Investigating the Influence of Human Resource Management Practices on the Performance of Tertiary Institutions in South-western Nigeria

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Abstract: TIs have the potential of playing significant role in the socio-economic development of any society. The same is true of Nigeria. Sadly, performance of Tertiary institution (TIs) in Nigeria has been on a downward spiral in recent years. Additionally, the study of the relationship and transmission mechanism between Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and performance of TIs in Nigeria is sparse in literature. This study investigated the role of HRM practices on the performance of TIs in South-western Nigeria, and the mediating impact of employee commitment and job satisfaction in the relationship. To meet these objectives, cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. Data measuring key dimensions of HRM practices (Recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, and compensation management) performance of TIs (perceived quality of tertiary education and perceived relevance of TIs), job satisfaction and employee commitment was collected from 390 academic staff members, which were selected a population of 9,817 academic staff members of selected public and private owned polytechnics in South-western Nigeria via stratified and purposive sampling technique. Sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula at 5% level of significance. Analyses was carried out using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling. Results shows that all 4 dimensions of HRM practices have pat coefficients of greater that ±0.1 at p < 0.05 indicating dimensions of HRM practices determine both perceived quality and perceived relevance of tertiary education in South-western Nigeria. Also, it was discovered employee commitment and job satisfaction do not significantly mediate the HRM practices -TI performance relationship with path coefficients ranging from -0.1 to +0.1 at p < 0.05. The coefficient of determination at 0.3 and above further strengthens the conclusion that the relationships are significant. This investigation therefore concluded that there exists a direct

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relationship between HRM practices and performance of TIs. Based on this outcome, it was recommended that owners and policy makers of TIs should pay attention to all dimensions of HRM practices in order to optimize the performance of their various institutions.

Keywords: training and development; job satisfaction; perceived quality of Tertiary Institutions

JEL Classification: M21, M54

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Tertiary Institutions (TIs) are vital for addressing the skills gap and promoting socio-economic development. TIs play a pivotal role in national development by contributing to various aspects of economic and social progress. These institutions have grown to become instrumental in addressing the challenges of unemployment, underemployment, and skills mismatch, which are crucial for sustainable development. This essay will elucidate the multifaceted role of TIs in national development.

Additionally, TIs are essential for developing a skilled workforce tailored to the needs of industries and sectors. Through practical training and education, they equip individuals with the technical expertise and competencies required for specific trades and occupations, thus reducing skill shortages and enhancing productivity in the labour market. Moreover, tertiary institutions foster innovation and technological advancement by collaborating with industries and businesses. By providing hands-on training and promoting problem-solving skills, these institutions contribute to the development and adoption of new technologies, thereby driving economic growth and competitiveness.

Furthermore, tertiary institutions play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship and small business development. By imparting business management skills and fostering an entrepreneurial mind-set, these institutions empower individuals to start their own businesses, thereby stimulating economic diversification and job creation. Also, programs promote social inclusion by providing opportunities for marginalized groups, such as youth and women. Accessible and inclusive vocational education enables individuals from diverse backgrounds to acquire skills and secure employment, thereby reducing poverty and promoting social cohesion.

Since the establishment of Nigeria's first TI in 1896 (Yaba Higher College, Now Yaba College of Technology), TIs have played a vital role in the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Many authors have concluded that TIs have contributed immensely to Nigeria's socio-economic development.

However, these institutions today face numerous challenges, including inadequate funding, outdated curricula, and limited access to modern technology (Agnes & Oladapo, 2020). Effective management of human resources is crucial for addressing these challenges and improving the performance of Tis (Ogunyomi & Brining, 2015). The continued relevance of TIs in Nigeria is now being questioned. It has now become more germane than ever to proffer lasting solutions to the challenges of higher education in Nigeria.

Many authors have concluded that Human Resource Management (HRM) practices such as recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and employee development have been shown to impact organizational performance significantly (Adebayo & Odukoya, 2019) such, the solution to the challenges of TIs may be found in the effective deployment of HRM practices. Understanding how these practices influence the performance of TIs in South-western Nigeria is essential for designing strategies to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of HRM practices, empirical research specifically focusing on their impact on TIs in South-western Nigeria is scarce. Existing studies often generalize findings from other sectors, overlooking the unique context and challenges faced by TIs. Consequently, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the specific HRM practices that are most effective in improving the performance of TIs in this region. Addressing this gap is essential for informing evidence-based HRM strategies tailored to the needs of TIs.

Additionally, many scholars believe that most challenges faced by organizations have significant people management components. This argument is drawn from the age-old belief that the people are the most important asset organizations possess. Consequently, the success of organizations including TIs depends on the degree of effectiveness of people management. Therefore, the connection between HRM practices and performance of TIs should be subjected to empirical scrutiny to determine how HRM practices can be used as a tool for addressing the many challenges which TIs currently face. Some of these problems include dwindling students' enrolment, erosion in the perceived quality of higher education, mass exodus of human resources from TIs etc. As such, the aim of this study is to provide an HRM solution to the problems faced by TIs in Nigeria, with South-western Nigeria as a case study.

1.3. Research Questions

To address the aforementioned gaps, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do HRM practices influence the performance of TIs in South-western Nigeria?

2. Do employee commitment and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between HRM practices, organizational culture and job satisfaction?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the relationship between HRM practices and the performance indicators of TIs in the region.

2. To explore the mechanisms through which HRM practices impact the performance of TIs, considering factors such as employee commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational culture.

1.5. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions and existing literature, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. H01: There is no significant relationship between HRM practices and the performance indicators of TIs in South-western Nigeria.

2. H02: The impact of HRM practices on the performance of TIs is not mediated by employee commitment and job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Review

Human Resource Management (HRM) practices encompass a range of strategies and activities aimed at managing an organization's workforce effectively. These practices include recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation, and employee relations (Armstrong, 2014). In the context of TIs, HRM practices play a crucial role in attracting and retaining qualified instructors, fostering a conducive learning environment, and ensuring the alignment of organizational goals with employee capabilities (Ibrahim & Alli,

2016). Effective HRM practices in TIs are essential for enhancing faculty effectiveness, student outcomes, and overall institutional performance.

This investigation adopts the dimensions of HRM practices that are common to similar previous studies such as Ogunyomi and Bruning (2017), Katou (2017), Adebayo and Odukoya (2019), Adekunle and Olaitan (2018), and Ibrahim and Alli (2016). These practices are: Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Compensation Management, and Performance Appraisal.

According to Armstrong (Armstrong, 2014), recruitment is the process of finding and engaging people organizations need. On the other hand, selection is the component of recruitment concerned with deciding which applicants or candidates should be appointed to vacant jobs. Armstrong (Armstrong, 2014) also defined training and development as any learning activity to acquire specific knowledge and skills for current or/and future occupation or task. Compensation Management is the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies for remunerating employees fairly, equitably, and consistently per their value to the firm, thus, helping the firm achieve its strategic goals (Paknaik & Suar, 2019). Performance appraisal is the process of ensuring the realization of organizational goals through systematically developing, monitoring, improving, and rewarding employee performance (Armstrong, 2014).

This investigation also determined the mediating role of Employees commitment and job satisfaction in the HRM practices – performance relationship in TIs. The following definitions of employee commitment and job satisfaction were adopted: Alfalla-Luque, Marin-Garcia and Medina-Lopez (2015) defined commitment as attachment and loyalty. An individual's level of commitment depends on how much they identify and engage with a given organization. According to Armstrong (2014), job satisfaction refers to people's attitudes and feelings about their work. Positive and favourable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction. Davar and Bala (2012) described job satisfaction as a complex variable influenced by situational factors of the job as well as dispositional characteristics of the individual.

The performance of Tertiary Institutions can be measured in many dimensions. However, this investigation focuses on performance measures in the following dimensions: perceived quality of tertiary education, and Perceived relevance of TIs, thereby partially adopting the approach of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) framework for measuring performance of TIs (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2022).

2.2. Theoretical Review

This study adopts the Resource-Based View (RBV) and High-Performance Work System (HPWS) theory as theoretical underpinning for the investigation.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) provides a theoretical lens through which to understand the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance. According to RBV, organizations can achieve sustained competitive advantage by effectively leveraging their unique resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). In the context of TIs, human capital, including the knowledge, skills, and expertise of instructors and staff, represents a valuable resource that can contribute to institutional performance (Santos, 2018). By investing in HRM practices such as training and development, TIs can enhance the skills and competencies of their workforce, thereby improving their ability to deliver high-quality education and training programmes.

The High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) theory emphasizes the importance of integrating HRM practices to achieve organizational goals. HPWS is characterized by a set of complementary HRM practices that work together to enhance employee motivation, engagement, and performance (Huselid, 1995). In the context of TIs, HPWS can involve aligning HRM practices such as recruitment, training, and performance appraisal with the institution's mission, vision, and strategic objectives (Boxall & Macky, 2009). By adopting an integrated approach to HRM, TIs can create a supportive work environment that promotes faculty development, collaboration, and innovation, ultimately leading to improved institutional performance.

2.3. Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance across various industries, providing valuable insights that can inform research in the context of TIs. For example, a study by Ogunyomi and Bruning (2017) investigated the impact of HRM practices on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a positive relationship between HRM practices such as training, performance appraisal, and employee involvement and SME performance indicators such as productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction.

Similarly, Agnes and Oladipupo (2022) conducted a study on HRM practices and organizational performance in selected technical colleges in Ondo State, Nigeria. The results showed that HRM practices such as recruitment, training, and performance management significantly influenced the performance of technical colleges, as measured by student outcomes and institutional reputation. These

findings underscore the importance of adopting effective HRM practices tailored to the unique needs and challenges of the education sector, including TIs.

Ohunakin et al. (2017) studied the influence of three dimensions of HRM practices (performance management, compensation management and teamwork) on organizational commitment in Nigeria's hospitality industry. To this end, data were collected from six guest houses in Southwest Nigeria and analyzed using multiple regression. The outcome showed that all three dimensions of HRM practices significantly influenced organizational commitment. A gap in this study is its focus on only three dimensions of HRM practices.

In summary, the literature suggests that effective HRM practices are essential for enhancing the performance of TIs in South-western Nigeria. It also identified that gaps in knowledge still exists in understanding the transmission mechanism between HRM practices and performance of TIs. Additionally, the impact of HRM practice on perceived quality of higher education and relevance to socio-economic development of the society remains unclear. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as RBV and HPWS, this research sought to identify the specific HRM practices that are most effective in improving faculty effectiveness, student outcomes and impact on the society in the tertiary education sector.

3. Method

Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this study. Population and number of selected respondents made up of academic staff members of selected TIs (both public and private owned) are shown in Table 1. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were employed in this investigation. Samples were drawn from only public and private owned polytechnics in South-western Nigeria. The choice of polytechnics was based on the fact that they have higher student enrolment than other TIs.

Table 1. Population and Samples

S/N	Polytechnics	Number	Population of Academic Staff	Number of Samples
1	Government owned	20	6,577	258
2	Private Owned	38	3,240	127
	Total	58	9,817	385

Source: Authors' compilation from websites of polytechnics

The population of academic staff of polytechnic in South-western Nigeria is 9,817, out of which 6,577 work in government owned polytechnics representing 67% of total number of academics in polytechnics in South-western Nigeria. Total sample size was determined using the Yamane formula. Consequently, the total minimum

sample size is 385. Sample size from each stratum was determined by the proportion of their respective population from the total population. This produced sample sizes of 258 for government owned polytechnics and 127 for private owned polytechnics.

Data for all variables were collected using structured questionnaire distributed among 500 academic staff of institutions in South Western Nigeria, out of which 390 returned copies were found to be useful. 263 useful copies were retrieved from government owned polytechnics while 127 came from private owned polytechnics. Items (measured variables) were measured using 5- point Likert scale with polar anchors 1 standing for strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree; 4: agree; and 5: strongly agree. Items measuring each construct were adopted from the following scholars: Katou and Budhwar (2014), Katou (2017), and Demo et al. (2012).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Measurement Model

Data was collected from 390 selected academic staff of TIs in South-western Nigeria to measure the following variables: Training and Development (TD), Performance Appraisal (PA), Recruitment and Selection (RS), and Compensation Management (CM), all treated as latent variables and dimensions of HRM practices. Furthermore, the following latent variables were also measured: Employee Commitment (EC), Job Satisfaction (JS), Perceived Quality of TI Education (PQ), and Perceived Relevance of TI Education (PR).

To determine the quality of research instrument and data, various validity and reliability tests were conducted using SMART PLS 4 statistical package. Results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted
CM	0.757	0.757	0.974	0.660
EC	0.776	0.794	0.832	0.624
JS	0.756	0.764	0.861	0.675
PA	0.779	0.779	0.872	0.695
PQ	0.880	0.887	0.913	0.677
PR	0.819	0.974	0.880	0.710
RS	0.807	0.898	0.869	0.626
TD	0.784	0.841	0.873	0.698

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS 4

Table 2 displayed the reliability test results. The Cronbach coefficient alpha results show figure that are more than the 0.75 minimum for all the constructs, indicating the existence of consistency and reliability of the research instrument. This outcome is also confirmed from the results of the composite reliability tests, all of which are more than the 0.75 minimum. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is a measure of convergent validity. The minimum value of the measured variables that have convergent validity is 0.5. A look at the figures for AVE from Figure 2 shows that all constructs have convergent validity.

The degree of discriminant validity was measures using the Heteriotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Result of the HTMT ratio are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Heteriotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

	CM	EC	JS	PA	PQ	PR	RS	TD
CM								
EC	0.764							
JS	0.203	0.820						
PA	0.778	0.350	0.544					
PQ	0.533	0.354	0.549	0.313				
PR	0.665	0.399	0.550	0.485	0.683			
RS	0.513	0.398	0.594	0.413	0.203	0.362		
TD	0.761	0.487	0.834	0.666	0.664	0.631	0.361	

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS 4

From Table 3, the HTMT ratio for all constructs are between 0.2 and 0.85. The threshold is 1.0. Therefore, all constructs have discriminant validity.

4.2. Results and Discussion

Hypotheses for this investigation were tested using PL SEM and computations were done using SMART PLS 4.

Hypothesis H01: There is no significant relationship between HRM practices and the performance indicators of TIs in South-western Nigeria.

Figure 1 shows the result of the relationship between HRM practices and performance of TIs in path diagram format.
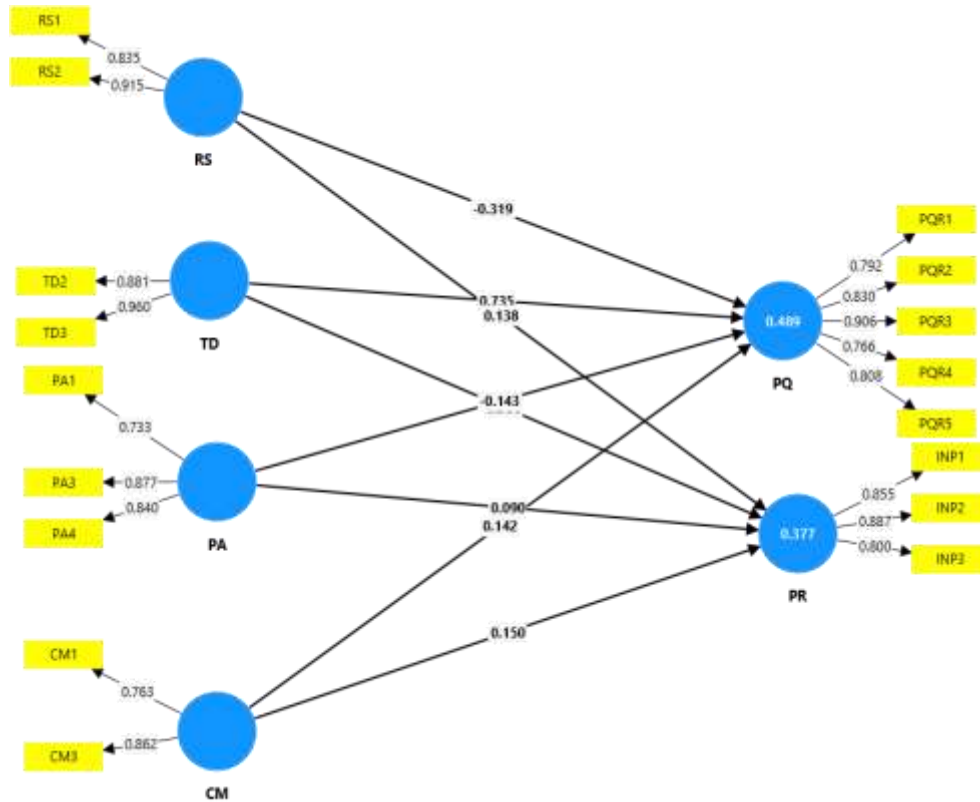
Figure 1. Path Analysis Results

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS 4

From Figure 1, the results of the external loading for each measured variable lies above the 0.6 minimum. This was achieved by dropping measured variable with external loading of less than 0.6. Secondly, Path Coefficients shown in the diagram indicates varying degrees of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables with the Coefficient of Determination R-square shown in the circles representing the dependent variables. A coefficient of determination of 0.489 means that approximately 50% of changes in perceived quality (PQ) is determined by changes in HRM practices. Similarly, a coefficient of determination of 0.377 indicates that about 38% changes in perceived relevance (PR) is caused by changes in HRM practices. The diagram also shows that Training and Development (TD) has the strongest influence on Perceived Quality of TI education (PQ) with a path coefficient of 0.715. However, to test for hypothesis H01, Bootstrapping method was employed. Results are shown in Figure 2 and Table 4.
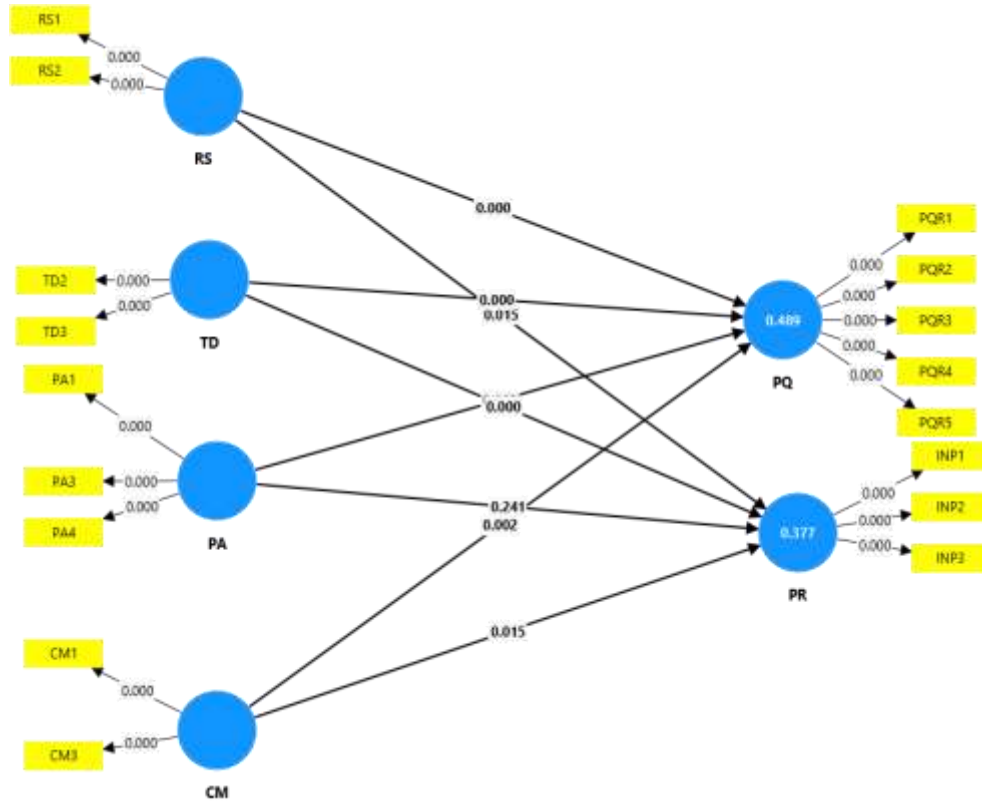
Figure 2. Results of Bootstrapping (1)

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS4

Figure 2 shows the level of significance of the relationship between each dimension of HRM practices and each dimension of performance of TIs with the respective p values indicated between the arrows. Most of the relationships are significant because their respective p values are less than 0.05. The only exception to this is the PA-PR relationship with a p value of 0.241, indicating that the relationship is not significant. These are further displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Bootstrapping

Paths	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	p Value
CM→PQ	0.142	0.139	0.047	3.036	0.000
CM→PR	0.150	0.148	0.061	2.444	0.015
PA→PQ	-0.143	-0.139	0.049	2.923	0.003
PA→PR	0.090	0.094	0.077	1.173	0.241
RS→PQ	-0.319	-0.318	0.033	9.711	0.000

68

RS→PR	0.138	0.140	0.057	2.436	0.015
TD→PQ	0.735	0.743	0.041	18.069	0.000
TD→PR	0.386	0.383	0.058	0.614	0.000

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS 4

The table above clearly shows the influence of each independent variable on each dependent variable and their respective p values. The strongest influence is the impact of training and development on perception of quality of TI education at $p < 0.05$. The implication of this is that the level of educational qualifications and training of academic staff of TIs determine the perception of the quality of education that they provide. The same can also be said of the influence of other independent variables on other dependent variables all with p value of less than 0.05. The only exception to this is the influence of performance appraisal on perception of relevance of TI education, which has a path coefficient of 0.09 at $p > 0.05$, indicating an insignificant relationship.

In summary, due to the fact that majority of the dimensions of HRM practices influence majority of the dimensions of TI performance, H01 is hereby rejected. Although this is not explicitly stated therein, this outcome is in tandem with that of previous similar investigations, as shown in Katou (2017), Ohunakin et al. (2017), Agnes and Oladipupo (2020), Adekunle and Olaitan (2018), and Ogunyomi and Bruning (2015). However, this investigation has empirically proven the dominant influence of the level of education and training of academics on the perception of people about the quality of TI education, and their relevance in the wellbeing of the society.

H02: The impact of HRM practices on the performance of TIs is not mediated by employee commitment and job satisfaction.

The second hypothesis tested the transmission mechanism by hypothesizing the mediation influence of employee commitment and job satisfaction in the relationship. Previous studies have already proven that Employees Behavioural Outcomes such as commitment mediate the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance (Katou, 2017; Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2017). However, similar study in the context of TIs is sparse in literature. In this investigation the mediation role of employees' commitment and job satisfaction in the HRM practices-performance relationship in the context of TIs in South West Nigeria. This analysis was carried out using PLS SEM. Results are shown below.
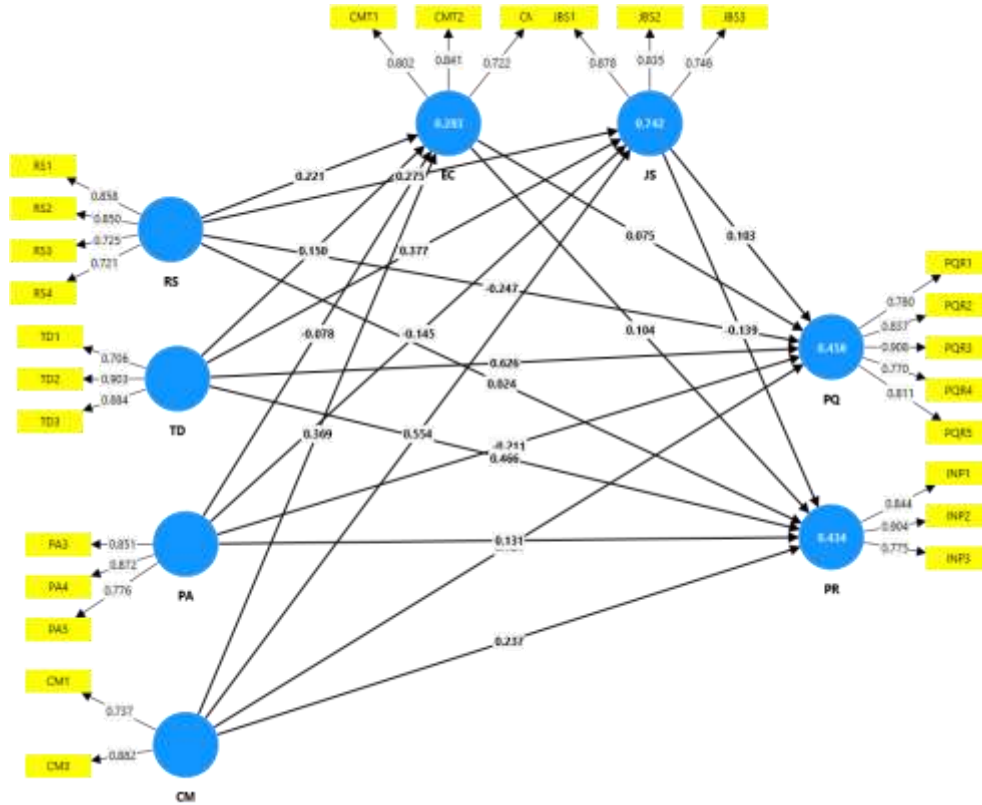
Figure 3. Path Analysis for Mediated Relationship

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS 4

Figure 3 displays the path analysis for the mediated relationship between HRM practices and performance of TIs. From the diagram, figures for the outer loading of all constructs are above the 0.7 minimum, indicating internal consistency and validity of the research instruments. All figures for the path coefficients are shown in the diagram indicating the existence of relationships between both dependent and mediator variables. The coefficient of determination also shows that the model measures substantial percentage of changes in the dependent variables. However, a clearer picture of the mediation relationship is displayed in the table below.

Table 5. Results of Mediated Relationship Computed by Bootstrapping

Paths	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
CM -> JS -> PQ	0.057	0.057	0.038	1.494	0.135
CM -> EC -> PQ	0.028	0.029	0.015	1.851	0.064

CM -> JS -> PR	-0.077	-0.078	0.04	1.943	0.052
CM -> EC -> PR	0.038	0.04	0.018	2.125	0.034
PA -> JS -> PQ	-0.015	-0.015	0.011	1.307	0.191
PA -> EC -> PQ	-0.006	-0.006	0.005	1.087	0.277
PA -> JS -> PR	0.02	0.02	0.01	1.976	0.048
PA -> EC -> PR	-0.008	-0.009	0.008	0.997	0.319
RS -> JS -> PQ	0.028	0.029	0.02	1.413	0.158
RS -> EC -> PQ	0.017	0.016	0.009	1.781	0.075
RS -> JS -> PR	-0.038	-0.038	0.019	2.034	0.042
TD -> JS -> PQ	0.039	0.039	0.026	1.475	0.14
RS -> EC -> PR	0.023	0.024	0.014	1.592	0.111
TD -> EC -> PQ	0.011	0.012	0.007	1.548	0.122
TD -> JS -> PR	-0.052	-0.053	0.027	1.946	0.052
TD -> EC -> PR	0.016	0.016	0.008	1.844	0.065

Source: Author's computation using SMART PLS 4

From 5, the CM-JS-PQ relationship has a path coefficient of 0.057 with a p value of 0.135, indicating that this mediated relationship is not significant. Meaning that job satisfaction does not significantly mediate the relationship between compensation management and perceived quality of TI education. All other mediated relationships as shown in the table follow the same pattern with their respective p value higher than 0.05. This mean that for majority of the dimensions, job satisfaction and employees' commitment do not significantly mediate the HRM practices-performance of TIs relationship. Exceptions to this are CM-EC-PR and PS-JS-PR, and RS-JS-PR, all of which have p values less than 0.05, indicting the existence of mediated relationships. However, due to the fact that majority of the mediated paths are not significant, it can be concluded that job satisfaction and employees' commitment do not significantly mediate the HRM practices-performance of TIs relationship. Therefore, hypothesis H02 is accepted.

In summary, the results clearly show that the HRM practices-TI performance relationship is not mediated job satisfaction and employee commitment. This outcome is contrary to that of previous studies which proved empirically that the HRM practices-organizational performance relationship is mediated by employee behavioural outcomes. Such studies include Katou (2017), Ogunyomi and Bruning (2017), Dava and Bala (2012), and Adebayo and Odukoya (2019).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on empirical evidence, this study concludes that the hypothesized model of a direct influence of HRM practices on performance of TIs is correct. In other words, all dimensions of HRM practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation management and performance appraisal) have direct influence on all two dimensions of performance of TIs (perceived quality of TI education, and perceived relevance of TI education). The study also concludes that job satisfaction and employee commitment do not significantly mediate the relationship between all dimensions of HRM practices and performance of TIs.

Based on this conclusion, it is hereby recommended that as a strategy of improving the quality and perceived relevance of the TI sector, owners of these institutions must improve the quality of recruitment, selection, staff training and development, compensation and performance management. This will reverse the downward performance trend of institutions in the TI sector.

One of the limitations of this investigation is its dependence on self-reporting questionnaires, which is susceptible to common methods bias. Another limitation is its dependence on cross sectional data, which studies have shown to possess weak predictive qualities. Additionally, due to the fact that data were collected for employees of TIs, care must be taken in generalizing the outcomes of this study across other sectors. Therefore, an agenda for future studies is to address these limitations.

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