# STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF SELECTED TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

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#### Abstract

Strategic human resource management practices are means by which organizations manage human capital in order to improve performance. Consequently, without clear implementation of these practices, organizational performance may be less than expected. Lack of implementation of strategic human resource practices leading to poor services in the Nigerian telecommunication industry has been identified as the problem. This study examined the relationship between strategic human resource management and customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. The study employed survey research design. Target population comprised 13,058 staff of the four major telecommunications company in Nigeria (MTN, GLOBACOM, Airtel and 9mobile) and a sample size of 582. Reliability test of the questionnaire was carried out and also validated. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the constructs ranged between 0.744 and 0.825. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive (percentages, mean and standard deviation) and inferential (correlation) statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Findings from the study revealed that performance management and recruitment have a positive significant relationship with customer satisfaction in the companies (r = .0.575,  $p \le 0.05$ ) and (r = .0.549,  $p \le 0.05$ ) respectively. However, the study recommended that MTN, GLOBACOM, Airtel and 9mobile further adopt these practices in order to enhance their performance.

**Keywords:** Organizational performance, Strategic human resource management, Performance management, Recruitment, Customer satisfaction.

### **Background to the Study**

A rapidly changing and competitive economic environment characterized by such phenomena as globalization and deregulation of markets, changing customer and investor demands, advancement of information systems and ever-increasing product-market competition, has become the norm for most organizations around the world. These organizations are driven by the

market to set goals in their performance. Some of the goals are to increase profits, attain cost reduction, achieve sales levels and increase customer satisfaction and the realization of these goals may be achieved through the human resources management in the organization (Raymond, Bergeron, & Blili, 2005). Therefore, organizations are becoming increasingly aware that successful human resource policies and practices

increase performance and this on the other hand has increased the involvement of human resource management in achieving these goals. According to Ovidiu-Iliuta (2013), workforce, as the key to success, will enable the achievement of organizational performance. Thus, in today's competitive business environment and global workplace, one of the strategies that successful companies use to achieve organizational performance is to strengthen strategic human resource management (SHRM) within the organization (Sayyad, 2017).

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is a complex process which is evolving and being studied by academics as well as stakeholders in the business environment (Sayyad, 2017). SHRM represents a relatively new transformation in the field of human resource management. It is concerned with the role human resource management systems play performance, particularly focusing on the alignment of human resources as a means of gaining competitive advantage. Strategic human resource management implies a managerial orientation that ensures that human resources are employed in a manner conducive the attainment to organizational goals and mission (Boon, Eckardt, Lepak, & Boselie, 2018). The purpose of strategic human resource management is to improve business performance through people management (Teena & Sanjay, 2014). Organizations need to manage their human resources effectively and efficiently to achieve desired goals and objectives which translate to improved performance. Nigeria, the human In resources of organizations have been identified as their most important assets as their success depends largely on their effective and efficient contributions (Awolusi, Magaji & Akpa, 2015; Nyaroo & Wekesa, 2013).

Human resource is argued to represent an asset that can provide a source of competitive advantage because it's often difficult to duplicate by competitors and hard to substitute even within the same organization. Strategic HRM can therefore, be used by organizations to acquire and develop this valuable capital. A number of studies have actually demonstrated that SHRM practices, either individually or as a system, are associated with higher levels of performance. According to Dessler (2013), the central feature of SHRM involves designing and implementing a set of internally consistent policies and practices to ensure that firm human capital contributes to achieving business objectives. The set of policies and practices of SHRM include formal training system, broadly defined jobs, results-oriented appraisal, performancecompensation, based employee voice/participation, recruitment and selection, career planning, training and development, performance management employment security (Oladipo Abdulkadir, 2012). Studies have revealed that successful HR policies and practices increase firm competitiveness in different areas such as productivity, quality and financial performance.

The Nigerian telecommunication sector is the largest segment of the information and communication sector (ICT). Nigeria has one of the largest telecom markets in Africa. The Nigerian telecommunication sector has evolved over the years to an oligopolistic market structure (a small number of firms have the majority of market share). The sector also includes a strong multinational presence. The leading players are MTN, a South African based multinational company,

Airtel Indian based (an multinational telecommunication), Glo (a Nigerian multinational company) and 9mobile (formerly Etisalat). Even though the Nigerian telecommunications sector has grown significantly in the past ten years, yet customers still complain of poor customer service, drop calls, high call rate, network blockage or congestion and service quality problems. The sector over the years has contributed immensely to Nigeria's economy and the lives of Nigerians. The advancement of mobile phone usage from basic phone telephony to new enhanced services and the introduction of new technology within diverse sectors of the country have seen the sector grow massively. The sector has experienced rapid growth and helps in easier banking services (bank mobile apps) and access to e-learning platforms to Nigerians. The telecommunications business is not only a capital-intensive industry, in which accesses to capital is a key factor to ensuring the development and expansion of a robust network but, also, one in which management skills, competencies and the capabilities of qualified people are solid drivers in accelerating the expansion and sustainability of the businesses (Guislain & Qiang, 2006).

The development of any nation, therefore, depends to a very large extent on the calibre, organization and motivation of its human resources. How well an organization performs its mission and accomplishes its goals of program service delivery is of paramount concern. Improving administrative capacity and especially, those aspects dealing with human resource offer the most challenge for improving organizational effectiveness. Strategic Human Management (SHRM) enhances Resource employee productivity and the ability of organizations to achieve their mission and satisfy their customers. Integrating the use of human resource practices into the strategic planning process enables an organization to better achieve its goals and objectives with

increased performance. This study therefore, sought to explore how SHRM practices of the telecommunication companies in Nigeria could be refocused as support aid for entrepreneurship development and through this effort accelerates economic growth and national development in Nigeria.

#### **Literature Review**

#### **Performance Management**

performance Brudan (2010)defined management as a system by which an organization evaluates and develops its employee's skills, behaviour and performance order improve organizational to performance in the competitive business environment (Dagar, 2014). According to (2008), performance Briscoe and Claus management is the system through which organization set work goals, determine performance standards, assign and evaluate employee's work, provide performance feedback to employees, determine training and development needs and distribute rewards to employees (Ion & Criveanu, 2016; Armstrong, 2014). Performance management provides the basis for selfdevelopment but importantly, it is also about ensuring that the support and guidance people need to develop and improve is readily available, to establish a high performance culture in which individuals and teams take responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes and for their own skills contributions within a framework provided by effective leadership, aligning objectives individual to organizational objectives and ensuring that individuals uphold corporate core values. (Armstrong, 2009; Onah, 2014; Osmani & Maligi, 2012). It provides for expectations to be defined and agreed in terms of role responsibilities and accountabilities, skills and behaviours (Onah. 2014). The aim is to develop the capacity of people to meet and exceed expectations and to achieve their full potential to the benefit of themselves and the organization. Performance management is a planned process in which key elements are different measurement, feedback, positive reinforcement and ongoing dialogue between managers and employees. It is a strategy that has to do with all the business and not just the managers. (Ejimabo, 2015; Islami, Mulolli, & Mustafa, 2018; Sahoo & Mishra, 2012).

#### Recruitment

Bratton and Gold (2012) defined recruitment as the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an organization. Recruitment is also defined as the applicant pools that provide sources of applicants as well as information that is applicants about the job's provided to rewards (Heneman & requirements and Milanowski, 2007 Ekwoaba, Ikeije and Ufoma (2015)). Umphress, Smith-Crowe and Watkins (2007) defined recruitment as the process where candidates choose their employers and the reasons employees wants to join an organization ranges from organizational characteristics like rank, work environment, and status to compensation, like performancebenefits and based salaries, bonuses (Mustapha, Ilesanmi &Aremu (2013; Beardwell, 2007).

#### **Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is defined as a post consumption evaluative judgment concerning a specific product or service (Nduka, Okocha, Chris-Nnamchi, 2017). It has conceptualized as the result of a comparison between what the customers expect and what they actually get from goods and services used (Koenig-Lewis & Palmer, 2014; Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2013). It is the extent of discrepancy between customers' expectations or desire and their perceptions of the actual quality of the service received. If the service performance outcome matches the customer's expectation, the customer will be satisfied. If the outcome is higher than expected, the

customer will be delighted. A satisfied or delighted customer is most likely to repurchase the goods or service and to become a loyal customer (Seiders et al, 2005). However, if the outcome is lower than expected, the customer will be dissatisfied. It is this disparity between customers' service quality perception and their prior expectations that determines their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2014; Zeithaml et al, 2013; Vavra (1997). Customer satisfaction is related closely to how the performance of the services is able to fulfil the anticipated expectations. when consumption of services is equivalent with the expectations (standards) confirmation of performance is established, on the other hand, when expectation is below the performance of the services leads to negative disconfirmation, while service performance above the customers' expectation level leads to positive disconfirmation (Roman, 2003; Evanschitzky et al., 2012; Oliver, 1997; Oliva et al., 1992, Oliver, 1980). Customer satisfaction is one of the most important issue concerning business organizations of all types which is justified by the customer oriented philosophy and the principles of continuous improvement in modern organizations (Arokiasamy, 2013; Pleshko & Heins, 1996, Kavusi, 2008, Kotler, 2000).

#### **Theoretical Framework**

There are many theoretical foundations on performance management, recruitment and customer satisfaction, but this study is anchored on Goal Setting Theory (Locke, 1968). Goal setting theory is based on the hypothesis that specific goals lead to better performance than do vague goals. Locke and Latham (1990) stated in their seminar work – A theory of goal setting and task performance; reinforced the need to always set specific and challenging goals where employees will strive hard to achieve. They outline five main principles of goal setting to motivate

employees. Clarity - Clear goals must be set which should be specific, measurable, and time-bound (SMART) as well as unambiguous. Clear and specific goals will be easily rewarded because there are clear parameters set for its attainment; Challenge - the goals that are hard to achieve are linearly and positively connected to performance. The harder the goals, the more a person will work to reach it. However, it may not be wise to set goals that are impossible to achieve. Employees are often motivated by achievement and they will judge a goal based on the significance of the anticipated accomplishment more so as rewards typically increase for more difficult goals; Commitment is a key factor in goal setting. Goals must be understood and agreed upon if they are to be effective as employees are likely to buy into goals they actively participate in its creation; Feedback - there should be a feedback mechanism which will provide opportunities for employees to clarify situations, expectations, adjusting parameters to achieve maximum results and afford the employees to clarify situations, expectations, adjusting goal parameters to achieve maximum results and afford the employees to determine for themselves how they are doing; Task Complexity - Employers should not set impossible goals which will be unattainable and also should not set easily achievable goals.

## **Empirical Review**

# Performance Management and Customer Satisfaction

Gantasala, Krishna and Swapna (2010) in their study "impact human resource practices on customers satisfaction introduction: mediating role of commitment" found a positive relationship beween human resource pratices and customer satisfaction. Okpara and Pamela (2008) study, revealed that HRM practices, such as performance appraisal and reward systems are still in place and issues of tribalism, training and development and corruption are some of

the challenges facing HRM in Nigeria. George and Cesar (2011) carried out a study on the impact of strategic human resources management on organizational success using logistic regression analysis of data. The result showed that strategic human resources management enhances productivity and the effectiveness of organizations and that when organization employ personnel practices, they are more able to achieve their goals and objectives which include the satisfaction of customers. Oladipo and Abdulkadir (2011) shown that line management **Findings** devolvement, innovative recruitment and selection system, and performance appraisal system are the key strategic HR practices that influence organizational performance in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Abdulkadir (2012); Koys and De Cotiis, (1991), Study results suggested that strategic HRM alignment, line management training, career planning system and job definition are the key strategic HR practices that influence organizational performance in the Nigerian insurance industry Perry and Mesch (2006) found an overall weak relationship between strategic HRM and outcome assessments. In another study, Gray and Shasky (2007) findings showed that when organizations employ such personnel practices as internal career ladders, formal training results-oriented performance systems, employment security, employee appraisal, voice and performance-based compensation, they are more able to achieve their organizational goals and objectives.

Archer (1998) argued that an effective performance appraisal can lead to higher job satisfaction and reduced absenteeism and turnover rates. Richards (2010) found that performance appraisal can provide indication of areas of training need as well as direction for leadership development. performance improvement and succession planning. Prior studies by Kuvaas (2006) reported that the employees' satisfaction and performance appraisal determined their work performance. It means a properly managed performance appraisal will lead to high employees' satisfaction and it sequentially elevates high work performance. MacKenzie (2000) revealed that the efforts of the individual are not necessarily aligned with desired organizational direction and little incentive exists amongst managers to challenge current processes or encourage risk taking to improve service delivery. Ishaq (2009) studied outcomes of performance appraisal and exploring factors that can make harm to the PA effectiveness in the perspective of Pakistani public and private sector organizations Overall results revealed that in Pakistani public and private sector organizations, awareness level about outcomes of effective performance appraisal is more than factors that can make harm to the effectiveness of performance appraisal. Boohene and Asuinura (2011) further pointed out that, since the assessment and reward criteria are related to the strategic objectives of the organization, it means that these human resource tools directly support the achievement of the organizational strategy. Ari, Gallato and Moorthy (2012) examined organizational justice in performance appraisal system and organizational performance. Results provided strong support for the relationship between employee perception of organizational justice in performance appraisal system and work performance. It also supports a significant relationship between performance appraisal satisfaction and work performance. Singh, Gagan & Cheema (2013) examined the effect of the performance appraisal on an individual as well as on the organizations. The findings of the research show that there is a noticeable effect of the performance appraisal on the organization as well as on the individual which implies improvement on customer satisfaction.

#### **Recruitment and Customer Satisfaction**

Holm and Sebastiampillai (2017) in their "The Effect of HR Practices on Employee and Customer Satisfaction A Study of an Airport Infrastructure Manager" found a significant

connection between employee attitudes and behaviours, and customer satisfaction, implies that there are much to gain by investing in ones employees, e.g. through HR practices. Salahat and Majid (2016). Study on "The effect of career planning and recruitment and selection on customer satisfaction: mediating extra-role performance: evidence Palestine" .Findings revealed that unlike career planning, recruitment and selection has no direct effect on customers satisfaction. That extra-role performance plays a partial mediating role between career planning and recruitment and selection respectively and satisfaction. customer Olajide, Israel Adebisiand Simeon (2013) in their study "Recruitment and Selection Practices and Customer Service Delivery among Selected Banks in Ekiti State, Nigeria" found out that there is wide gap between the banks recruitment and selection process and the objective of maintaining qualitative banking services that will not only meet the need of the customers satisfactorily but ensure also loyalty. Terpstra and Rozell (1993) also examined the effects of extensive staffing practices, with firm performance. The results of the study demonstrated a positive and significant effect of extensive staffing practices on annual profit, profit growth and overall performance. According to Hall and Torrington (1998), better recruitment and selection strategies resulted in improved organizational outcomes. The more effectively organizations recruit and select candidates, the more likely they are to hire and retain satisfied employees which will eventually leads to consumers satisfaction.

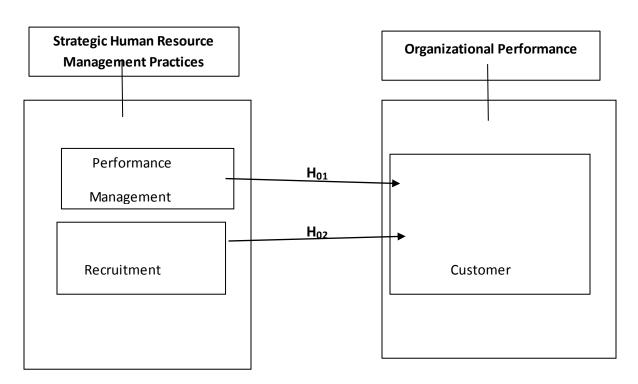
Recruitment form a major part of an organization's overall resourcing strategies, which identifies and secures people needed for an organization to survive and succeed in the short to medium-term. Moreover, as Zheng (2006) and Croucher (2008) point out, there is a positive and significant relationship

between recruitment and selection and the performance of a firm (Sang 2005; Ichniowski & Shaw, 1999) . Ezeali and Esiagu (2010) stated that recruitment and selection in any organization is a serious business of the human resources managers. This is because the success of any organization or efficiency in service delivery depends on the quality of its workforce who was recruited into the organization through recruitment and selection exercises. Omolo, Oginda and Oso (2012) investigated the effect of recruitment and selection on the performance of SMEs in

Kisumu .There was a significant positive correlation between recruitment and selection and performance of SMEs.

# **Conceptual Model**

The conceptual model is developed to establish the relationship between the independent variable (strategic human resource management) and the dependent variable (organizational performance) as elucidated in the gap of the study. The conceptual model is thus presented in Figure 2.2.



# Source: Developed by the Researcher

# Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed as the study guide to examine relationship between strategic human resource management and customer satisfaction so as to ascertain degree of relationship between the hypothesized variables. The used of descriptive survey research design was adopted because it

allowed for collection of quantitative data that were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. The population of the study 13,058 staff of four major telecommunications company in Nigeria, that is, Nigeria (MTN), Airtel Nigeria, Global telecommunication of Nigeria (GLOBACOM) and 9mobile as at March 2016. The sample size for this study was 582

determined using the formula for sample determination for a finite population as expressed by Yamane (1967). A well structured questionnaire was used for gathering primary data for this study. The questionnaire was adopted from Delery and Doty's (1996) survey instrument to measure these practices. The questions adopted were modified to suit the purpose of this study. The study adopted a six-point rating scale to obtain data from the respondents so as to avoid the problem of central tendency and to gain more effective screening power (Osuagwu, 2006; Sin & Tse, 2002). The scores were coded as strongly agree =6, agree= 5, partially agree=4, partially disagree =2, and disagree=3, strongly disagree=1. The study used Cronbach's alpha reliability test to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire for the study and validity was established through suitable means. An instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value of the scales is above 0.7 (Mokaya *et al.*, 2013).

The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by subjecting the result of the pilot test using the instrument to a Cronbach Alpha test based on a reliability level of 0.7 and above. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of its scales ranged from 0.766 to 0.834 respectively for strategic human resource management and firm performance. The Cronbach's alpha for individual variable performance management (0.825);recruitment (0.744); customer satisfaction (0.798). Table 3 presents the Cronbach's Alpha values variables of the study. Base on the alpha values it can be decided that the framed questions are more reliable with each other and survey can be conducted by using the questionnaire.

Table 1: Reliability Coefficient of Research Measures (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Performance Management	.825
Recruitment	.744
Customer Satisfaction	.798

Source: Research Study, 2018

The statistical analysis was carried out by using MS-Excel and SPSS (statistical Package for social Science) Software 21 version. Correlation (Pearson Product Moment Correlation.) was for the analysis data to determine the relation between variables. Questionnaire assessing performance management, recruitment and customers satisfaction measures were distributed to random sample of 582 respondents and

total of 552 were properly filled and returned, thus, representing a response rate 94.8

Hypotheses Testing, Results and Discussion
Hypothesis one: Performance management
has no significant relationship with
customer satisfaction of selected
telecommunication companies in
Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of performance management and customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

		Performance Management	Customer Satisfaction
Performance Management Pearson Correlation		1	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	552	552
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.575**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	552	552

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows a correlation analysis of the performance relationship between management and customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. The coefficient of correlation, r =0.575, and the result is significant (p=0.00< 0.05). This suggests that there is a positive relationship between performance and customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. This implied that as performance management is been enhanced, there is also a corresponding improvement in customer satisfaction. We therefore, fail to accept the null hypothesis which states that performance management has no significant relationship with customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Gantasala, Krishna and Swapna (2010) in their study "impact human resource practices on customers satisfaction introduction: mediating role of commitment" found a relationship positive between human resource practices and customer satisfaction.

This finding is supported by the definition of performance management according Armstrong (2009), that it is the systematic process for improving organizational performance by developing the performance of individuals and teams . It is a means of getting better results from the organization, teams and individuals by understanding and managing performance within an agreed framework of planned goals, standards and competence requirements. The finding is also supported by the findings of Brudan (2010); Briscoe and Claus (2008) that performance management is a system by which an organization evaluates and develops its employee's skills, behaviour and individual employee performance in order to improve organizational performance and customer satisfaction in the competitive business environment. Similarly, Richards (2010) found that performance appraisal can provide an indication of areas of training need as well as direction for leadership development, performance improvement and succession planning. Kuvaas (2006) reported that the

employees' satisfaction on performance appraisal determined their work performance this implies that properly managed performance appraisal will lead to high employees' satisfaction and it sequentially performance elevates high work improvement of customer satisfaction. Also Singh and Gamji (2013) examined the effect of the performance appraisal on an individual as well as on the organizations. The findings of the research show that there is a noticeable effect of the performance appraisal on the organization as well as on the individual which implies improvement on customer satisfaction. The finding is inconsonance with George and Cesar (2011) findings which the result showed that strategic human resources management enhances productivity and the effectiveness of organizations and that when organization employ personnel practices, they are more able to achieve their goals and objectives which includes the satisfaction of customers. In the same vein Gray and Shasky (2007) findings showed that when organizations employ such personnel practices as internal career ladders, formal training systems, results-oriented performance appraisal, employment security, employee voice and performance-based compensation, they are more able to achieve their organizational goals and objectives.

**Hypothesis two**: Recruitment has no significant connection with firm customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of Recruitment and Customer Satisfaction of Selected Telecommunication Companies in Nigeria.

		Recruitment	Customer Satisfaction
Recruitment	Pearson Correlation	1	.549**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	552	552
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.549**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	552	552

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From analysis in table 3 the coefficient correlation, r = 0.549, and the result is significant (p=0.00< 0.05). This suggests that there is a positive relationship between recruitment and customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in

Nigeria. This implied that as performance management is been enhanced, there is also a corresponding improvement in customer satisfaction. We therefore, fail to accept the null hypothesis which states that Recruitment has no significant connection

with firm customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria.. This finding is in consonance with finding Holm and Sebastiampillai (2017) in their " The Effect of HR Practices on Employee and Customer Satisfaction A Study of an Airport Infrastructure Manager" found a significant connection between employee attitudes and behaviours, and customer satisfaction, implies that there are much to gain by investing in ones employees, e.g. through HR practices. The finding of this study also agreeds with Olajide, Israel Adebisiand Simeon (2013) that found out that there is wide gap between the banks recruitment and selection process and the objective of maintaining qualitative banking services that will not only meet the need of the customers satisfactorily but ensure also loyalty. Similarly, the finding of this study supported the finding Salahat and Majid (2016) that That extra-role performance plays a partial mediating role between career planning and recruitment and selection respectively and customer satisfaction. The finding also agrees with that of Terpstra and Rozell (1993) where a positive and significant effect of extensive staffing practices on annual growth profit, profit and overall performance was observed. Also Omolo, Oginda and Oso (2012) found that there was a significant positive correlation between recruitment and selection and performance of SMEs. It's also agrees with findings of Zheng (2006); Croucher (2008) Sang (2005) Ichniowski and Shaw (1999) that recruitment has significan and positive correlation with performance firm and customers satisfaction.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study concluded that strategic human resource management practices (performance management and recruitment)

had significant relationship with customer satisfaction of selected telecommunication companies in Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommended that MTN, GLOBACOM, Airtel and 9mobile further adopt these practices in order to enhance their performance.

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