HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS PREDICTORS OF BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS' WORK ENGAGEMENT IN EDO STATE

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Abstract
The study has investigated the extent to which human resource management practices predicted business studies teachers' work engagement. The main purpose of the study was to establish how human resource management practices (For example, recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward) predict business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The correlation survey design was adopted in the study. A total of 153 business studies teachers were sampled out of the 309 teachers in Edo State. The HRM and engagement scales were adapted and used for the study. Two experts in Business Education validated the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha was used in establishing the reliability for both scales, and they yielded: HRM = .81 and work engagement = .88. The instrument was distributed via Google Form to respondents. The regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward individually predicted business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. The finding also revealed that recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward jointly predicted the work engagement of business studies teachers in Edo State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government should ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair to attract the most competent teachers who will be highly engaged in the job. This finding makes a novel contribution to the literature in HRM and Business Education by utilizing social exchange

theory (SET) in explaining the reciprocal benefits in employer–employee relationships in the teaching sub-sector in Edo State.

Keywords: Work engagement, recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward

Introduction

Work engagement is a concept that has continued to attract researchers and Human Resource Management (HRM) practitioners, considering its roles in the realization of organizational goals. It was initially defined as the degree to which individuals are personally involved in their work performance (Kahn, 1990). According to more recent research, work engagement arises at the team level through shared experiences of Vigor, dedication, and absorption, and is the outcome of multiple social-psychological processes, including contagion from partners, leaders, and coworkers (Bakker, 2022). According to Aman et al. (2023), work engagement is defined as a good, satisfying, and work-related frame of mind that is marked by Vigor, dedication, and absorption. These criteria place a strong focus on an employee's complete participation in the organization's work operations. The achievement of the organization's objectives depends on a high degree of employee involvement.

The work engagement of business studies teachers is of great concern to the researchers, considering the roles they play in formulating and implementing the curriculum content of business studies. Work engagement can be advantageous for organizations (For example, Post Primary Education Board) because it is not only positively related to performance and extra-role behaviours but also negatively related to turnover intention (Pimenta et al., 2023). The work engagement of business studies teachers is often demonstrated in the following way: vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Vigor comprises high levels of energy, mental resilience, and willingness to do work well, which generates persistence in the face of difficulties. Teachers in Business Studies demonstrate this vigor in their approach to teaching, marking, and examining students, and many more. Dedication is described as a sense of meaning, pride, enthusiasm, and inspiration gained through meeting workplace challenges, which results in employees' strong identification with their work. Finally, absorption refers to a state of deep involvement in and concentration at work, which is experienced by workers as the rapid passage of time and difficulty in distancing themselves from their job (Aman et al., 2023).

The work engagement of business studies teachers is largely influenced by the implementation of HRM practices in the organization. According to Manuti and de Palma (2023), Human Resource Management (HRM) is a strategic management of people, primarily defined as resource-based, emphasizing human resources as a valuable, rare, and non-substitutable intangible asset. Human resource management, according to Pattanayak (2025), is the art and science of managing people in an organization, covering every facet of people management to successfully achieve organizational goals. The overall goal of HRM is the harmonization of individual and organizational goals towards the actualization of the goals of the organizations. This can be achieved via the implementation of HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, reward (Ediagbonya, 2019; Ediagbonya & Igbinedion, 2020; Ediagbonya, 2023)

Recruitment refers to the process of discovering potential candidates and attracting them to apply for a vacant position within the organization (Imeokparia & Ediagbonya, 2020). From

this definition, the emphasis of recruitment is on making people, whether qualified or not, show interest in working in an organization. The recruitment process involves different steps all geared at ensuring that the most qualified candidate(s) fill a vacancy (ies). The notable sources of recruitment according to Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2020) are internal and external recruitment. In an internal recruitment, the focus is on filling vacancies with the members in the organization; while in an external recruitment, the focus is on filling vacancies with members who are not employees of the organization. This method has a way of injecting fresh and smart brains into the organization. It is after attracting these candidates that selection is made. Selection is the process of collecting and evaluating information from the applicants to determine who among them is most qualified to fill a particular position. Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2020) stressed that selection is the process of choosing a candidate from a large pool of applicants to fill a certain position. There are different strategies adopted for this purpose. According to studies by Uddin (2022), Prasetyo and Palupi (2023), Salunkhe et al (2024), Razali and Vasudevan (2024), recruitment and selection are significantly correlated with employee engagement. However, the study by Sharif et al (2026) found that recruitment and selection did not significantly predict work engagement. It is always an idea to expose those who have been hired to some form of training and development programme.

Training and development are essential functions of HRM. Training refers to the process of impacting and equipping individuals with the skills, knowledge, and attitude needed to function well. Basically, training aims at equipping employees with skills, knowledge and attitude to address current job demands (Ediagbonya & Igbinedion, 2021; Ediagbonya & Ezeani, 2021). In a similar vein, development aims at equipping employees with the skills, knowledge, and attitude needed to address future job requirements. The training of employees (business studies teachers) takes different forms, ranging from on-the-job training to off-the-job training. Investing in training and development yields reasonable returns to the organization (Ediagbonya, 2019; Imeokparia & Ediagbonya, 2021a). Such benefits include enhanced employee performance, commitment, retention, and engagement. The studies by Huy and Dinh (2021), Amir et al (2022), Prasetyo and Palupi (2023), Shukla and Prakash (2024), Espinosa-Jaramillo (2024), Aldabbas and Blaique (2025) have also revealed that training and development significantly predict employee engagement. However, the studies by Lin et al (2021), Akter et al (2022), and Hoo et al (2024) found that training and development did not significantly predict work engagement. Exposure to training and development guarantees better performance, which is often rewarded by the organization.

Reward is commonly defined as the monetary and non-monetary returns employees receive in exchange for work duties and contributions, and as the organized set of practices that deliver those returns to shape behaviour and outcomes (Imeokparia & Ediagbonya, 2021b). Reward is one of the practices implemented by organizations to motivate and recognize the contributions of employees in the organization. For business studies teachers, reward may be in the form of steady payment of salaries and allowances. It may also be non-financial. That is, recognizing the contributions of business studies teachers through promotions, a safe working environment, and awards for deserving teachers. All these exercises go a long way in making the employees engage. Employees will want to reciprocate the proper implementation of HRM practices by being highly engaged with their jobs and organizations. Reward was found to be a significant positive predictor of employee engagement (Ferine et al., 2023; Praetyo & Palupi, 2023; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Aldabbas & Blaique, 2025). However, the study by Ali Ababneh et al (2021), Memon et al (2021), Zeng et al (2022), Ooi et al (2022), Hendriks et al (2023),

Anggrainy and Karyatun (2025), and Sharif et al (2026) found that reward did not significantly predict work engagement. There has been increasing research in this field owing to its impact on organizations.

Several studies have been carried out to determine the relationships between HRM practices and work engagement in organizations. According to studies by Uddin (2022), Prasetyo and Palupi (2023), Salunkhe et al (2024), Razali and Vasudevan (2024), recruitment and selection are significantly correlated with employee engagement. Contrary, Ishaque (2024) revealed that recruitment and selection did not show a significant impact on engagement. The studies by Huy and Dinh (2021), Amir et al (2022), Prasetyo and Palupi (2023), Shukla and Prakash (2024), Espinosa-Jaramillo (2024), Aldabbas and Blaique (2025) have also revealed that training and development significantly predict employee engagement. Similarly, reward was found to be a significant positive predictor of employee engagement (Ferine et al., 2023; Praetyo & Palupi, 2023; Salunkhe et al., 2024; Aldabbas & Blaique, 2025). The study by Dey et al. (2023) found that HRM practices significantly predicts employee engagement. There is still a gap despite the review empirical studies done in the field. Most of the research in this field was carried out outside the nation. From the reviewed studies, no single study has looked at the extent to which HRM practices predict business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. This study fully addressed the gap by investigating the extent to which HRM practices predict business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Hypotheses

The 0.05 threshold of significance was used to design and test the following hypotheses.

1. recruitment and selection are not significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.
2. training and development are not significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.
3. reward is not a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.
4. recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward do not jointly predict business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework upon which this study is hinged is the Social Exchange Theory (SET), which was propounded by Blau (1964). According to the SET, employers and employees have a symbiotic relationship in which both parties gain from it. In other words, it is believed that "mutual give and take" is the foundation of an employer-employee relationship. When business studies teachers, for example, receive positive support from their employers in the form of training and development opportunities, and rewards like recognition, fringe benefits, pay, bonuses, and other allowances, they will want to return the favour by being more engaged in their jobs and work. This is based on the reciprocity norm, which maintains that employees feel required to "pay back" by adopting positive attitudes and actions when a company performs good deeds like proper implementation of HRM practices. Work engagement (such as vigor, dedication and absorption) is an example of the positive attitude and behavior employees used in reciprocating the good deeds from the organization. Employers who engage in fair practices during recruitment and selection; value their workers' contributions and invest in the training and

development of their employees should expect to have a team of engaged employees (e.g. business studies teachers).

Method

The study utilized the cross-sectional survey research design in investigating the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This design was considered suitable for the study considering its emphasis in establishing the relationship between the independent variables (HRM practices – recruitment and selection, training and development and reward) and dependent variable (work engagement). The population of this study is made up of all the 309 Business Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Edo State. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample for the study. The researchers first grouped the teachers by Senatorial Districts – Edo South, Edo North and Edo Central. The proportionate sampling technique was then adopted in selecting a proportion of 50% from each of the Senatorial Districts. The total sample size was 153 Business Studies teachers. The instruments used for the study was structured questionnaires which were adopted from previous scales. The HRM scale was adapted from Demo et al (2012) while the work engagement scale was adapted from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004). The instruments were given to two experts in Business Education who validated them. The Cronbach Alpha was used in determining the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to 30 Business Studies teachers. The responses were analyzed, and it yielded the following coefficients, HRM (0.87) and work engagement (0.81). The researchers administered the instruments via google form to the respondents and a total of 153 instruments were returned. The data collated were analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.0. The simple linear regression was used in analyzing hypotheses 1 – 3 while hypothesis 4 was analyzed using multiple regression analysis.

Results

The results of the data analysis are presented in this section with respect to the hypotheses testing of the study variables.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between recruitment and selection and business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Table 1: Recruitment and Selection predicting Work Engagement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	22.157	1.698		13.051	.000
	Recruitment and Selection	1.487	.237	.454	6.261	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Note: R^2 = .206, Df = 1, 151, SE = .237, F = 39.200, P < .05, t = 6.261, β = .454, 95% LLCI = .893, 95%ULCI = 2.103

Table 1 reveals that recruitment and selection (F (1, 151) = 39.200, SE = .237, β = .454, t = 6.261, 95% LLCI = .893 – ULCI = 2.103) had a significant positive influence on work engagement. The R-square (.206) reveals that 20.6% of the variance in work engagement is influenced by recruitment and selection. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients

for recruitment and selection influencing work engagement (bias = .005, p = .000) were statistically significant. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected in the study. That is, recruitment and selection is a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Hypothesis Two: Training and development are not significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Table 2: Training and development predicting work engagement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	26.174	1.647		15.890	.000
	Training and development	.875	.221	.307	3.970	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Note: R^2 = .095, Df = 1, 151, SE =. 353, F = 15.759, P < .05, t = 3.970, β = .307, 95% LLCI = .195, 95%ULCI = 1.584

Table 2 reveals that training and development (F (1, 151) = 15.759, SE = .353, β = .307, t = 3.970, 95% LLCI = .195 – ULCI = 1.584) had a significant positive influence on work engagement. The R-square (.095) reveals that 9.5% of the variance in work engagement is influenced by training and development. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for training and development influencing work engagement (bias = .005, p = .000) were statistically significant. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is rejected in the study. That is, training and development is a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Hypothesis Three: Reward is not a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Table 3: Reward predicting work engagement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	25.266	1.541		16.397	.000
	Reward	.990	.203	.368	4.869	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Note: R^2 = .136, Df = 1, 151, SE = .203, F = 23.702, P < .05, t = 4.867, β = .368, 95% LLCI = .439 95%ULCI = 1.545

Table 3 reveals that reward (F (1, 151) = 23.702, SE = .203, β = .368, t = 4.867, 95% LLCI = .439 – ULCI = 1.629) had a significant positive influence on work engagement. The R-square (.136) reveals that 13.6% of the variance in work engagement is influenced by reward.

The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for reward influencing work engagement (bias = -.007, p = .000) were statistically significant. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is rejected in the study. That is, reward is a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Hypothesis Four: recruitment and selection, training and development and reward do not jointly predict business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Table 4: Recruitment and selection, training and development and reward jointly predicting work engagement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	16.218	2.086		7.775	.000
	Recruitment and Selection	1.167	.236	.356	4.949	.000
	Training and Development	.447	.205	.157	2.179	.031
	Reward	.676	.192	.251	3.520	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Note: $R^2 = .303$, Df = 3, 149, F = 21.553, P < .05

Table 4 reveals that recruitment and selection, training and development and reward (F (3, 149) = 21, 553, jointly had a significant positive influence on work engagement. The R-square (.303) reveals that 30.3% of the variance in work engagement is influenced by these three (3) HRM practices. The table further revealed that all the three HRM practices are individually predicting work engagement, with recruitment and selection as the most significant predictors of work engagement. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for HRM practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward) influencing work engagement (bias = -.001, p = .000) were statistically significant. That is, recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward jointly predict business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis conducted with respect to the first hypothesis revealed that recruitment and selection is significant predictors of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. This finding implies that when there are fair recruitment and selection processes, business studies teachers will be more engaged and willing to put in their best towards contributing meaningfully to the overall achievement of the curriculum content of business studies. This finding corroborates the findings by Uddin (2022), Prasetyo and Palupi (2023), Salunkhe et al (2024), and Razali and Vasudevan (2024), who found that recruitment and selection are significantly correlated with employee engagement. On the contrary, Ishaque (2024) and Sharif et al (2026) revealed that recruitment and selection did not show a significant impact on engagement.

The findings from the second hypothesis revealed that training and development are significant predictors of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. This finding shows that when institutions invest in human capital (business studies teachers) by way of sending them for training and developmental programmes, the teachers will become more attached to the institution that has invested so much in them. The net effect will be that they will

be more engaged in the organization. This finding corroborates the findings by Huy and Dinh (2021), Amir et al (2022), Prasetyo and Palupi (2023), Shukla and Prakash (2024), Espinosa-Jaramillo (2024), Aldabbas and Blaique (2025), who found that training and development significantly predict work engagement. However, the studies by Lin et al (2021), Akter et al (2022), and Hoo et al (2024) found that training and development did not significantly predict work engagement.

The findings from the third hypothesis revealed that reward is a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. This finding shows that when business studies teachers' contributions are recognized and fairly rewarded as due, there is a likelihood that the employees (business studies teachers) will be more engaged and promote the productivity of the institution. This finding corroborates the findings by Ferine et al. (2023), Praetyo and Palupi (2023), Salunkhe et al. (2024), Aldabbas and Blaique (2025), who found that reward is a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. However, the study by Ali Ababneh et al (2021), Memon et al (2021), Zeng et al (2022), Ooi et al (2022), Hendriks et al (2023), Anggrainy and Karyatun (2025), and Sharif et al (2026) found that reward did not significantly predict work engagement.

The findings from the fourth hypothesis revealed that recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward jointly predicted business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State. This finding shows that when more than one HRM practice is properly implemented at the same time, it will go a long way in making business studies teachers more engaged. This finding corroborates the findings by Dey et al. (2023) and Aldabbas and Blaique (2025), who found that HRM practices significantly predict work engagement. who found that reward is a significant predictor of business studies teachers' work engagement in Edo State.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that human resource management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, and reward) significantly predict business studies teachers' work engagement. This therefore underscores the need for the teaching service board and the Ministry of Education to ensure proper implementation of HRM practices across the public schools in the state. This will go a long way in reducing turnover and boosting business studies teachers' job performance. Additionally, this finding makes a novel contribution to the literature in HRM and business education by utilizing social exchange theory (SET) in explaining the reciprocal benefits in employer–employee relationships in the teaching sub-sector in Edo State.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government (employer) should ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair to attract the most qualified teachers who have a passion for teaching.
2. The government should encourage teachers to go for training and development programmes to update their knowledge base and keep up with the trends in teaching-learning
3. The government should always recognize outstanding staff and reward them accordingly.

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