



Tackling Talent Acquisition Challenges in Nigerian IT Sector: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract

The Information Technology industry in Nigeria is experiencing rapid growth and development yet faces significant challenges in talent acquisition. This article explores the key problems and prospects associated with attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals in Nigeria. Through a comprehensive review of data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics and industry case studies, this study identifies several critical issues, including a shortage of skilled professionals, intense competition for talent, inadequate infrastructure, and limited career development opportunities. Using case studies of System Specs Nigeria, BOK TECH- Addressing Turnover Through Flexible Work Arrangements, and D_Market Seller - Leveraging Diversity for Innovation to examine how they navigated the IT talent acquisition challenges in Nigeria. Using the Human Capital Theory, the article examines potential solutions and prospects for addressing these challenges, such as improved leadership and management, advocating for positive government policies, enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, and effective crisis management. The study recommended effective recruitment strategies leveraging social media and partnering with universities and professional organizations to identify and recruit skilled professionals. Adopting strong Career Path Development and Professional Development Opportunities will attract prospective employees and the utilization of emerging technology to streamline recruitment, onboarding, and performance management processes, making it easier to manage talent. By addressing these challenges, Nigeria's IT sector can better position itself for sustained growth and competitiveness in the global market.

Keywords: Diversity & Inclusion, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Talent Acquisition, Workplace Culture

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's Information Technology (IT) sector has emerged as a critical economic growth and innovation driver, pivotal in the country's digital transformation journey. With a rapidly expanding digital economy and increasing global demand for IT services, Nigeria's IT sector holds immense potential for job creation, wealth generation, and technological advancement. However, amidst the promising prospects lie significant challenges related to talent acquisition, which threaten to hinder the sector's growth and sustainability.

Nigeria has experienced significant growth in its Information Technology (IT) sector in recent years, attributed to a youthful population, increased internet connectivity, and rising demand for digital services (Agri & Sunny, 2023). This growth has established thriving tech hubs in major cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, positioning Nigeria as a significant player in the global tech landscape. The Nigerian government's dedication to fostering the tech sector is evident through initiatives like the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and digital innovation policies.

By leveraging Nigeria's entrepreneurial culture, NITDA has facilitated the emergence of numerous tech startups across various sectors, including fintech, e-commerce, health tech, and agritech (Olorundare et al., 2022).

This paper aims to explore the critical challenges facing talent acquisition in Nigeria's IT sector and examine potential strategies and prospects for addressing these challenges. As the sector continues to expand and evolve, attracting skilled IT professionals has become a pressing concern for organizations seeking to remain competitive in the global market. By examining the problems and prospects of talent acquisition in Nigeria's IT sector, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and to provide actionable insights for policymakers, industry leaders, and other stakeholders.

Research Questions

- I. What are organizations' current talent acquisition strategies in Nigeria's IT sector?
- II. What do organizations face the main challenges in acquiring talent in the IT sector?

III. How do salary, job security, and career development opportunities influence job satisfaction and turnover in the Nigerian IT sector?

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology is instrumental in comprehensively exploring the intricate dynamics of talent acquisition challenges in the Nigerian IT sector (Akinsowon, 2020; Osonuga, 2022). This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted issues and provides insights into the stakeholders' subjective experiences, perceptions, and motivations.

Qualitative research allows for analyzing case studies, industry reports, and policy documents related to talent acquisition practices in the Nigerian IT sector (Mohammed et al., 2019; Osemwota, O. (2021). By critically examining these case studies, researchers can identify gaps, contradictions, and areas for improvement in existing talent acquisition policies and practices.

Case Studies

The methodology incorporates case studies of successful IT companies in Nigeria, leveraging available data to identify trends and patterns in talent acquisition (Mohammed et al., 2019). This data-driven approach enhances the understanding of the dynamics within the IT sector and informs the analysis of challenges and opportunities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Human Capital Theory (HCT): Human Capital Theory and Talent Development:

Human Capital Theory (HCT) is a theoretical concept that offers strategies for addressing talent acquisition challenges in Nigeria's IT sector. It underscores the significance of viewing human resources as valuable assets and sources of value creation for organizations (Wujarso & Dameria, 2023). Thus, HCT suggests that organizations should invest in individuals' skills, knowledge, and abilities to achieve competitive advantage (Mühlbacher, 2012; Wilson & Herceg, 2022).

HRD plays a crucial role in evaluating and enhancing organizational performance through the lens of HCT.

In Nigeria's IT sector, HCT emphasizes attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals to enhance organizational performance and competitiveness. Organizations can address talent acquisition challenges by implementing strategies such as offering competitive salaries and benefits, providing opportunities for skill development and career advancement, and creating a positive work environment. These strategies align with HCT's emphasis on investing in human capital to drive organizational success. Investing in employees' professional growth and well-being can lead to higher job satisfaction and commitment levels, thereby

reducing turnover rates. By implementing these strategies, Nigeria's IT sector can enhance its ability to attract and retain top talent, ultimately driving innovation and growth in the industry. Additionally, Human Capital Theory underscores the significance of viewing human resources as valuable assets and sources of value creation for organizations. This perspective shifts the focus from traditional cost-minimization approaches to result-based strategies aligned with business goals and objectives.

Leveraging the principles of social exchange theory can help organizations in Nigeria's IT sector tackle talent acquisition challenges, ultimately contributing to their long-term success and competitiveness in the market.

RESOURCE-BASED VIEW (RBV)

In the context of talent acquisition challenges in the Nigerian IT sector, integrating the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory can provide valuable insights into *innovative work behavior* (Pereira et al., 2022), strategic management of resources, and human capital as a source of competitive advantage. American management scholar Jay Barney proposed that RBV focuses on understanding how organizations can gain and sustain a competitive advantage by strategically managing their unique resources and capabilities (Howe-Walsh et al., 2023). The RBV posits that a firm's competitive advantage stems from its unique bundle of resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable (Somasekar, 2014; Miller, 2019).

Applied to talent management in the Nigerian IT sector, RBV emphasizes the strategic importance of human capital in driving organizational performance and success. Human capital, comprising employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities, is a critical resource that can differentiate IT firms and enable them to gain a competitive edge in the market. RBV's perspective will help organizations strategically manage their human resources to enhance their competitive position (Collin, 2021). This involves identifying and leveraging their workforce's unique strengths and capabilities to address talent acquisition challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities in the dynamic IT landscape. For instance, IT firms can focus on attracting and retaining top talent with specialized skills and expertise in high demand in the market. By investing in training and development programs, organizations can enhance the knowledge and capabilities of their employees, making them valuable assets that contribute to organizational success. Furthermore, the RBV framework underscores the importance of aligning human resource strategies with organizational goals and objectives (Ployhart, 2021). IT firms can develop tailored recruitment and retention strategies aligned with their business strategies, ensuring that they attract and retain employees with the skills and competencies needed to achieve strategic objectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The talent acquisition challenges in Nigeria's Information Technology (IT) sector have garnered increasing attention from researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. This literature review aims to provide an overview of existing studies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings related to talent management practices, skills shortages, and workforce mobility within the Nigerian IT sector. A study by Adebisi and Adeola (2020) highlights the significance of talent management practices in addressing talent acquisition challenges in Nigerian organizations (Amori & Becky, 2016). The authors emphasize the importance of adopting strategic talent management approaches, including recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement, to attract and retain skilled IT professionals.

Talent Acquisition in Nigeria's IT Sector

Talent acquisition refers to a strategic and comprehensive approach within human resources that aims to identify, attract, and retain top-tier talent to meet present and future organizational demands. Unlike recruitment, which focuses on immediate staffing needs, talent acquisition involves thoroughly assessing organizational needs and individual aspirations. The primary goal is to align job roles with the right individuals based on their skills, qualifications, and cultural fit (Udegbumam et al., 2024).

Effective talent acquisition requires a deep understanding of an organization's objectives, culture, and values. It involves sourcing, screening, and selecting candidates who possess the requisite competencies and align with the company's mission and vision. Various recruitment channels, from traditional job boards to social media platforms and professional networks, are leveraged to reach a diverse pool of candidates and create a talent pipeline (Udegbumam et al., 2024).

Talent acquisition extends beyond the initial hiring process to encompass onboarding, training, and development initiatives to nurture employee growth and engagement. By investing in comprehensive onboarding programs and continuous learning opportunities, organizations cultivate a motivated and skilled workforce, thereby driving productivity, innovation, and organizational success.

According to Vedapradha et al. (2023), talent acquisition is a continuous human resources endeavor to source and secure highly skilled individuals who can contribute to achieving a company's overarching business objectives. It involves meticulous planning and execution to identify, attract, and engage top-tier talent for present and future organizational demands. By prioritizing long-term workforce planning and scouting for candidates with precisely tailored skill sets, talent acquisition ensures that the organization remains well-equipped to meet evolving challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Challenges of Talent Management in the IT Industry in Nigeria

Global Labor Mobility

Global labor mobility is a phenomenon that affects the demand for skilled IT professionals worldwide. Talent competition often drives skilled workers to move to countries that offer better opportunities and compensation (Kerr, 2018). Advancements in technology and transportation, coupled with globalization, have made it easier for professionals and highly high-skilled workers to move across geographical and cultural boundaries, leading to brain drain from less-developed to more-developed countries. Nigeria experiences a significant brain drain, with many skilled IT professionals leaving for better remuneration, career advancement prospects, and more favorable work environments abroad. This frequent job-switching trend among IT professionals in Nigeria poses challenges for companies in retaining experienced employees and maintaining team stability (Muhammad et al., 2023).

Talent Competition in the IT Industry

In Nigeria, the IT sector faces intense competition for skilled professionals as numerous companies strive to attract top talent from a limited pool. Many IT organizations, particularly smaller ones, often need help from high-caliber professionals due to financial constraints and limited brand recognition. This disparity hampers their ability to appeal to candidates seeking stability, attractive benefits, and association with reputable brands. Consequently, this competitive landscape leads to escalated salary and benefits packages, posing challenges for smaller firms in talent acquisition efforts (Udegbumam et al., 2024).

Skills Mismatch

Skills mismatch in the IT sector refers to the difference between the skills employers seek and the skills that job seekers possess, which can create significant challenges for employers and job seekers. With the rapidly changing technology landscape in the IT industry, the gap occurs when there is a mismatch between the technologies and tools that employers require and job seekers' skills. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and cybersecurity may require specialized skills that are not readily available in the job market.

Changing job requirements can also contribute to skills mismatch. As job roles in the IT sector evolve, employers' expectations regarding required skills and qualifications may change. Job seekers with outdated skills or needing more proficiency in emerging technologies may need help finding suitable employment opportunities. Disparities between the skills taught in educational institutions and those demanded by employers can also contribute to skills mismatch. Job seekers may graduate with degrees or certifications that do not align with the skills needed in the current job market, making it difficult to secure employment.

Federal Character and Endemic Corruption

The Federal Character principle, initially intended to foster national inclusivity, has, in practice, inadvertently erected barriers to talent development in Nigeria. By placing ethnicity above merit, this principle, along with the pervasive issues of corruption and nepotism, has stymied the nation's capacity to nurture authentic talent. The result is a landscape marred by socio-economic hardships and a public distrust of governmental institutions. Despite its noble intentions, the principle has faced criticism for perpetuating marginalization, neglecting merit-based appointments, and allowing certain sectional groups to monopolize crucial government positions, jeopardizing national unity and integration (Okechukwu & Nwosu, 2020; Shehu, 2021).

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: SystemSpecs Nigeria

SystemSpecs is a Nigerian software company known for its innovative solutions in the finance and public sectors. One key talent acquisition strategy is its comprehensive talent development and recognition program. SystemSpecs emphasizes identifying and nurturing talent from within the organization. They offer extensive training programs, mentorship opportunities, and career development initiatives to help employees reach their full potential. Additionally, SystemSpecs has implemented a performance-based recognition system that rewards employees for their contributions and achievements. The company's commitment to talent development and recognition has resulted in a highly engaged workforce and low turnover rates. Employees feel valued and motivated to excel in their roles, contributing to SystemSpecs' continued success in Nigeria's competitive IT sector. <https://www.systemspecs.com.ng/about-us/>

Case Study 2: BOK TECH- Addressing Turnover Through Flexible Work Arrangements

BOK TECH, a leading IT firm in Nigeria, needed to improve with high turnover rates among its technical staff. Despite offering competitive salaries and benefits, many employees quickly left the company. Upon recognizing the need to tackle this challenge, BOK TECH implemented flexible work arrangements as a critical talent acquisition strategy.

Initially, BOK TECH conducted surveys and interviews to understand the factors contributing to turnover. Employees cited long commuting hours, lack of work-life balance, and limited autonomy as significant concerns. Armed with this insight, the company devised a plan to offer remote work options and flexible working hours.

Implementing flexible work arrangements yielded immediate results. Employees appreciated the newfound flexibility, which allowed them to balance their professional and personal lives better. Productivity levels remained high, if not increased, as employees felt more motivated and engaged. Moreover, the reduced need for office space

resulted in cost savings for the company. The company also noticed an improvement in the quality of talent applying for open positions, as the flexible work policy became a crucial differentiator in the competitive IT job market.

Case Study 3: D_Market Seller - Leveraging Diversity for Innovation

D_Market Seller is a rapidly growing IT startup in Abia State that engages with customers through apps and social media. D_Market Seller recognizes the importance of diversity in fostering innovation and retaining top talent. Despite facing challenges in attracting skilled professionals in a competitive market, D_Market Seller prioritizes diversity and inclusion in its talent acquisition efforts.

To achieve this, D_Market Seller implemented several initiatives to promote diversity at all levels of the organization. Firstly, D_Market Seller revamped its recruitment processes to eliminate biases and ensure equal opportunities for candidates from diverse backgrounds. This included training recruiters on unconscious bias and actively seeking out candidates from underrepresented groups. D_Market Seller established mentorship programs that pair experienced employees with newcomers, focusing on fostering diversity and inclusion. The mentorship program provided valuable support and guidance to employees from diverse backgrounds, helping them integrate into the company culture and advance in their careers. Furthermore, D_Market Seller organized networking events and affinity groups to create a sense of belonging among employees. These initiatives encouraged collaboration and idea-sharing among individuals with different perspectives and experiences, ultimately driving organizational innovation.

As a result of these efforts, D_Market Seller experienced a significant improvement in talent acquisition. Employees felt valued and respected, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates. The diverse and inclusive work environment also fueled creativity and innovation.

ANALYSIS

In addressing talent acquisition challenges in the Nigerian IT sector, it is crucial to draw comparisons that highlight the unique dynamics of the sector within Nigeria and uncover transferable solutions from other contexts to gain valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by the Nigerian IT sector and identify potential strategies for overcoming them.

Comparing the Nigerian IT sector with IT sectors in other emerging economies or regions with similar developmental challenges can offer valuable insights. Countries like India, South Africa, or Brazil may present comparable contexts regarding rapid urbanization, youth population, and aspirations for technological advancement. By examining the talent acquisition strategies employed in these countries, Nigeria can identify innovative approaches and best practices

adaptable to its context. For example, India's success in leveraging its large pool of engineering graduates or South Africa's initiatives to promote digital skills among youth may offer valuable lessons for Nigeria's IT sector.

Additionally, drawing comparisons within the Nigerian context can highlight regional disparities and sector-specific challenges. For instance, the talent acquisition landscape in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial hub, may differ significantly from that in other regions. Factors such as access to infrastructure, availability of skilled labor, and regulatory environments may vary across regions, necessitating tailored strategies for talent acquisition. By conducting intra-country comparisons, researchers can develop more nuanced insights into the diverse challenges faced by the Nigerian IT sector and devise targeted solutions that account for regional variations.

Adopting a systematic approach to case selection involves defining clear criteria for identifying suitable case study candidates. These criteria could include variables such as company size (e.g., small, medium, or large enterprises), geographical location (e.g., urban centers, technology hubs), market presence (e.g., startups, established firms), and sectoral focus (e.g., software development, IT services). By establishing specific selection criteria, we ensured that case studies represent a diverse range of organizations within the Nigerian IT sector, thus enhancing the robustness and validity of the study's findings.

Furthermore, a strategic approach to case selection involves purposefully selecting cases that offer maximum insight and representation. This may involve purposive sampling, where cases are selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and their potential to provide rich and diverse data. For example, the selected case studies include a mix of companies representing different segments of the IT sector, such as software development firms (SystemSpecs Nigeria), IT consulting companies (BOK TECH), and technology startups (D_Market Seller). Additionally, selecting cases from various geographical regions within Nigeria captured regional variations in talent acquisition challenges and strategies. Where (SystemSpecs Nigeria) had offices in the six geopolitical zones, BOK TECH is based in Lagos while (D_Market Seller) is in Aba, Abia State; by ensuring sufficient diversity and depth in the selected case studies, we enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of our findings.

FINDINGS

The findings from case studies provided valuable insights into specific organizational contexts. However, it is essential to acknowledge the potential limitations of directly generalizing these findings to the Nigerian IT sector without considering the variability between different organizations and regions. By discussing these limitations, the study can provide a more nuanced understanding of the applicability of its findings and ensure transparency in the research process.

Firstly, it is crucial to recognize that the Nigerian IT sector is diverse and heterogeneous, comprising organizations of various sizes, structures, and operational models. As such, the talent acquisition challenges one organization faces may not necessarily reflect the experiences of all entities within the sector. Organizational culture, market positioning, geographical location, and sector-specific dynamics can significantly influence talent acquisition practices and outcomes. Therefore, acknowledge the potential limitations of generalizing findings from case studies to the entire sector and consider the contextual factors that may moderate or mediate these generalizations.

Additionally, regional variations within Nigeria can further complicate the generalization of findings across the entire IT sector. The talent landscape may differ between urban and rural areas and across different states or regions due to factors such as infrastructure development, educational opportunities, and access to technology hubs. Therefore, it is essential to recognize Nigeria's geographical diversity and contextualize the findings accordingly. This could involve discussing how regional differences may influence talent acquisition practices and outcomes and acknowledging the limitations of extrapolating findings from specific regions to the broader sector.

CULTURAL FACTORS

Cultural issues play a significant role and can influence various aspects of the recruitment process in Nigeria's IT industry. The peculiar Nigerian polity is marked by a complex heterogeneous national culture with multi-ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, which provides fertile ground for conflict and places a significant demand on employment processes. Nigeria is considered the seventh most populated country globally and the most populated nation in Africa, endowed with abundant human and natural resources. However, many Nigerians remain in poverty, inequality, unemployment, and insecurity (Oyetade & Femi-Olubiyi, 2023).

Nigerian culture strongly emphasizes family cohesion and communal relationships, often leading individuals to prioritize opportunities to remain close to their families and communities, impacting relocation decisions, as individuals may be reluctant to accept job offers that require them to move away from their hometowns or support networks. However, today, the issue of insecurity (Ifeanyi, 2023) significantly affects talent acquisition, hence the rise of flexible work arrangements, remote work options, or incentives to mitigate the challenges.

The concept of hierarchy and respect for authority is another cultural dimension that shapes talent management practices in Nigeria, following a solid hierarchical structure where deference to authority figures and seniority are deeply ingrained. HR practitioners and organizational leaders must adopt leadership styles that resonate with Nigerian cultural

norms, such as fostering open communication channels, soliciting employee feedback at all levels, and demonstrating respect for diverse viewpoints. Organizations can foster a conducive work environment that promotes employee engagement and retention by aligning leadership practices with cultural values.

The concept of collectivism versus individualism is a critical cultural dimension that influences talent management in Nigeria. Nigerian culture strongly emphasizes collective identity and group cohesion, where individuals prioritize the community's welfare over individual interests. Thus, HR policies and practices should recognize and reinforce this cultural inclination by promoting teamwork, fostering a sense of belongingness, and incentivizing collective achievements. By leveraging the collective strengths of employees, organizations can enhance productivity, innovation, and employee satisfaction in the IT sector.

Other findings include

1. **Brain Drain:** Brain drain remains a significant concern, with skilled professionals opting to emigrate to countries with better prospects and opportunities. Limited career advancement opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and political instability drive talent flight, exacerbating acquisition challenges for Nigerian IT organizations.
2. **Strengthening STEM Education:** Investing in STEM education and training programs is essential for bridging skills gaps and equipping the workforce with the necessary competencies to thrive in the digital economy.

STRATEGIES FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN THE IT INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

Leadership and Management

Addressing talent acquisition in Nigeria requires effective organizational leadership and organizations. Firm managers can attract top talent through structured internship and mentorship programs and foster learning and development. Consistent training and development opportunities are crucial to equip employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt to industry demands, contributing to talent development and organizational success (Johnson et al., 2019; Yildiz, 2023)

Influential leaders focus on efficiently and reliably achieving goals. Influential leaders prioritize accomplishing goals efficiently and reliably while fostering interpersonal relationships that increase mutual trust, cooperation, job satisfaction, and identification with the team or organization by Inspiring, motivating, challenging, and supporting teams and employees to achieve shared goals; leaders continuously develop a steady supply of competent talent capable of assuming strategic roles (Malukani & Paranjape, 2023; Okechukwu & Nwosu, 2020). Leaders with long-term perspectives are willing to challenge the status quo and drive innovation, creating a sense of excitement and purpose within organizations (Dorta-Afonso et al., 2021).

Advocating for Positive Government Policies

Supporting policies that foster growth in the IT sector can significantly impact economic development and innovation. Education and training are key policy areas where Nigeria can make a difference. By promoting STEM education and training programs, policymakers can help cultivate a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the IT sector (Popo-Olaniyan et al., 2022). Additionally, investing in research and development (R&D) is crucial for driving innovation in the IT sector and developing new technologies and products. Ensuring access to high-speed internet and digital infrastructure is also essential, making infrastructure-focused policies critical for the industry's growth (Cui et al., 2023).

Moreover, policymakers can encourage investment in the IT sector by promoting a favorable regulatory environment, such as data protection laws and intellectual property rights (Bradley et al., 2021; Eid, 2023). Supporting entrepreneurship and startup initiatives is another vital aspect that can foster innovation and drive growth in the IT sector. Encouraging international collaboration can further help the industry access new markets and technologies, enhancing its competitiveness on a global scale. Lastly, policies promoting digital inclusion can help bridge the digital divide and ensure that everyone can benefit from the growth of the IT sector (Elahi, 2020)

Talent Development

The success of any organization is directly linked to its employees' skills and growth. To achieve this, Talent Development, also known as Learning and Development, is not just important but essential. It is not merely a complement to Talent Management but a crucial part. According to Osolase et al. (2024), Talent Development is responsible for strategic planning, engagement, performance appraisals, hiring, and onboarding, making it the foundation of these processes. It is the driving force behind an organization's ability to adapt, innovate, and succeed. Regular training and development opportunities are vital for employees to reach their full potential and contribute to their organization's competitiveness. In today's digital era, agile organizations prioritize training in specialized skills such as data analysis, cybersecurity, and cloud computing to bring about digital transformation. This ensures that IT professionals continuously update their skills and knowledge, keeping the organization at the forefront of their industry. Investing in employees' career advancement and providing clear paths for progression is crucial for retaining skilled professionals (Malukani & Paranjape, 2023). Talent Development recognizes individuals' strengths and weaknesses and helps them reach their full potential, which, in turn, contributes to the organization's success. Therefore, it is essential to implement Talent Development and Talent Management to manage human resources effectively. HRD scholars and practitioners facilitate Talent

Development and ensure it aligns with an organization's goals and objectives. In conclusion, Talent Development is not just a key to an organization's success; investing in employees' career advancement is vital to achieving this goal. By embracing Talent Development, organizations can foster a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and growth, seizing opportunities and overcoming challenges to remain competitive in today's ever-changing business environment (Malukani & Paranjape, 2023).

Policy Recommendation

To enhance the effectiveness and actionable policy recommendations for addressing talent acquisition challenges in the Nigerian IT sector, it is imperative to delineate specific actions to be undertaken by different stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, and industry associations:

Government Bodies

I. Develop and implement policies to incentivize investment in IT education and training programs, including tax breaks or subsidies for IT firms that support workforce development initiatives.

II. Allocate funding for research and development initiatives to foster innovation and technology advancement within the IT sector.

Educational Institutions

I. Enhance collaboration with industry partners to design curricula aligned with the skills and competencies required by the IT industry.

II. Expand capacity for IT education and training programs to meet the growing demand for skilled professionals, including the establishment of specialized IT academies or vocational training centers.

Industry Associations

I. Facilitate knowledge sharing and best practice exchange among member organizations to address common talent acquisition challenges and identify innovative solutions.

II. Partner with educational institutions to develop internship and apprenticeship programs that provide hands-on experience and bridge the gap between academia and industry.

CONCLUSION

The talent acquisition challenges facing Nigeria's IT sector are complex and multifaceted but manageable. This study has highlighted the pressing need for concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, industry players, and policymakers, to address these challenges effectively. By implementing targeted interventions such as improving education and training programs, enhancing workplace conditions, and implementing robust talent management strategies, Nigeria

can foster a more conducive environment for attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals. Furthermore, the prospects for success in tackling these challenges are promising, given Nigeria's growing economy, burgeoning technology ecosystem, and the increasing global demand for IT services. By capitalizing on these opportunities and addressing the underlying issues, Nigeria's IT sector can emerge more robust, more competitive, and better positioned to contribute significantly to the country's socio-economic development in the years to come.

Addressing talent acquisition challenges in Nigeria's IT sector is crucial for driving sustainable growth, innovation, and competitiveness in the digital age. Analyzing internal and external factors impacting talent management revealed significant barriers, including skills shortages, brain drain, organizational culture issues, and competition from multinational corporations. Despite these challenges, there are promising prospects and opportunities for improvement. Drawing on theoretical frameworks, case studies, and empirical research, it is evident that a multifaceted approach is necessary to tackle these challenges effectively. Strengthen STEM education and training programs, promote employee engagement and well-being, and enhance public-private partnerships to build a robust IT workforce in Nigeria.

In conclusion, while the road ahead may be challenging, the prospects for talent acquisition and retention in Nigeria's IT sector are promising. By embracing innovation, investing in human capital development, and fostering a conducive business environment, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of its IT industry and drive sustainable economic growth and development in the digital era.

Future studies - Future researcher could integrate quantitative data or statistical analysis to validate our findings and provide other perspectives.

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