

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS REQUIRED OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS FOR SUCCESSFUL OPERATION IN NASARAWA STATE

BY

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Abstract

This study surveyed the human resource management skills required by small business owners for successful operation in Nasarawa State. The study surveyed 310 registered small business owners. Three research questions guided the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire on a five point scale. The instrument was subjected to face validation and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions while one – way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that small business owners in Nasarawa State require human resource management skills for successful operation of their businesses. This study also revealed that qualification were sources of differences in the mean ratings of the small business owners on human resource management skills required for successful operation. It was therefore recommended among others those small business owners and potential entrepreneurs should adopt the use of human resource management skills in order to achieve success in their businesses. Also, it was recommended that small business owners who do not have human resource management skills should embark on on-the-job training, workshop and seminars so as to acquire the required skills.

Key words: *Human Resource, Human Resource Management, Strategic Planning, Recruitment and Placement, Training and Development*

Introduction

The workforce which is the human resources and the firms' ability to recruit and maintain a good workforce among other factors constitute a necessity for production. One most critical resource of all organisations is people. Some simple forms of organisation consist only of people or members who establish their own objectives, decide among themselves who shall fill leadership positions, and carry out other tasks required to accomplish their objectives.

Human resources are indispensable in the life of any business organisation. Human resources also known as manpower refers to the totality of the energies, skills, knowledge and experiences available in an organisation (Yaro 2012). According to Robbins (2001), human resource is the managerial, scientific,

engineering, technical and other skills which are employed in creating, designing, developing, organizing, managing and operating productive and service enterprises. Human resources are the most valuable resources in every organisation. The human resources of a business organisations include variety of specialists such as engineers, accountant, sales persons, secretaries, computer and machine operators through whom the firm's manager achieve the firms objectives. All other resources in an organisation without the human resources are passive factors. However, it is only through effective management that the human resources can perform their functions diligently.

Management according to Lawal (2005) is the process of planning, organising, leading and

controlling the efforts of organisation members and of using all other organisational resources to achieve stated organisational goals. In the same vein, Ejiofor (2009) described management as the art of working particularly through people for the achievement of the goals of an organization. In trying to achieve these goals, the manager has to map out his strategy, find people and the materials to do the job, assign different people to accomplish different jobs, ensure that these jobs are being done as planned. In other words, management is the art of getting things done through people. In the context of this work, management is the process by which managers create, direct, maintain and operate purposive organisation through systematic and coordinated cooperative human effort. Management of human resources plays a tremendous role in enhancing the quality and efficiency of a business. The organisational climate and processes are usually sound when the employees in the organisation are well coordinated through effective and efficient human resource management.

Human Resource Management is needed to ensure the optimum use of the human resources currently employed in an organisation. Effective management of human resources in an organisation encompasses strategic planning, recruitment and placement, training, development and compensation of employees. Appropriate skills are very important requirements for effective operation of any business organisation especially small scale business enterprises. A skill is defined by Garry (2002) as the ability to do something well arising from talent, training or performance. Thus, skill is an action that involves the application of knowledge in anticipation of some outcome. The level of performance in business most times depends on the level of human resource management skills of the small business owner.

Small business enterprise, according to Abas (2000) is defined as those entrepreneurial units in business operations which operate and serve at a limited scale in limited vicinity, with limited means for operations, usually owned and controlled by single individual as the owner, manager and sometimes owned as family business. CBN (2003) in its credit guidelines, classified small business as those businesses with annual income/assets with less than half a million naira. Oyetunji (2010) stated that small business enterprises remain a dominant engine for economic growth in Nigeria because of their role in job creation, stimulation of entrepreneurial skill and private ownership of business. The success of a small business organisation would greatly depend on the human resource management skills of the manager of the business.

Asumeji (2010) points out that Human Resource Management skills is the term used to describe formal practice and policy necessary to execute all management tasks relating to personnel issues, especially employment/hiring, education, evaluation and rewarding of employees and provision of safe, ethically acceptable and fair environment for them. These Human Resource Management skills include strategic planning skills, job recruitment and placement skills training and development skills and compensation skills.

Strategic planning skills is the pattern of decision in a company that determines and reveals its objectives, purpose or goals and products, the principal policies and plans for achieving these goals and defines the range of business the is to pursue, the kind of economic and human organisation it is or intends to be and the nature of the economic and non economic contributions it intends to make to its shareholders, employees, customers, and communities. Recruitment and placement skill is the process of searching for prospective

employees and stimulating them to apply for jobs in the organisation, they are then selected by ascertaining their qualification, experience, skill and knowledge to ensure their suitability to the job, then induction and orientation is carried out to enable the new employees to rehabilitate in their new surroundings.

Training and development skills on the other hand is the process by which the employees learn skills, knowledge, abilities or attitudes to improve organisational and personal goals. They are then developed by improving, moulding, changing and developing the skills, knowledge, creative ability, aptitude and attitude based on present and future job and organisational requirement. Compensation skill is the ability of managers to provide equitable and fair remuneration to the employees. It includes wage and salary administration, incentive, fringe benefit etc (Dessler 2009).

Human resource management skill is the expertness of a business manager to achieve organisational goals. It includes all the strategies, policies, plans, processes and practices business managers use to attract and engage, manage, develop and reward the people who work for them. The level of performance in a business most times depends on the level of human resource management skill of the business manager. Aku (2002) described a business manager as the person that oversees the day-to-day operations of the business. In this study, the business manager is the owner of a small business enterprise who makes good use of his employees to perform whatever task that may be necessary to achieve organisational goals. A business enterprise is any organisation which engages in economic activities such as manufacturing, commercial or rendering services with a view to making profits.

In addition, Yaro (2012) contends that every owner of small enterprises aspires to have successfully organised enterprise and to realise high profits with employees who have high level of motivation in regards to the successful operation of the enterprise. The author, however, indicated that most of such enterprises in Nasarawa lack the human resource management skill which is a key element in maintaining a competitive edge in the market. Studies on Human Resource Management indicated that inadequate and inefficient management of employees in small firms has resulted in low productivity and poor labour turnover rates which is one of the leading causes of small firm failures (Ade 2011s). A human resource management skill in small business is an issue of great concern. Some of the small business owners do not know or are aware that they need HRM skills to boost their productivity.

Similarly, the level of investment required to maintain and sustain the workforce can be disputable if its accompanying benefits for the firm are not clear. In practical terms therefore, small business managers who wish to make use of the Human Resource Management skills will help small business owners to consider how employees values and preferences be identified, what rewards are most likely to be valued by employees, in what ways can rewards be tied to performance and what training resources are required to ensure that employee effort can result in effective performance. As a result, this study determined the human resource management skills required by small business owners for successful business operation.

Purpose of the study

The major purpose of this study is to determine the human resource management skills required for successful operation of small business enterprises in Nasarawa State. Specifically the study determined:

1. The strategic planning skills required by small business for successful operation.
2. The recruitment and placement skills required by small business owners for successful operation.
3. The training and development skills required by small business owners for successful operation.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the strategic planning skills required by business owners for successful operation?
2. What are the recruitment and placement skills required by business owners for successful operation?
3. What are the training and development skills required by business owners for successful operation?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Qualification is not a significant source of difference in the mean responses of business managers on the human resource management skills required for successful operation of small business enterprises.

Methodology

Research Question 1

What are the strategic planning skills required by small business owners for successful operation?

The results are presented in Table 1 below

Table 1

Mean Ratings of Respondents on Strategic Planning Skills Required by Small business owners for Successful Operation

		<i>Uzuagu, A. U, Allu, S. F. & Chiaka, A.O.</i>	
S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	Decision
	Ability to		
1	Defines the business mission and visions	3.42	MR

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Nasarawa State. The populations for this study were 1,386 small businesses registered with Corporate Affairs Commission in Nasarawa State. The sample for the study consists of 310 respondents made up of business managers (i.e. small business owners). The instrument for data collection was Human Resource Management Skills Questionnaire (HRMSQ) developed by the researchers, which consists of forty-six (46) items. The structured questionnaire was made up of four sections. Section A is designed to obtain background information about the respondents. Section B ascertained the strategic planning skills required by small business enterprises. Section C consist items on the recruitment and placement skills required by small business enterprises and Section D assesses the training and development skills required by small business enterprises. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Vocational Teacher Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula. The instrument for the data collection was administered to the respondents by the researchers and with help of six research assistants. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the three research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

2	Define business goals	3.85	MR
3	describe the nature of business	4.60	VHR
4	identify strategies	3.39	MR
5	determine extent to which strategic change is required in the business	4.13	HR
6	analyse and implement resources	4.10	HR
7	establish strategic control measure	4.71	VHR
8	conduct performance evaluation	4.83	VHR
9	review and update organisational strategies	2.56	LR
10	have required facilities for business success	3.42	MR
11	ensure proper location of business	4.35	HR

The data presented in Table 1 above reveals that, out of the 11 listed strategic planning skills, 10 skills had their mean values ranged from 3.00 – 5.00 which were between very highly required and moderately required.

This indicated that the 10 listed planning skills are all required for successful operations of small enterprises while the remaining one skill is less required which is ability to review and update organisational strategies.

S/N	Statements	\bar{X}	Decision
Ability to			
1	Have information on the employees job	4.02	HR
2	Have job description and specification	4.28	HR
3,	Have job vacancies,	4.40	HR
4,	Show requisite education, skills and personality of the job,	4.32,	HR,
5,	Plan and implement job screening,	3.65	MR
6,	Analyse test validity and reliability,	3.72	MR
7,	Conduct job interview,	3.72	MR
8,	Assess educational background of individuals for	4.05	HR
9,	Make use of external recruitment,	2.06	LR
10,	Make internal recruitment ,	4.59	VHR
11,	Place candidates on the right job,	4.75	VHR
12,	Ensure proper placement of employees,	4.15	HR

The data presented in Table 2 showed that out listed recruitment and placement skills are of the 12

S/N	Statements	X	Decision
	Ability to:		
1	provide orientation for new employees	4.97	VHR
2	diagnose training needs	4.62	VHR
3	design training goals and objectives	4.04	HR
4	determine skills required for training	4.16	HR
5	use performance appraisal to assess training needs	4.10	HR
6	ensure uniformity in rating appraisal	3.31	MR
7	conduct appraisal and promotion interview	3.77	MR
8	Provide on the job training	4.55	VHR
9	use required technology for training	4.01	HR
10	maximise the similarity between the training situation and work situation	2.43	LR
11	implement and evaluate training goals	4.49	HR

listed recruitment and placement skills, 11 items are between very highly required and moderately required with their mean values ranged from 3.00 – 5.00. This indicated that 11

required for operation of small enterprises while item 8 was rates less required which is the ability to assess educational background of individuals for recruitment.

Research Question 3

What are the training and development skills required by small business owners for successful operation?

The results are presented in Table 3 Below

Table 3

Mean Ratings of Respondents on Training and Development Skills Required by Small Business Owners for Successful Operation

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The data presented in Table 3 above revealed that, out of the eleven listed skills on training and development, ten items had their mean values ranged from 3.00 – 5.00. Three skills were rated very highly required which include the ability to: provide orientation for new employees, diagnose training needs and provide on the job training. Five skills rated highly required include ability to: design training goals and objectives, determine skills required for

training, use performance appraisal to assess training needs, use required technology for training and plan implementation and evaluate training needs, use required technology for training and plan, implement and evaluate training goals. Two skills were rated moderately require while item 10 was rated less required which is the ability to maximise the similarity between the training situation and the work situation.

Hypothesis testing

Ho: Qualification is not a significant source of difference in the mean responses of business managers on the human resource management skills required for successful operation of small business enterprises.

The result is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4

The one-way ANOVA Results of the Mean Ratings on		Strategic Planning Skills Required for Successful Operation of Small Business by Owners According to Qualification				
Items		Sum of Squares	dF	F	Dec. post hoc Test (scheffe)	
1. define the business mission and visions	Between Groups	5.71	3	3.00	S	First Deg.
	Within Groups	194.16	306			
	Total	199.87	309			
2. ability to define business goals	Between Groups	2.50	3	2.05	NS	First Deg.
	Within Groups	124.33	306			
	Total	126.84	309			
3. describe nature of Business	Between Groups	36.47	3	16.21	S	First Deg.
	Within Groups	229.46	306			
	Total	265.93	309			
4. indentify strategies	Between Groups	12.82	3	4.43	S	HND
	Within Groups	294.86	306			
	Total	307.69	309			
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5. determine extent to which strategic change is required in the business	Between Groups	89.79	3	23.91	S	First Deg.
	Within Groups	382.99	306			
	Total	472.78	309			
6. analyze and Implement Resources	Between Groups	177.58	3	37.90	S	HND
	Within Groups	477.88	306			
	Total	655.47	309			
7. establish strategic control measure	Between Groups	52.50	3	11.05	S	HND
	Within Groups	484.36	306			
	Total	536.86	309			
8. conduct Performance	Between Groups	111.16	3	20.42	S	HND
	Within Groups	555.04	306			

Evaluation	Total	666.21	309			
9. review and update	Between Groups	56.69	3	14.25	S	First Deg.
Organizational	Within Groups	405.74	306			
Strategies	Total	462.43	309			
10. have required	Between Groups	102.36	3	21.31	S	First Deg.
facilities for	Within Groups	489.96	306			
business success	Total	592.33	309			
ensure proper	Between Groups	114.49	3	19.44	S	HND
location of business	Within Groups	600.50	306			
	Total	714.99	309			

The result presented in Table 4 showed the analysis of variance of the responses of the respondents on strategic planning skills required by small business owners for successful operations of their business. The result revealed that significant differences existed in the responses of the respondents on 10 out of 11 listed skills since the F- calculated

where all greater than the F- critical at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore not accepted. The result of post hoc test conducted using scheff's test revealed that qualification is a source of difference in the ratings of the respondents.

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Table 5

The one-way ANOV A Result on the Mean Ratings on Recruitment and Placement Skills Required for Successful Operation by Small Business Owners According to Qualification

Items	Sum of Squares	Df	F	Sig.	Decision	Post Hoc Test
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							(Scheffe)
1. Ability to have information on the employees job	Between Groups	5.11	3	3.00	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	194.16	306				
	Total	199.87	309				
2. have job description and specification	Between Groups	2.50	3	2.05	.11	NS	
	Within Groups	124.33	306				
	Total	126.84	309				
3. have job vacancies	Between Groups	36.47	3	16.21	.00	S	first Deg.
	Within Groups	265.93	306				
	Total	265.93	309				
4. show requisite education, skills and personality of the job	Between Groups	12.82	3	4.43	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	294.86	306				
	Total	307.69	309				
5. plan and implement job screening	Between Groups	89.79	3	23.91	.00	S	PG
	Within Groups	382.99	306				
	Total	472.78	309				
6. analyze test validity and reliability	Between Groups	177.58	3	37.90	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	477.88	306				
	Total	655.47	309				
7. Conduct job Interview	Between Groups	52.50	3	11.05	.00	S	First Deg.
	Within Groups	484.36	306				
	Total	536.86	309				
8. assess educational background of individuals for recruitment	Between Groups	111.16	3	20.42	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	555.04	306				
	Total	666.21	309				
9. make use of external recruitment	Between Groups	56.69	3	14.25	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	405.74	306				
	Total	462.43	309				
10. make internal Recruitment	Between Groups	102.36	3	21.31	.00	S	first Deg.
	Within Groups	489.96	306				
	Total	592.33	309				
11. place candidates on the right job	Between Groups	114.49	3	11.72	.48	S	HND
	Within Groups	600.50	306				
	Total	714.99	309				
12. ensure proper placement of employees	Between Groups	98.81	3	1.72	.00	NS	
	Within Groups	659.89	306				
	Total	714.99	309				

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Table 5

The one-way ANOV A Result on the Mean Ratings on Recruitment and Placement Skills Required for Successful Operation by Small Business Owners According to Qualification

Items		Sum of Squares	Df	F	Sig.	Decision	Post Hoc Test (Scheffe)
1. Ability to have information on the employees job	Between Groups	5.11	3	3.00	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	194.16	306				
	Total	199.87	309				
2. have job description and specification	Between Groups	2.50	3	2.05	.11	NS	
	Within Groups	124.33	306				
	Total	126.84	309				
3. have job vacancies	Between Groups	36.47	3	16.21	.00	S	first Deg.
	Within Groups	265.93	306				
	Total	265.93	309				
4. show requisite education, skills and personality of the job	Between Groups	12.82	3	4.43	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	294.86	306				
	Total	307.69	309				
5. plan and implement job screening	Between Groups	89.79	3	23.91	.00	S	PG
	Within Groups	382.99	306				
	Total	472.78	309				
6. analyze test validity and reliability	Between Groups	177.58	3	37.90	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	477.88	306				
	Total	655.47	309				
7. Conduct job Interview	Between Groups	52.50	3	11.05	.00	S	First Deg.
	Within Groups	484.36	306				
	Total	536.86	309				
8. assess educational background of individuals for recruitment	Between Groups	111.16	3	20.42	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	555.04	306				
	Total	666.21	309				
9. make use of external recruitment	Between Groups	56.69	3	14.25	.00	S	HND
	Within Groups	405.74	306				
	Total	462.43	309				

10. make internal Recruitment	Between Groups	102.36	3	21.31	.00	S	first Deg.
	Within Groups	489.96	306				
	Total	592.33	309				
11. place candidates on the right job	Between Groups	114.49	3	11.72	.48	S	HND
	Within Groups	600.50	306				
	Total	714.99	309				
12. ensure proper placement of employees	Between Groups	98.81	3	1.72	.00	NS	
	Within Groups	659.89	306				
	Total	714.99	309				

The data presented in Table 5 reveals the Analysis of Variance of the responses of the three categories of small business owners on recruitment and placement skills required for successful operation of business. The result showed that there were significant differences in 10 items except for two. Items 2 and 12 (ability to prepare job descriptions and specifications) and (ability to ensure proper placement of employees) respectively. The F.

calculated for the 10 significant items were all greater than the F critical at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that small business owners differ in their recruitment and placement skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis in respect of all the identified recruitment and placement skills was not accepted. In order to determine the variation, a post hoc test using scheffe's test. The result of the post hoc test showed that the source of difference was in the qualification of the operators.

Table 6

The one-way ANOV A Result of the Mean Ratings on Training and Development Skills Required for Successful Operation by Small Business Owners According to Qualification

Items		Sum of Squares	Of	F	Sig.	Decision Post Hoc Test scheffe
1. Ability to: provide orientation for new employees	Between Groups	8.26	3	8.21	.00	S HND
	Within Groups	102.57	306			
	Total	110.83	309			
2. diagnose training needs	Between Groups	63.13	3	16.06	.00	S first deg.
	Within Groups	401.00	306			
	Total	464.13	309			
3. Design training goals and	Between Groups	3.73	3	1.57	.11	5 first deg.

	objectives	Within Groups	241.51	306				
		Total	245.24	309				
4.	Determine skills required for training	Between Groups	5.51	3	3.82	.00	5	first deg.
		Within Groups	147.09	306				
		Total	152.60	309				
5.	Use performance appraisal to assess training needs	Between Groups	30.57	3	8.84	.00	5	HND
		Within Groups	352.52	306				
		Total	383.09	309				
6.	Ensure uniformity in rating appraisal	Between Groups	63.03	3	8.84	.00	5	HND
		Within Groups	326.23	306				
		Total	389.27	309				
7.	Conduct appraisal and promotion interview	Between Groups	54.92	3	19.70	.00	5	HND
		Within Groups	307.75	306				
		Total	362.67	309				
8.	Provide on the job training	Between Groups	61.82	3	18.20	.00	5	HND
		Within Groups	415.81	306				
		Total	477.63	309				
9.	Use required technology , for training	Between Groups	98.83	3	27.63	.00	5	HND
		Within Groups	364.80	306				
		Total	463.63	309				
10.	maximize the similarity between the training situation and the work situation	Between Groups	14.66	3	4.60	.14	NS	
		Within Groups	324.91	306				
		Total	339.57	309				
11.	Plan, implement and evaluate training goals.	Between Groups	12.99	3	6.11	.00	5	first deg.
		Within Groups	216.90	306				
		Total	229.89	309				

The analysis of data in Table 6 showed the Analysis of variance of the responses of the three categories of small business owners on training and development skills required by small business owners for the successful operations of their business. The analysis revealed significant differences in all the 11 items except for item 11 (maximize the similarity between the training situation and the work situation). The result also indicated that the respondents differ in their opinions for the rating of the skills. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not accepted since the F - calculated was greater than the f-critical value at 0.05 level of significant. In order to

determine the variation, a post hoc test using scheffe's test was conducted. The result further indicated that qualification is a source of difference in the mean ratings of the operators.

Discussion of Findings

The study determined the human resource management skills required by small business owners for successful operation. The findings based on the analysis done showed corroborations with the findings and views of other authors. Table 1 revealed that 10 out of 11 listed skills on strategic planning were all accepted as required by the managers of small businesses for successful operations. Only one

item was rated as not required. The findings indicated the importance of strategic planning in business operations. The findings of this study is in agreement with the views of Dessler (2005) who asserted that without strategic planning skills and responsibilities, the business will lack focus and loses direction. Eze (2005) explained that strategic planning defined where the business is going in the future and as such organises its resources to enable it accomplish its objectives.

Table 2 showed the analysis of the data on recruitment and placement skills required by small business owners for successful operation. The result relating to the second research question shows that out of 12 items, three items were rated very highly required; six items were rated highly required, two items were rated moderately required and only one item was rated as less required. The findings showed that the skills were all required for recruitment and placement of workers for successful business operations. The findings are consistent with the views of Cole (2012) and Dessler (2009) which stated that job descriptions and specifications are necessary for correct placement of workers into the right positions in business. This is because the job descriptions will describe the activities and responsibilities of the job, the working conditions and safety hazards while the job specification will give a list of job's human requirements such as education, experience, skills etc.

Table 3 revealed the ratings on training and development skills required by small business, for business owners for successful operation. Eleven skills rated as required include ability to use job grading to assess pay, recognize difference in performance, give cash awards, recognize good and high performance on the job, provide welfare and security programmes for employees, provide life and health insurance scheme for staff, grant bonus and

special pay for excellence, grant holidays and vacations to staff, pay salaries and wages regularly as at when due, provide educational assistance and study leave and establish allowances and fringe benefits for workers. The findings as regards to research question three is in line with that of Eigege (2003) who contends that both financial and non financial rewards are particularly important to motivate. Oyetunji (2010) explains that wages and salaries are the mode of compensating workers for exerting their energy or spending their time in accomplishing the organisation's objectives. Ndudi (2010) stated that the objective of compensation is to motivate the employees to retain, retain workers and thus reducing rate of labour turnover.

The results of the hypotheses presented in Table 4, 5 and 6 consistently indicated that qualifications are significant source of difference in the mean ratings of the three categories of small business operators. Hence majority of the skills listed had their F ratio greater than the F calculated at 0.05 level of significance and the null hypotheses were not accepted.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the human resource management skills required by small business owners for successful operation. It was found that Human resource management skills are necessary for the successful operations of small businesses. The study therefore concluded that strategic planning skills, placement and recruitment skills and training and developments skills are all required for success in business. Based on result of the hypotheses tested, the study equally concluded that the operators who do not possess requisite qualification for success in business be given some of training to enable them operate their businesses successfully.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Existing and potential business operators should adopt the human resource management skills in operating their business for successful performance.
2. The state government should organise training on human resource management skills for the small business operators through its agencies that are in charge of their growth and development to ensure survival of small businesses in the state.

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