the country raising the teledensity to 23.29 in a five year period (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2006). Also, in term of fixed broadband, Nigeria is not doing well. Broadband refers to subscriptions to high-speed access to the public Internet (a TCP/IP connection), at downstream speeds equal to, or greater than, 256 kbit/s. This can include for example cable modem, DSL, fibre-to-the-home/building and other fixed (wired) broadband subscriptions. According to Internet Coaching Library (2012), Nigeria has 15,311 broadband subscriptions and ranked 136th in the world. However, this is grossly inadequate to provide adequate internet services for the country, and this has implication for the level of adoption of e-recruitment in Nigeria.

The study also found out that cost of acquiring, installing, maintaining and upgrading of relevant software is a major infrastructural factor affecting adoption of e-recruitment in Nigeria. This was indicated by 90% of the study population that the major problem is largely on the software needed to power the e-recruitment system. During an IDI session, a respondent supported the position of the majority and explained further as follows:

> *Nigerian market is filled with computer hardware that is adequate for effective utilisation. Where the problem lies is in the area of software needed to make the hardware work. Greater attention should therefore be focused on software availability.*
>
> ***(IDI/Male HR Practitioner/Ijebuode/2012)***

A respondent explains the situation more succinctly as follows:

> *Installing and maintaining of computer equipment and software are serious problems in Nigeria when you consider the low level of maintenance culture.*
> *This equipment will just function when newly installed and thereafter abandoned when they need to be upgraded.*
> ***(IDI/Male HR Practitioner/Otta/2012)***

Software such as AI, Application Tracking Software, HR software and so on are among the available software for e-recruitment. The challenge further involves sourcing for software that will make the e-recruitment package to be user friendly especially in a society like Nigeria where the availability of facilities is an issue. According to Mathis and Jackson (2006), the Application Tracking Systems do more than compiling incoming web-based resumes and track applicants during the hiring process. In addition, they also help in knocking out applicants who do not meet the minimum job requirements. They are also used in testing and screening applicants online, and finally, they also help to discover 'hidden talents from the applicants' pool. They therefore offer a number of benefits to users.

This finding aligns with the view of Awe, (2010), who had earlier on argued that software constitutes the heart of effective utilisation of ICT and that its unavailability in Nigeria poses a threat to effective utilisation. Awe (2010) argued further that any nation that values its sovereignty must take software serious. Software opportunities in Nigeria are very poor not being fully exploited to unleash the potentials of the Nigerian people and the Nigerian nation. Going further, he argues that realistic open source strategies are not promoted. Local developers also face challenges of harsh business environment, ignorance and patronage. Existing software promotion policies have not made much impact. For the local software industry to grow Nigeria is not seen as aggressively promoting, rewarding and encouraging local software developers and entrepreneurs. There are no practical initiatives to encourage the mass usage of indigenous software and the stimulation of demand locally and globally for local software products and services. The implication of the above is that the level of utilisation of ICT is not effective, thus hindering active competition in the global super-highways.

Lack of public utilities especially power supply was also identified as an infrastructural factor affecting the adoption of e-recruitment as indicated by 88.4% of the respondents. This confirms the findings of Imhonopi (2010) and Olanrewaju (2011) in their studies relating to adoption and utilisation of ICT for various socio-economic activities in the country. This was buttressed by a respondent during an IDI session as follows:

> *The poor and epileptic supply of electricity poses one of the greatest challenges to e-recruitment and utilisation of ICT in Nigeria in general for social and economic activities. Efforts at increasing power supply should be intensified at all levels of government.*
> ***(IDI/Male HR Practitioner/Lagos/2012)***

ICTs generally operate on electricity. Its availability and effective distribution could therefore have implication for effective utilisation of the ICTs. The GSM operators attribute their high tariff structure to the extremely high overhead costs of doing business in the country especially given the infamously epileptic nature of power supply. One of the major cellular phone providers in the country spends about N21 billion annually on electricity generation at its base stations" (Okonedo,

2005). This cost is passed on to the consumers. Successive governments in the country have focused attention on improving the power supply in Nigeria. For example, one of the priorities of the Obasanjo Administration was the provision of stable and regular electricity supply: in March 2000, the President replaced the NEPA management with a nine-member technical committee to run the utility with the mandate of ending power cuts by December 2001 (US Energy Information Administration, 2006). This was the first step in the achievement of this goal. The reform of the power sector continued with the re-naming of National Electrical Power Authority to Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN). The government also explored the prospects of privatization, foreign participation and encouraging other groups to get into the electricity supply market. The current administration is also focused on improving the electricity challenge being faced in the country. Although the situation has slightly improved as a result of the concerted efforts of the federal and state governments through the de-regulation of the power sector and involvement of the private sector in power generation and distribution, but the level of power supply is still too poor to leapfrog the level of utilisation of ICT in the country.

On integration of e-recruitment with HR systems in organisations, majority of the respondents did not agree that integration of e-recruitment with HR systems could affect the utilisation of ICT for staff recruitment. This is evidenced by the analysis of the responses where 76.2% indicated 'No'. This finding is very revealing and falls short of what scholars see as an emerging trend in HR systems (CIPD, 2005; Depardieu & Islam, 2008; Dessler, 2008). The finding also falls short of the findings of Reilly and Barber (2006) in their study in Ireland where e-recruitment was seen as having been fully integrated into the entire HR system. According to Mathis and Jackson (2006), elements in such integrated solution include: a requisition management system which facilitates requisition creation, routing, approval and posting of job opening; a recruiting solution which includes job advertisement, recruitment marketing, applicant tracking and online recruitment vendor management to increase and improve applicant pool quality; screening service such as background checks, skills and behavioural assessment services; and hiring management which involves software to capture and manage candidate information while providing standard workflow practices.

Furthermore, such integration involves creating a consonance with other HR functions and networking the process to the user departments and the chief executive officers. This will enable these officers to monitor the recruitment process, know the status of applicants as well as the situation report when recruitment and selection exercises are taking place. The process will also serve as check on the HR practitioners thereby making it difficult to introduce biases into the exercise.

On the theoretical discussion of the findings from this study, it has been established that a major factor affecting the level of adoption of e-recruitment is technology dependence. Going by the analysis of the world system theory, Nigeria is classified as belonging to the periphery, which comprises nations characterised by low technology, low level of development and low standard of living. For such countries to develop, they need to rely on the 'core' countries that are more technologically advanced. Awe (2010) had argued that there is a gradual growth in the availability and access to ICT tools in Nigeria with the advent of liberalization and the availability of cheap imports from Asia and the growth in the second hand PC market, but Obong (2007) counters the argument by saying that undue dependence on foreign imports will continue to upset the successful implementation of any digital revolution in Nigeria and the achievement of ICT related goals. This finding therefore finds support in the world system theory.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from this study, e-recruitment appears not to have become a significant part of the recruitment strategy for a wide range of HR practitioners in S/W Nigeria, compared with the situation in the more developed countries of the world, but HR practitioners in S/W Nigeria were fully aware of the emerging ICT tools and realized the benefits derivable, and this suggests that given proper landscape in terms of cost, availability of tools and software, and internet penetration, they will be willing to utilise the available ICT tools and techniques for staff recruitment, selection and placement.

There is need for the federal government to improve the ICT landscape in the country. Effective utilisation of ICT for all business and economic functions depends on a smooth landscape including conducive environment where all stakeholders will be free and have the desired infrastructure to work with. In the developing economies such as Nigeria, the status of the state can be viewed as a mega force; it is the strategic gatekeeper determining who has access to key resources and whose actions affect all others or stakeholders in the business of government and government of business. It is therefore the role of the government to ensure availability of structures and provision of access to such structures for the overall development of the society.

There is also need to encourage local investors to design software that will be suitable and affordable for local consumption especially as they apply to ICT. The availability of relevant software will promote the level of usage and adoption of ICT for all facets of personal and business activities.

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