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## MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Bolstering human capital management and engagement in the health sectors

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**Abstract:** The health sector is one of the cornerstones and most viable tool for sustainable development. The quest for improved performance has developed momentum over the past years, and this has increased the demand for excellent service. Still, surprisingly the process and array of complexities in employees' selection, education, as well as their career development in the health sector is worrisome with heightened attrition rate. Hence, this paper examines how holistic human capital management is nurtured, implemented and practiced in Nigeria's health sector. The human capital and social exchange theories were also used to explain the issues. The study adopts a cross-sectional approach and descriptive research design to establish trends related to the objectives of this study. A quantitative approach was employed using a modified survey questionnaire in purposively sampling 408 selected health workers in the south-west, Nigeria. The use of measurement model and structural equation modelling (SEM\_PLS) was



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### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Human capital is the most crucial factor of production in a business. This involves the combination of skill, knowledge, competencies, technical know-how, behaviour, attitude, talents, intelligence and abilities inhabited by individuals or in-groups, owned as assets for organizations to utilize at will. Human capital is the aggregate or totality of human competences that add value to the organization. Not many have identified how investments in human capital engage employees or increase their involvements in organizational activities. Hence, this paper explored the relationship between how human capital management dimensions influence the way health workers in the teaching hospitals engage themselves through their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The study opined that the level of relationship, cooperation, and communication between the employee and employer has a positive or negative influence on the employee work environment, thereby resulting in low or high engagement levels.

adopted to establish the convergent reliability, model-fit and degree of association. The results established that human capital management dimensions (training and development, mentoring, employee relations, coaching, job design and career development) are significant predictors of employee engagement. Surprisingly, career development and mentoring had the least values. The study concluded by providing a quite detailed analysis of the assumptions underpinning holistic human capital management in Nigeria's health sector and also putting forth viable and pragmatic recommendations.

**Subjects:** Strategic Management; Human Resource Management; Human Resource Development; Organizational Change

**Keywords:** human capital; management; health sector; engagement

## 1. Introduction

Human capital is the most crucial factor of production in a business and it involves the combination of skill, knowledge, competencies, technical know-how, behaviour, and attitude, talents, intelligence, abilities and so on, inhibited by individuals or in-groups, owned as assets for organizations to utilize at will. Human capital is the aggregate or totality of human competences that add value to the organization (Adeniji et al., 2018; Choudhury & Nayak, 2011). In other words, human capital requires a high level of maintenance (Jena & Pradhan, 2017), development (Halidu, 2015) and control (Ehnert et al., 2014), since it can be highly dynamic and complex to deal with and this sets a pace for the term "Human capital development". Human capital development (HCD) involves the application of new ideas (competencies), identification of new potentials and improving the performance of already existing personnel in the workplace. This HCD also involves effective utilization and engagement of personnel, including the process of mentoring, internships, training, coaching (Kucharcikova & Miciak, 2018), and other educational programmes to improve skills, motivate resourcefulness (Longoni & Cagliano, 2016) and stimulate employees' engagement (Tomislav et al., 2019).

Extant literature has shown that employees find engagement as an opportunity to have reasonable input in the organization. When employees are engaged, it gives them a sense of value and challenge. Tomislav et al. (2019) argued that employees can be engaged in workplace development activities using mental acts of acquiring knowledge, using thoughts emotions, experiences and senses (cognitive engagement), feelings and emotions (affective/emotional engagement) and through their actions (behavioural/physical engagement). There are three main categories of employee existent in organizations include; engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged. Engaged employees are the roots and foundations of the organization they work with, and they try as much as possible to direct their energy, talents and strengths to their work. They move their organization towards high performance with passionate drive and innovation (Kucharcikova & Miciak, 2018; Uzzal, 2016). Not engaged employees only focus not more or less on work and nothing else. They are not energetic and happy towards work (Reilly, 2014; Salau et al., 2018). They have little or no contribution to the accomplishment of organizational aims and objectives. Actively disengaged employees, on the other hand, neither have the interest to work or effectively do their work. They have negative orientations to their work and put no input at all for the betterment of the organization.

Empowering, improving, training and developing employees are ways in which to engage employees in the workplace. When employees are selected for development programmes, they feel a need to want to repay the organization for generating interests in them and increasing their value. Employees feel indebted and generate a natural bond that ensures they are more committed and relatively responsible for the organization. In subsequent years, theories have identified that there is a correlation between investing in human capital and the intentions of employee