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ABILITY AND SKILL COMPETENCIES MAPPING: FACTORS INFLUENCING
EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study investigated ability and skill mappings as determinants of employee retention in civil service commission in Bayelsa and Cross-Rivers States, Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey design was employed and structured questionnaire was the major data collection instrument. The study population comprised 389 employees of civil service commission and a sample of 197 was obtained via probabilistic sample size determination formulae. Questionnaire was administered on 197 respondents who are employees of civil service commission, out of which 187 were fully retrieved. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive, diagnostic and inferential statistical methods. The multiple regression results showed that ability mapping (t -value = 7.17; Prob. = 0.000 < 0.05) and skill mapping (t -value = 6.44; Prob. = 0.000 < 0.05) significantly positively influence employee retention. On this note, it was recommended that management should see skill and ability mappings as imperative strategic human resource management mechanisms of enhancing retention of employees. Hence, during employee recruitment, selection and placement, ability and skill of employees should be sternly emphasized. Also, Nigerian civil service commission should formulate policies targeted at enhancing skill and ability mappings of employees via training and development programmes. This study contributes to knowledge by using competency Ice-Berg model in describing the ability and skill mappings and employee retention nexus and established that ability and skill mappings significantly influence the retention rate of employees in Nigerian civil service commission.

Keywords: Ability mapping; Skill mapping; Employee retention; Selection; Human resource management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is a process that brings organizations and employees together with the aim of fulfilling the goals of the organization and employees. Hence, for organizations to fulfil long and short-term goals, cordial relations between the organization and employees are required jointly with a workforce that is knowledgeable, skilled and capable (Kaur, Geetika, Sayeeduzzafar & Pretty, 2023). In recent times, jobs demanding highly skilled knowledge-employees are on the increase while the low-skilled jobs are decreasing (Szafranski, Selma, Magdalena & Gerhard-Wilhelm, 2022); this calls for competency mapping via apposite SHRM function and initiatives.

Competency mapping (COMP) is a process of identifying specific competencies for an organization and it is a very

imperative SHRM activity (Anusha, 2018). The discuss on competencies mapping has gained more prominence because well managed organizations ought to have well-defined job roles and competencies needed to perform each job roles in the most efficient way. Ashokkumar and Vanitha (2023) asserted that COMP process identifies the strengths and weaknesses of employees so as to enable employees better understand themselves, integrate adequately in the workplace and be able to identify need for career development where necessary.

Competency is one vital process describing how a job role can be done in an excellent way (Ruchi, 2019; Helen, Cherie, Shalom & Benrimoj, 2019). Competency has been broadly distinguished from capability; for instance, capability describes what employees have to do only and not how employees can perform job roles (Himani & Ritu, 2017;



Waghmare, Shriniket, Siddhant, Abhinandan & Anuj, 2021; Udaya, Bhaskara & Mallika, 2022). A core-competency is one that competency cannot be imitated and it is a pillar upon which employees take a job (Sanjeev & Luxmi, 2022).

According to Erica and Emilio (2022), COMP is one of the most priceless functions of human resource managers because it seeks to identify job-related and behavioural-based competencies of employees in organizations. To this end, Garima, Richa and Swati(2022) see COMP as an anthology of knowledge, skills, motives, ability, attitude, and behaviour required to perform a job role efficiently. Given that COMP is an anthology or collection of factors enhancing work-related outcomes like employee satisfactions, commitments, retention, performance, productivity, among others, several dimensions of COMP has emerged in the literature.

In recent times, employee retention is one of the most vital dynamics of stern competition that organizations are facing. In such scenario, it becomes important to understand that employees can be retained if their competencies are mapped, developed and used in the right direction (Ashokkumar & Vanitha, 2023). Employee retention entails management of talents which to ensure that organizations attract, retain, motivate and develop talented employees now and in the future (Gatakaa & Lumwangi, 2023). The goal of retention is to avert loss of talented or competent employees which could adversely affect quality service delivery, productivity and performance (Monari, 2021).

Worlikar and Artee (2017); David, Holmes, Melanie and John (2018); Toopalli and Nalla (2019); Jain and Bhavya (2021); and Monari (2021) identified several dimensions of COMP to include knowledge, skills, ability, behaviour, motives, commitments, and traits. The study employed two (2) competency mapping measures – ability and skill; hence, this study investigated how competencies mapping (ability and skill) play a major role in promoting the retention of employees in civil service commission in two Nigerian States - Bayelsa and Cross-Rivers. On the basis of the above, we hypothesized as follows:

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between ability competency mapping and the retention of employee in civil service commission.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between skill competency mapping and the retention of employee in civil service commission.

2. LITERATURE UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 Ability and Skill Competencies Mapping

In the recent times, employee retention is one of the main problems in public and private organizations (Anusha, 2018; Szafranski, Selma, Magdalena & Gerhard-Wilhelm, 2022). Thus, there is growing concern on how organizations can effectively attract and retain qualified employees to maintain a competitive advantage. The main goal of competency mapping is to avert the loss of talented employees, which may result to increase in hiring, training and development costs for new employee (Udaya, et al, 2022). Competency mapping is

one of the most vital efforts HRM use in having an inspired workforce (Waghmare, et al, 2021)

Given that HRM are the main source of value creation, competency mapping via ability and skill are particularly crucial for the success and increased employees' retention rates (Sanjeev & Luxmi, 2022). The actual effects of competencies mapping on employees' retention, performance, productivity and ultimately other human resource(HR) initiatives, must be understood by management, particularly for HR managers that seek to retain a talented workforce (Garima, Richa & Swati, 2022; Erica & Emilio, 2022).

According to Jaskiran, et al (2023), skills and ability competencies mapping are strategic HR approach for monitoring effectiveness and growth of organisation's human resources as well as employees' retention; this calls for competency mapping via the use of creative abilities and skills to drive employees' retention. Jayasri and Srilalitha (2022) believed that ability and skills competencies mapping will not only make organizations to gain a more competitive advantage but it would help enhance the capability of organizations to retain a talented workforce. Accordingly, Kaur, et al (2023) noted that organizations that encourage skill and ability competency mapping will have increased employees' retention where talented workforce that can produce superior goods, incessant in-flow of cash to join the market and use of cutting-edge technologies become possible.

2.2 Employee Retention (EMR)

The concept of employee retention has been extensively defined in the strategic human resource management (SHRM) literature. According to Jaskiran, Geetika, Sayeeduzzafar and Pretty (2023), employee retention (EMR) refers to the ability of companies to retain, attract, motivate and growth talented workforce. As noted by Toopalli and Nalla (2019), EMR is designed to avoid loss of skill and talented workforce which when they leave the company may negatively affect organizational performance and productivity.

Anusha (2018) opined that the goal of EMR is to avoid increased recruitment and training costs for newly employed workforce when they leave the company. In SHRM literature, there are numerous ways to encourage EMR which according to David, Holmes, Melanie and John (2018); and Helen, Cherie, Shalom and Benrimoj (2019) include empowering employees, career growth, fair treatment, openness, regular communication and feedback, recognition and more recently, competency mapping.

Consequently, ERM can be influenced by competency mapping. The SHRM literature suggests numerous measures of competency mapping which include but not limited to skill, ability, motive, knowledge, self-image, integration, trait, among others(Ruchi, 2019; Erica & Emilio, 2022). Himani and Ritu (2018) showed that EMR is vital in assessing companies' ability to decrease recruitment and training costs. Hence, employees can be retained on a basis of creativity and/or novelty (Worlikar & Artee, 2017). In view of the review of concepts, a conceptual model was designed to guide

the estimation of empirical model of the study as shown in figure 1:

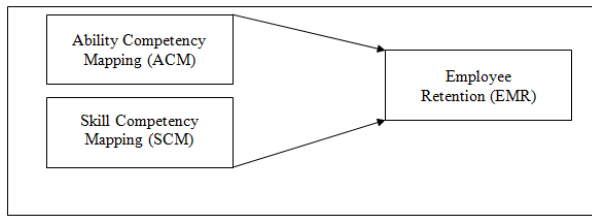


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Researcher’s Conceptualization

2.3 Theoretical Foundation

This study used Competency Ice-Berg Model (CIBM) as its theoretical anchorage. The CIBM identifies varied enhancing-factors of employees and that these enhancing-factors positively drive performance, retention, satisfaction and commitment levels of employees. According to the CIBM, the enhancing-factors include skill, knowledge, self-image, trait and motive (Gatakaa & Lumwangi, 2022; and Garima, Richa & Swati, 2022).

First, CIBM describes skill as the capability of employees to do something adequately; second, knowledge is seen as information employees’ use in specific areas; third, self-image refers to identity, personality and worth of employee; fourth, trait implies a specific aspect of employees’ attitude and behaviour and lastly, motives which are dynamics that drive employees’ behaviour in a specific area of need for achievements, attachment and power (Ashokkumar & Vanitha, 2023)

The relevance of CIBM to this current study is that it assists in describing the dynamics that drive employees’ retention which include skill, ability and other dynamics. Thus, for organization to enhance employees’ retention, satisfaction, performance and commitment, there is the need for management to promote competency mapping (skill, ability, motive, traits, knowledge, self-image, etc).

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study used cross-sectional survey research design; this design enabled the researcher to obtain information on ability and skill competency mapping and employee retention from a cross-section of employees in civil service commission in two (2) Nigerian states – Bayelsa and Cross-Rivers. The study population consists of employees of civil service commission in the headquarters of two (2) Nigerian states – Bayelsa and Cross-Rivers. The study population was made up of 389 employees in both States (Bayelsa State – 207; & Cross-Rivers State 182). To arrive at a sample, Taro-Yamane sample size formula was used in obtaining a sample of 197 respondents who are employees of civil service commission in both States.

Structured questionnaire was employed in obtaining the viewpoints of respondents on ability and skill competency mappings influence employee retention. The questionnaire was designed on 5-point scales: 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 =

Strongly Agree to assess how respondents agree or disagree with questionnaire items. Skill and ability competency mappings and employee retention scales were adopted from Shivanjali and Tripti (2019); Ashokkumar and Vanitha (2023); Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023). Furthermore, the research instrument was administered by the respondents on face-to-face basis alongside two (2) research assistants.

The test-re-test method was employed to determine the level of reliability of the research instrument; the procedure entailed the use of 20 employees of civil service commission in Delta State. The data obtained in the process was correlated via Cronbach alpha and the results are shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Reliability Result

Variable of Study	Alpha Coefficients
Employee Retention	0.73
Ability Competency Mapping (ACM)	0.79
Skill Competency Mapping (SCM)	0.80

Source: Computation by the Researcher, 2024

The independent variables consists ability and skill competency mappings and dependent variable is employee retention. In line with the above, model estimation was based on the multiple regressions as follows:

$$EMR = f(ACM, SCM) \text{ Equation 1}$$

$$EMR_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ACM_{it} + \beta_2 SCM_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \text{ - Equation 2}$$

Where: EMR connotes employee retention; SCM represents skill competency mapping; ACM represents ability competency mapping; β_0 - β_2 represents coefficients of the regression; ϵ is error term; i individual respondents; and t time frame. As observed by Okoro and Egbunike (2017); Okoro and Egberi (2020), multiple regression models are suitable for empirical analysis. Furthermore, data obtained in the study were analyzed using descriptive, diagnostic and inferential statistical techniques and analysis was carried out via STATA 16.0.

4. RESULTS

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skwness	Kurtosis
Employee Retention	2.8411	0.7791	0.3389	2.9489
Ability Competency Mapping	2.7305	0.9016	0.3553	3.0916
Skill Competency Mapping	2.6559	0.9479	0.3725	3.2412

Source: Researcher’s Computation (2024)

Table 2 revealed that ability and skill competency mappings had mean scores of 2.7305 and 2.6559 respectively while



employee retention had mean score of 2.8441; this implies that respondents perceived that skill and ability competency mappings are practiced and a way of employee retention. The result further showed that employee retention (2.9489) had smallest kurtosis which is smallest value of kurtosis and skill competency mapping (3.2412) the highest. Skewness values showed that ability and skill competency mapping skewed towards one direction (positive) with employee retention. More importantly, the kurtosis values were not far from 3; indicating that the variables are normally distributed.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation

Variables	Employee Retention	Ability Competency Mapping	Skill Competency Mapping
Employee Retention	1.0000		
Ability Competency Mapping	0.0171	1.0000	
Skill Competency Mapping	0.0473	0.0233	1.0000

Source: Researcher’s Computation (2024)

Table 3 showed that the coefficients of Pearson are carrying positive signs; an indication of positive relationship between ability and skill competency mappings and the retention of employees.

Table 4: Variance Inflation Factor

Variable(s)	VIF	1/VIF
Ability Competency Mapping	1.02	0.98039
Skill Competency Mapping	1.01	0.9900
VIF (Mean)	1.02	

Source: Researcher’s Computation (2024)

Table 4 revealed that VIF mean (1.02) is less than accepted VIF mean (10.0); this implies an absence of multicollinearity in the model of ability and skill competency mappings and employees’ retention. As opined by Ososuaqpor and Okoro (2023); Okoro and Ekwueme, C.M. (2020); Okoro and Ekwueme, (2018), VIF result below 10.0 is considered suitable.

Table 5: Multiple Regressions

F-Value	= 9.47	Prob-F
	= 0.000	
R-Squared Adjusted	= 0.831	R-Squared
	= 0.727	
Parameters	Coefficients	t-value (Prob. Value)

ACM	0.3623	7.17 (0.000)
SCM)	0.2474	6.44 (0.000)
_Constant	0.3617	22.01 (0.000)

Source: Researcher’s Computation (2024)

Table 5 showed results of multiple regression for ability and skill competency mappings and employee retention. R^2 is 0.831, indicating that ability and skill competency mappings jointly explained about 83% of the systematic variations in employees’ retention while 17% accounts for other variables not included the regression model; however, the model of ability and skill competency mappings provides good fit to the data since unexplained variation is just 17%. Furthermore, F-value is 9.47 and Prob.-F is 0.000 and is less than 5 percent level of significance; this showed that ability and skill competency mappings significantly influence employee retention.

5. DISCUSSION

Corporate organizations seek to retain a talented workforce because they contribute to the success, growth and performance of organizations. For organizations to retain a talented workforce, Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023) asserted that organizations must therefore engage in the use of skill and ability competency mappings. This study was carried out with the view to investigating if ability and skill competency mappings affect employees’ retention in civil service commission in Bayelsa and Cross-Rivers State. Cross-sectional research design was used and data obtained were analyzed via descriptive, diagnostic and inferential statistical tools.

The multiple regression results ($R^2 = 0.831$) showed that ability and skill competency mappings account for 83% variation in employees retention. Also, the study showed that there is positive significant relationship between ability and skill competency mappings and employee retention in civil service commission in selected States. These findings were supported by Gatakaa and Lumwangi (2023); Jaskiran, et al, (2023); and Jayasri and Srilalitha (2022) who found that competency mappings significantly and positively affect employees retention. This study contributed to knowledge by using competency Ice-Berg model in describing how ability and skill competency mappings influence employee retention. Also, the study contributed to knowledge by establishing that ability and skill competency mappings significantly positively influence retention rates of employees in Nigerian civil service commission.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the relationship between ability and skill competency mappings on employee retention of civil service commission in Bayelsa and Cross-Rivers States. Using

the multiple regression results, we conclude that ability and skill competency mappings significantly positively influence employee retention.

On the basis of the study findings, it was recommended that management should see skill and ability mappings as imperative SHRM mechanisms of enhancing retention of employees; thus, during recruitment, selection and placement of employees, ability and skill of employees should be sternly emphasized. Also, civil service commission should formulate policies targeted at enhancing skill and ability mappings of employees via training and development programmes.

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