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# Talent management and succession planning: A conceptual assessment of Rivers State owned tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt

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## ABSTRACT

The human aspect of every organization's resources remains the most revered and critical; more especially in the service sector such as the tertiary institutions where knowledge creation and dissemination is only made possible through effective engagement of the right mix of talent in the right situations. Hence, this study critically reviewed extant literature on the concept of talent management and its contributory role in the enthronement of succession planning efforts in tertiary institutions owned by the State Government in Rivers State, Nigeria. Effective talent management indicates the extent an institution is able to attract, develop and retain the right pool of skilled individuals such that institutions do not ever experience shortfall in expertise in the future. Based on literature exploration, successful organizations are products of quality workforce arrangements through effective talent management and succession planning policies. Furthermore, the study reveals that Rivers State Government owned tertiary institutions have no visible operational talent management policy that promotes sustainable succession planning; rather the predominant practice is what we may call accidental replacement systems.

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# Talent management and succession planning: A conceptual assessment of Rivers State owned tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt

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## ABSTRACT

*The human aspect of every organization's resources remains the most revered and critical; more especially in the service sector such as the tertiary institutions where knowledge creation and dissemination is only made possible through effective engagement of the right mix of talent in the right situations. Hence, this study critically reviewed extant literature on the concept of talent management and its contributory role in the enthronement of succession planning efforts in tertiary institutions owned by the State Government in Rivers State, Nigeria. Effective talent management indicates the extent an institution is able to attract, develop and retain the right pool of skilled individuals such that institutions do not ever experience shortfall in expertise in the future. Based on literature exploration, successful organizations are products of quality workforce arrangements through effective talent management and succession planning policies. Furthermore, the study reveals that Rivers State Government owned tertiary institutions have no visible operational talent management policy that promotes sustainable succession planning; rather the predominant practice is what we may call accidental replacement systems. The study therefore concludes that inconsistencies and inadequacies in managing core assets (talents) of the institutions is the main cause of paucity of competent and committed employees to deliver on the institutions' core mandate of progressive novel knowledge generation and dissemination*

*to make the society a healthy place. Therefore, we recommend: i) That the administrators of these institutions go back to the drawing board and set things right before the entire system slides into entropy by reengineering the system's procedures and practices in such a manner that incorporates young talent discovery, attraction, retention and development through mentoring to facilitate transfer of tacit knowledge from the mentors to the mentees as well as regular training through grants for conferences, locally and internationally, to facilitate the acquisition of current knowledge needed for effective succession planning . ii) They should not give politicians any further room to make a mess of the sanctity of the system by declining acceptance of any unqualified applicants imposed on them for employment without merit.*

**Keywords:** talent management, talent attraction, retention, development, succession planning, mentoring, training, tertiary institution.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Tertiary institutions are educational organizations such as universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. Tertiary institutions are saddled with the task of providing postsecondary educational services to the general public in different areas of specialization. In Port Harcourt, there are five

main tertiary institutions owned and managed by the State government namely the River State University, Ignatius Ajuru University, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rivers State College of Health and Rivers State School of Nursing. Just like every other organization, managing these institutions and ensuring that the purpose for which they are founded is achieved based on the required progressive engagement of healthy and intellectually sound minds to translate the vision of the institutions into reality. This is why Tamunomiebi and Wobodo (2018) maintain that amid all organizational resources, the employees still remain the lifeblood of the organization as its success or failure depends largely on their performance and commitment to its mission. Given this circumstance, it becomes a necessary strategic decision to ensure that the institution progressively acquires the right pool of talents whose work behaviors are in tandem with the goals and aspirations of the institution and is devoid of any form of counterproductive behavioral tendencies.

However, the extent to which these tertiary institutions attract and retain better workforce over their competitors depend on how effective their succession planning policy and strategy are. Just as Akani (2015) stated, it is practical for any goal-driven organization to ensure that managers are available in their appropriate number and places at every given time. The implication of this statement is that every proactive organization should, as a matter of strategic concern, have the necessary human resource it requires to drive its agenda without any vacuum at all strata or echelon. Furthermore, Rothwell (2005) posited that through succession planning mechanisms, organizations are able to get the right people in the right place at the right time. This is as Muslim Haron and Hashim (2012) stated that developing potential leaders in public institutions of higher education is such a challenging task. In furtherance to this assertion, Akani (2015) added that well thought-out succession planning provides a future for the organization through the development of formal plans that clearly define

who will own and operate the business in future. Consequently, of late, succession planning has come to occupy a very sizable portion of the mind space of corporate decision-makers (Sinha & Dubey, 2005).

Incidentally, tertiary institutions owned and managed by the Rivers State Government through their appointed Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Provosts are still far away from the adoption and implementation of succession planning programs as a dependable tool for a sustainable institutional viability. This is evident because in these institutions both at the academic and non-academic divide, there is no visible operational policy within their corporate strategy that places it as a statutory or official obligation on the senior officers of the institutions to train, mentor and coach the inexperienced talented employees who are supposedly going to be their successors in the event of any form of attrition tendency whether voluntarily or statutorily. No wonder, Sinha and Dubey (2005) contend that succession pipelines are going dry almost everywhere; nobody paying attention to its essentiality. Given this anomaly, these institutions have over the years seriously robbed and denied themselves the opportunity of attracting and retaining the right breed of human capital at a low cost. Today in these institutions especially, at the academic stance, there are some departments with paucity of lecturers to handle specific areas of concern such as the quantitative related courses where people are usually unwilling to venture into carelessly without proper orientation and guardianship by a more experienced officer thereby creating a large room for increased hiring and replacement cost for the institutions.

Again, the absence of effective succession planning initiative also brings about colossal loss of intellectual property especially when rare knowledge carriers leave the institution without having to transfer that particular knowledge base to their successors or mentees as a way of perpetuating strategic positioning of the institution. There is also concern about critical talent migrating to other countries or sectors in

the form of brain drain due to poor implementation of succession planning programs. In fact, in one of these institutions there was a time after a successful staff audit exercise they needed to move some officers of the institution with relevant qualifications to the academic unit to fill vacant spaces within that perspective but they bluntly refused redeployment due to lack of effective succession planning. This is therefore a malaise, which can escalate into a serious plague if remedial actions are not taken urgently through the adoption of talent management strategies that would stimulate succession planning programs in this contemporary time. Accordingly, Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2012) maintain that talent management issue is a unique and non-imitable competitive advantage, which does not just have one phase. This is as different institutions with various strategies implement talent management in a unique manner, which may lead to their success on a global scale.

However, as essential as talent management programs in facilitating an organization's succession planning agenda in a fast changing business environment there is still an observed dearth in theoretical studies in the direction of state owned tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt. Some of the studies observed so far include Sumardi and Othman (2009) who investigated talent management in the context of Malaysian companies. Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2012) assessed the determinants of talent management in multinational corporations in Malaysia. Barbu and Diaconescu (2018) investigated talent management from the angle of sport organizations while Hughes and Rog (2008) examined talent management as a strategy for improving employee recruitment, retention and engagement within hospitality organizations. It is on this premise that it became a burden on the researchers to theoretically examine how effective talent management strategy could be used to foster a successful and sustained succession planning initiative in the Rivers state owned tertiary institutions in Port Harcourt, Rivers State Nigeria.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The baseline theory that best explains talent management construct is the Resources Based View (RBV) of the firm theory. This theory was actually advanced by Penrose (1959) in his famous work and subsequently developed by (Wernerfelt, 1984, Rumelt, 1984 and Connor, 1991). Resource based theory holds that resources available or acquired by an organization are the basic driver of its performance outcomes. It is the organization's resources that give it competitive power (McKelvey, 1997, Prime & Butler, 2001 and Hunt, 1991). The increased advocacy for the protection of firm's immutable resources such as "knowledge" by scholars and organization leaders justifies the indispensability of the human aspect of organizational resources in the determination of overall business performance and survival tendencies amid fierce global competition. The main emphasis of the RBV is to identify the elements of resources that are not easily imitated or copied by rivals (Tokuda Akio, 2005). However, if the resources possessed by a firm are easily imitated by competitors, even though the resources represent a competitive strength to the firm, then such advantage will not be sustainable. Dierickx and Cool (1989) offered how the growth and sustainability of a firm's competitive edge depends largely on how easily its resources can be copied. He went on to say that imitability is associated with the accumulation process of the assets such as social complexity, time asset erosion, interconnectedness etc.

Leaning on this theory, in today's knowledge driven economy, an organization believes that the success of any business endeavor relies heavily on its ability to attract and retain an identifiable pool of talents to stock up their knowledge base not just for the now but also for the future in the means of promoting succession planning essentially from within. Thus, the employees are like vehicles conveying the organization from their current position to that future desired state. On this premise, the pillar of industrial economies

has now moved away from natural resources to intellectual property (Morten, 1999).

### III. THE MEANING AND NATURE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT

Over the years several scholars have advanced that the performance of every organization is a function of its human resource make up. This is because when managers develop and line up desired organizational goals, it takes the employees to bring those goals to reality. Robbins, David and Mary (2011) further buttressed this fact when they maintained that every organization needs people to carry out whatever tasks are required to achieve set out goals. However, the extent to which organizations possess the right number and blends of employees they require to prosecute their mission and goals at all times also lies in their talent management commitment. This is as Beheshtifar and Nekoie-Moghadam (2011) contend that talent management is now a critical phenomenon for contemporary organizations since an organization's performance is directly associated with talents that are being utilized. Drawing from Sinha and Dubey (2005) talent is referred to as the innate ability of an individual to carry out a given task in a particular manner. It is associated with an individual's skill to perform a particular task in an impressive manner no matter how complex. Talent is also trainable or developable innate capabilities of an individual that give him/her performance edge over others.

Having employees with impressive talents is a rare commodity in this era of the knowledge based economy and onset of globalization. Even economists have also proven that finding talented people is one of the world's most valuable products, but very difficult to find (Beheshtifar & Nekoie-Moghadam, 2011). To this end, future-orientated organizations are taking bold steps to maximize the available talents at their disposal through its effective management. Today, scholars argue that effective talent management is a contributing factor in the success of contemporary organizations (Shafieian, 2014;

McDonnell, Collings, Mellahi & Schuler, 2017). According to Sinha and Dubey (2005) talent management is concerned with the deployment of special strategies by the organization to recruit, develop and retain their pool of top talents. Also, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2009) refers to talent management as a strategy designed to attract, deploy, develop and retain high potential employees who are perceived as core values for the organization. Consolidating on these definitions, we view talent management as a corporate strategy geared towards attracting, developing and retaining a pool of skilled individuals such that organizations do not ever experience a shortfall in expertise in the future. In view of this, it is clear that talent management is a management function that if effectively implemented will significantly contribute in preserving an organization's core competences through knowledge sharing between the experienced leaders and the discovered talent pool in the organization.

Consequently, Ordonez de Pablos (2004) stated that it is essential to have inside arrangements of Human Resource Management (HRM) in an organization such as talent management so as to make learning, capacities and aptitudes of the company's human capital secure and significant. Also, Human capital theorists support talent management in contemporary organizations as they pointed out that there is a continuous need for valuable learning and aptitudes for workers in contemporary workplaces in order to enhance their effectiveness, profitability and pay (Bohlander, Snell, & Sherman, 2001); hence, talent management encourages a progressive trainings and development of identifiable pool of talents within and outside the organization. The essence of doing this is to ensure the survival of the organization as it creates a platform for organization's trade secrets to be passed on to mentees in their different area of competences through their mentors who by the policy of the organization is saddled with the task of developing them as reliable replacement for those approaching retirement or are in some other way

leaving the company in a near future. This is why Beheshtifar and Nekoie-Moghadam (2011) maintained that the talent pool is connected with a group of people ready for responsibilities whenever they are called upon. Yet, Rothwell (2011) refers to it as all people who are considered promotable to the next level up in the organization.

Effective talent management is beneficial to both the organization and the employees. The organization benefits from it through the employees' increased productivity and capability; a better linkage between employees' efforts and business goals; commitment of valued employees; reduced turnover, increased bench strength and a better fit between people's jobs and skills. On the other hand, the employees also benefit from career development, increased knowledge about and contribution to company goals; sustained motivation and job satisfaction.

### 3.1 Talent Management Strategies

In the course of debate on how talent management could be used to better the organization's performance, several scholars have advocated different but related taxonomies through which effective talent management can be achieved. For instance, Beheshtifar and Nekoie-Moghadam (2011) in their study adopted talent recruitment, talent maintenance and talent development. Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam (2012) utilized attraction, deployment, development and retention. Tepayakul and Rinthaisong (2016) on the other hand used talent identification, talent recruitment, talent selection, talent development, talent retention, talent compensation management, talent performance management and talent succession planning. However, given the peculiarity of our industry of interest and in line with the study purpose, we adopted talent attraction strategy, talent retention strategy and talent development strategy as measures.

### 3.2 Talent Attraction Strategy

The success of every organization is tied to the quality of their workforce. This is as a quality workforce constitutes competitive advantage especially in this era of knowledge driven economy. In the same vein, Morton (2004) added that every organization requires talents which have the capacity to change its present and future execution. Therefore, to remain competitively viable, organizations are constantly in the hunt for high-talented employees. According to Sinha and Dubey (2005) talent attraction is connected with assessment and selection of human resources. In other words, talent attraction is associated with comprehensive evaluation and selection of potential employees of an organization. Attracting highly talented individuals to work in an organization is such a complex task to achieve if the employer's brand is not enchanting enough to those identified talents. This is because talented people join organizations which they consider to be attractive and add leverage to themselves (Glen, 2007). Flowing in this line of thought, we may assert that since potential employees with talents desire to work in organizations that they perceive as key players of industry so that they too can grow and actualize their personal goals, employer's brand plays a key role on the ability of organizations to attract external talents into their fold.

### 3.3 Talent Retention Strategy

Due to the strategic role the employees play in keeping an organization competitively vibrant ahead of their competitors, no organization wants to see its talented workers leave voluntarily. Chaminade (2007) asserts that talent retention is a voluntary effort by an organization's management to create a workplace environment that promotes long employment relationships with its employees. Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001) describe it as systematic plans by the management to enable workers to remain with the organization for a longer period in their career life. This is particularly important because of the high tendency of young managers to

embrace a new job when a better opportunity presents itself. Therefore, talent retention strategy is a managerial function that needs not be taken for granted because of its capacity to reduce employee turnover. Employee turnover is associated with the extent to which an employer gains or losses employees (Casio, 2003). Employee turnover is not such a pleasant phenomenon especially when its voluntary dimension is on the high side. A rapid voluntary talent turnover constitutes a threat to organizational survival due to the destructive implication of losing experienced talents and the huge cost implication associated with their replacement.

In fact, according to Muhammad, Naeseer, Sheraz and Aisha (2013) the effect of voluntary turnover on the performance of an organization revolves around, finance, productivity, innovation, and quality output and customers satisfaction. Because of all these key indicators on a performing organization, it becomes a strategic responsibility on the part of the management to adopt strategies that ensure they are in their right mix at all times. It is on this note that organizations generally define reasonable human asset approaches and techniques to retain the best accessible talents (Shekshnia, 1994); so as to ensure that organization does not lose its valuable human resource to other organizations. Galbreath (2010) posits that the ability of firms to retain their employees is a signal of success and shows that the organization is not only a valued place of work but also that there are positive consequences for the firm's performance and productivity.

### 3.4 Talent Development Strategy

Talent development is an indispensable aspect of an effective talent management system. This is because a mere attraction and retention of super talents into the organization upon discovery is not enough to guarantee sustained performance due to the dynamic nature of today's business operational patterns requiring constant talent upscale to meet the fast changing customers tastes and expectations. Talent development deals with

efforts to advance employees' capacity to handle a variety of tasks and to cultivate capabilities beyond those required by the current job (Sinha & Dubey, 2005). Talent development is considered very sacrosanct because of the strategic role of the employees in the attainment of organizational goals. Hence, we can state that the more knowledgeable the workforce, the more effective and efficient the organization becomes. This position is also buttressed in Rastogi (2000) where he contends that human capital is a vital input for organizations especially for employees' continuous improvement mainly on knowledge, skills, and abilities. Similarly, Tajadin and Muali (2009) reiterate the need for the organization's continuous investments on employees in order to meet future expectations and needs.

Bearing the forgoing observations in mind, it indicates that an organization that fails progressively to upscale its talent base through regular on and off- the-job trainings and development programs may be taking itself on the path of relegation due to the tendency of a once cherished talent or skill to go obsolete in the absence of continuous improvement mechanisms in place; and this scenario can also trigger poor employee performance as a result of skill inadequacy to carry out the task. Just as Beheshtifar and Nekoie-Moghadam (2011) argued that attainment of organizational objectives is only ensured when people are committed to the organization; and beyond motivation, an employee can only be committed to achieving a goal when he or she has the request knowledge or skill required to do the job hence, no one can give out what is not at his disposal.

### 3.5 Succession Planning

Beyond the profit maximization objective, another critical interest of any organization is a continuous survival agenda. It is the utmost desire of every organization to remain in business no matter how turbulent their operating environment may be. It is on this premise that succession planning becomes a necessary ingredient for continuous business survival.

Hence, an organization's ability to continuously remain operationally vibrant is a function of how well it is able to successively sustain the right mix of people with relevant knowledge and experience to steer its affairs. In support of the forgoing statements, Mandi (2008) and Rothwell (2010) affirmed that the future sustainability and viability of any organization will depend on how it implements an effective succession planning and management program. According to Charan, Drotter and Noel (2001) succession planning is viewed as a procedure of developing and classifying in-house workforce with high potential to supply vital leadership positions in the organizations. Croteau (2009) in his view argued that it is concerned with a preparation of the organization's future through appropriate development of human resources to succeed into a critical leadership position. Furthermore, Deshmukh (2012) sees it as a process through which an organization ensures that employees are recruited and developed to fill each core role within the organization.

Drawing from the various authors' submissions, in our view, we may refer succession planning as a gradual and systematic process through which the management of an organization spots out vibrant talents within and outside the organization and subjecting them to regular intensive training and development programs and mentorship with a view to making them potential successors for key leadership positions in the organizations. This is also in line with why Charan, Drotter and Noel (2001) stressed that effective succession planning is linked with a series of activities for fulfilling leadership pipeline and movement. In fact, unlike replacement planning which employees are assessed solely on the basis of past performance, succession planning is largely predictive in judging an employee for a position he or she might never have occupied (2012). It provides a credible opportunity to fulfill key positions by capable and knowledgeable employees when they are needed. It is through effective employment planning that succession planning processes can easily be executed in line with the current and

future needs of the organization. Thus, employment planning as clarified in Robins et al (2011) not only guides the current staffing needs but also projects future employee needs and availability.

#### IV. MEASURES OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

##### 4.1 Mentoring

The concept of mentoring is a phenomenon any organization desiring to sustain its knowledge based competency must take seriously as it promotes free flow of tacit and explicit knowledge from the surplus end (mentors) to the deficit end (mentees) with the aim of equipping them with all the necessary practical and professional knowledge they need to managing the organization even when they (mentors) are long gone. This is demonstrated in Hirsh and Carter (2002) as they succinctly describe mentors as individuals who prepare others for optimum future performance and groom them to advance in their carriers. Clutterbuck (2002) refers to mentoring as the assistance through encouragement and support from one person to another through the sharing of knowledge, work or ideas. It is a creative method of improving professional growth which in turn leads to self-actualization and focuses on developing the totality of the person (Talley & Henry, 2008). A good mentor helps his mentees understand the nitty-gritty of the organization's internal dynamics thereby making them better ambassadors of the organization ready to lead the organization to its desired future state. Although mentoring needs no standard procedure but it is more productive to have mentors that adopt supportive roles rather than a directive approach in the process of helping and dealing with mentees so as to enable them to feel a sense of independence.

Since the core purpose of mentoring is anchored on effective dissemination of tacit knowledge which is resident in the brain of the mentor and are not easily accessible to the mentees unless at



the express discretion of the mentor, the most viable approach here will be personalization approach; whereby the mentor develops networks to bringing people within his influence together so that knowledge in his brain could be exposed and shared to them. This is easily achieved through face-to-face contacts, interactive media, workshops, brainstorming (Wobodo, Asawo & Asawo, 2018). Mentoring is directly beneficial to the organization and the mentees as knowledge gained will not only promote the employees procedural knowledge on the job and the industry at large, but the organization also will experience greater output through the application of the gained knowledge by the mentee in the discharge of their duties while they are still with the organization, thereby improving performance outcome. On the part of the mentors, there is also the need to create a platform that recognizes their place as the intellectual memory base of their organization core competence by rewarding and recognizing them appropriately. This means that the organization can either lean on intrinsic or extrinsic reward mechanisms to achieve this feat (Wobodo, Asawo & Asawo, 2018).

#### 4.2 Training

To keep the employee constantly abreast with the unavoidable changes going on in the industry a business locates itself very vital for continuous improvement and performance. Training refers to an activity involving the renewal or updating of a worker's skills, knowledge, attitude, work habits and competencies to enable them perform their assigned responsibilities creditably (Imhabekhai, 2000). Training is considered an essential tool for new and old employees to enhance their present or future performance (Ivancevich, 2010), and most importantly create an avenue for mastery in the particular skills and aptitude required to be effective at work (Longnecker & Fink, 2005). Through training a new worker is introduced and integrated into the organization's rules and regulations as well as work culture. And helps them at the entry stage to know what to do and also enables them to understand the inner workings of their organization (Jaja & Okwandu,

2007). Armstrong (2006) further stated that there are different methods of training which includes in-service training, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, conferences, seminars and workshops while Jaja and Okwandu (2007) suggested that training and development initiative can be achieved through socialization or orientation, induction training, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, vestibule training, supervisory training and executive training.

#### 4.3 Talent Management and Succession Planning

The tertiary institution as a knowledge generating and disseminating citadel cannot continually deliver on its core values and objectives without ensuring that they have the right mix of talents to meet their current and future operational needs. This is as the future sustainability and viability of any organization is said to depend on how well it implements an effective succession planning and management program (Mandi, 2008); and Rothwell (2010) specifically contends that succession planning and management is an increasingly indispensable issue in academic institutions and few other organizations. Similarly, Sinha and Dubey (2005) argued that the implication of poor succession planning is usually poor performance, which translates into high turnover and corporate instability. On the other hand, Barton and Rouse-Jouns (2007) summarily disclosed that effective succession planning ensures continuance supply of prepared leaders for strategic positions; having an organized process for examining leadership talent; increasing opportunities for talents; helping employee to identify their career plans within the organization; and developing the strong leadership, teams for strategic tasks of the organization.

#### 4.4 Mentoring and Succession Planning

According to Shery and Stephen (2012) mentoring program enhances succession planning processes. This is because having mentors attached to

mentees at different cadre and specializations builds and develops potential leaders by widening their knowledge base on the job. However, notwithstanding the merits associated with mentoring, tertiary institutions owned and managed by the Rivers State Government are still far from its adoption and effective implementation as there is no evidence of such policy in their several years of existence. A common approach used by these institutions is the usual emergency replacement which is aimed at filling an observable vacuum as a result of the retirement, vacation or death as against succession planning which is focused on developing people as future successors. Most times these replacements are made at the instance of top Government Officers who may want to settle some of their political cronies through the tertiary institutions' platform and in some instances these applicants are unqualified or does not possess the requisite skills needed to do the job and in the end will not be able to contribute anything to the growth and survival of the institution. This observation corroborates with Norzaini (2012) where it is stated that unfavorable appointment decisions in higher education may be associated with the lack of succession planning in the tertiary institutions. This also supports González's (2010) claims that not much attention is paid to develop leadership through succession planning even in tertiary institutions.

#### 4.5 Training and Succession Planning

Over the years literature has established the essentiality of training in the development of employee skills for optimal performance outcome. It is through regular training that the employees get to know more about their jobs and the changes taking place in their industry domain and as such help in positioning the organization strategically against failure. Nnadozie (2013) alludes that it is only when an organization is able to maintain its employees by satisfying their individual and collective needs in terms of training and development and rewards that organizational goals such survival, quality service delivery, profitability etc. can be achieved. Talent training

basically aims at bridging any gap between the existing and required knowledge of the individuals for better succession planning (Sinha & Dubey, 2005). This is why a talent management driven organization is always in constant review of its current human resource and future human resource needs as well as developing means of meeting those needs. And it is clear that succession planning cannot be effectively achieved if an organization's new entrants are not adequately guided on the dos and the don'ts about the organization through on and off the job training.

However, as regards our institutions of focus, the issue of employee training as a tool for effective succession planning project, literature search proves that inadequate or in most cases a clear absence of government commitment to sponsor employee training is a major challenge faced by the tertiary institutions in Rivers State and Nigeria at large. For instance, Wobodo, Asawo and Asawo (2018) noted that lack of a progressive staff development program is a critical issue affecting tertiary education in Nigeria. Many institutions of higher learning in Nigeria including those owned by the Government of Rivers State lack staff quality and regular training and retraining courses for their workforce to keep them abreast with current happenings in the industry. In fact, it is so bad that even when they apply for grant or sponsorship to attend professional conferences locally and internationally, the application will be kept in view (KIV) till the conference schedule is over and in the end, the applicants might be forced to grudgingly use their personal fund to sponsor it or ignore it where they perceive that they are financially insolvent to accommodate the cost.

Now the implication of this situation on effective succession planning is that people with scarce tacit talents will not be willing to transfer their wealth of experience to the junior workers who are supposedly designed to succeed them when they are gone thereby defeating the whole purpose of succession planning through the creation of the talent pool. No wonder, Gabriel (2012) observed

that because of the strategic role owners of tacit knowledge play in an organization, not too many of them can willingly share it without certain conditions in place.

## V. CONCLUSION

Drawing from the extensive review on the study subject matter, it is observed that scholars at different times and in different empirical and theoretical studies have established that successful organizations are products of quality workforce arrangements through effective talent management and succession planning policies. This is as quality utilization and rational management of intellectual capital such as talent is considered as an essential factor for organizations' economic performance, competitiveness and survival. Furthermore, we discovered that the Rivers State Government owned tertiary institutions have no visible operational talent management system that promotes sustainable succession planning in place rather the predominant practice there is what we may call accidental replacement system; and based on this we conclude that it is on the basis of these inconsistencies and inadequacies in managing the core asset (Talent) of the institutions that has resulted in the paucity of competent and committed employees to deliver on the institutions' core mandate of progressive novel knowledge generation and sharing to make the society a healthy place. Therefore, we recommend:

That the administrators of these institutions go back to the drawing board and set things right before the entire system slides into entropy by reengineering the system's procedures and practices in such a manner that incorporates young talent discovery, attraction, retention and development through mentoring to facilitate transfer of tacit knowledge from the mentors to their mentees as well as regular training through grants for local and international conferences to acquire current knowledge needed for effective succession planning.

They should not give the politicians any further room to make a mess of the sanctity of the system by declining acceptance of any unqualified applicants imposed on them for employment without merit.

To achieve sustainable succession planning through talent management, owners of tacit knowledge such as mentors, should also be rewarded either monetarily or through awards and recognition annually as a platform to motivate them for sharing their expertise with others who in the future will become the leaders of the institutions.

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