



Full Length Research

Attracting and Managing Talents in Modern Day Political Parties: Evidential Strategies from Nigeria's Democratic Process

¹Ayo Aluko, ²Dr. Adewale Sunday Oke, ³Dr. Muftau Oladosu Jinadu and
⁴Dr. Abiso Kabir (Professor)

¹Department of Business Management, Covenant University, Ota - Nigeria.

²Department of Economics, POMA University, P. O. Box 75, Igolo, Ayedjou Road, Ifangni, Republic of Benin.
E-mail: adeolafavour1680@yahoo.com, E-mail: sundayadewale1680@gmail.com

³Managing Director, Latino Farm Care Services, Lagos Abeokuta Expressway, Lagos, Nigeria.
Email: oladosujinadu@gmail.com

⁴International Adjunct Faculty, Faculty of Management Science, POMA University, P. O. Box 75, Igolo, Ayedjou Road, Ifangni, Republic of Benin. Email: kabir.abiso@yahoo.com

Abstract: The broad objective of this paper was to explore the place of succession planning and talent management among political parties in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper seeks to determine the strategies for attracting and managing talents in modern political parties with the aid of empirical evidence from Nigeria's electoral process. The study employed the survey method of research in which the data required for the study were collected through the instruments of questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Four dominant political parties were selected out of the current 63 registered political parties in Nigeria. Quota and stratified sampling techniques were mostly used in their sample selection; and samples of 400 respondents were selected. The data collected were presented, analyzed and interpreted through the use of tables, frequencies, and percentages. The findings of the study indicated that talents can be attracted to a political party and managed through a generous reward system, good working environment, membership development policy, authority delegation, challenging jobs and committee involvement, harmonious working relationship with party officials and hierarchies. Also, talents can be managed for a party's survival using membership development policy, motivation and other retention strategies. Our test of hypothesis also indicated that a political party's continuity depends on the application of these strategies. Based on these findings, the study suggested that political parties should take deliberate steps to put in place some motivational and staff/membership development policies that will expose its functionaries to global best practices in democracy and party management.

Keywords: Party Management, Talent Management, Political Environment, Succession Planning, Democratic Process, Political Parties, Nigeria.

Cite This Article As: Aluko, A., Oke, A.S., Jinadu, M.O. & Kabir, A. (2021). Attracting and Managing Talents in Modern Day Political Parties: Evidential Strategies from Nigeria's Democratic Process. American Journal of Research in Business & Social Sciences, 1(1): 1-11.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Deerey & Jago (2015) argued that the political atmosphere universally is an unstable one with lots of challenges such as strong competition, fast paced technological changes, ethics and cultural, environmental and human resources issues. Previous studies revealed that succession planning and talent management are required to allow political entities to survive these turbulence (Downs, 1957; Devi & Nagurvali, 2012; De Bruyn, 2014). Political parties require to deliberately plan and build the most unique and adaptive structures that will enable them to maximize their resources to allow them survive. Dilshad & Bashir (2013) posited that most of democratic parties and their executives think that inadequate management is threatening electoral performance and party survival. They go further to mention that such inadequacy often affect the ability to adapt and respond to political risks, such as increased competitive pressures, rapidly altering political market circumstances, random voter behaviour, stakeholders' influence, innovation and voter expectations (Farley, 2005; Dabor et al., 2015; Du Plessis, 2015). It is hence, applicable to say that for a party to have continuous stability and survival, it must plan for the future and the unforeseen. In Nigeria, for instance, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo had their political parties and ideologies, although, their inability to put down an adequate succession planning and forecast of future political environment of Nigeria led to the death of their dreams. This was not because there were no competent people on ground to carry out the business of politics, but there was no effective succession plan to improve and sustain ideological endurance (Long et al., 2012; Boon et al., 2018). Political parties have the duty to make sure that their approach to leadership and techniques are attuned to the ebb and flow of these political complexities and survival (Spencer, 1973; Dilshad & Bashir, 2013; Deerey & Jago, 2015). However, this allows the political parties to be able to create a positive working condition that would inspire the members to do their best. Du Plessis (2015) stressed that with good management of human resources, parties can efficiently meet the increasing demands and wants of the electorate. In a nutshell, a party must judiciously focus attention inwards and externally to allow operational effectiveness and longevity for the party.

2.0 Conceptual Framework

This strategic view shapes the way in which talent management is construed, and puts into operations activities that can lead in different action or outcomes depending on the directions adopted (Baines & Egans, 2001; Devi & Nagurvali, 2012; De Bruyn, 2014). Some of the strategic views as mentioned by previous researchers are:

- i) **Process Perspective:** This suggests that a process is required for the optimal use of the talent of people within an organization (Farley, 2005). This perspective believes that long term prosperity of the political party depend on having the right talent in any functional position. Thus, managing and nurturing talent is part of the everyday process of party life.
- ii) **Cultural Perspective:** This perspective views talent management as a mindset that should be developed for organizational prosperity (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Ajagbe et al., 2016). This could happen in circumstances that party members rely on their talent for success due to the nature of the political market in which they operate. Ahenkan et al. (2018) opined that such is typical of political parties where there is internal marketing and democracy with roles assigned accordingly. In another dimension, this can be a party where the development of every individual's talent is paramount. Thus, allowing people to explore and develop their talent becomes part of their work culture.
- iii) **Competitive Perspective:** The competitive view is underpinned on the belief that talent management entails the identification of people, discovering their want, and been able to provide such wants so as to avoid been outsmarted by competitors (Nimmo, 1999; Long et al., 2012; Boon et al., 2018). This tends to be the default mindset that indicates that should no other person be engaged as a retention strategy. Such action could be perceived in the professional service mindset, where they often adopt the competitive technique because their business proposition is based on the talent of their people.

iv) Development Perspective: This opinion suggested that talent management is about paths for accelerated development for the highest potential employee. This employee is seen to be applying the same personal development process to everyone in the organization. Ajagbe et al. (2016) concluded that accelerating the process for high potential, hence, the attention is on developing high potential or much quicker talent than others.

2.1 Talent Management

Talent management was described by Farley (2005), as the action that involves all talent processes that are necessary to be optimized in an organization, employee, including the management of performance management. In addition, it also includes decision analytics, target selection, talent reviews, development planning as well as support for career development, workforce planning and recruitment. In modern day organizations that seek new ways of improving workforce productivity and having the needed available talent, talent management has become an intrinsic tool in creating a suitable human resource environment (Dilshad & Bashir, 2013; Deerey & Jago, 2015). Talent management could be said to be a continuous integrated process that helps the employer to:

- Effectively plan talent needs
- Attract the very best talent
- Speed up time to recovery
- Motivate the right behavior
- Develop targeted capabilities and knowledge
- Retain highest performers
- Enable talent mobility across the organization

Scammel (2004) reported that talent management is vital for firms to attain long-term strategy so that persons are placed in an atmosphere where they can have the highest impact within the enterprise. Consequently, the ability to identify, develop, manage and retain talent as an integral part of the processes across the organization enable organizations to drive new value from its talent. This worth is represented in strategic procedures such as increased output and accomplishment of business plan objectives and, eventually increased shareholder value.

2.2 Succession Planning

Succession planning is an approach used to determine essential functions within organizations, finding out and evaluating anticipated successors and providing them with the necessary skills and experience for present and future opportunities (Karen, 2005; Dabor et al., 2015; Du Plessis, 2015). It is the strategy through which successors are enlisted for important positions throughout an organization including critical functions in each unit of the organization. Aguinis et al. (2012) stressed that it is essential to understand that succession planning considers and account for strategic vision and objectives of the organization. However, with the appropriate succession planning in place, employees are now ready for fresh leadership functions when someone quits the organization or when someone in an important position quits, another well trained employee gets ready to step up to that position (Baines & Egans, 2001). Succession planning enables employee to build a variety of work skills. This concept has become a critical talent management initiative for organizations around the world. Aguinis et al. (2011) concluded that succession planning is a long term approach that lowers leadership gaps for vital positions and provides opportunities or top talent to build the required skills needed for future roles.

2.3 Succession Planning and Talent Management

Nimmo (1999) posited that just like talent management, succession planning is a complex approach involving several levels, layers and commentators. Succession planning is part of a succession management strategy where 'one or more

successors are recognized to occupy an important position and career moves and/or development activities planned for such successors'. However, the separation between talent management and succession planning is not usually very clear. Spencer (1973) argued that the intention of succession planning tends to be only on the most senior executives of the political party such as the chairman, secretaries, board members, board of trustees, or rather other vital senior leadership positions. Nevertheless, succession planning could also be adopted for more junior positions especially those that are in operational capacity (Aguinis et al., 2011; Aguinis et al., 2012). In another view, top leadership officials of the political party could quit for a wide array of reasons such as: illness, death, a new party, unsatisfactory performance, personal reasons, resignation, and so on. Thus, when a top-level vacancy occurs in a party, decisions need to be made about how to source suitable candidates for such position (Karen, 2005). The CIPD 2005 recruitment, retention and turnover survey found that managerial and professional vacancies are often difficult to fill externally. As a result of this, it can make sense to look for internal candidates who have demonstrated potential to grow. Being able to source these candidates easily through effective human capital metrics held in succession planning or talent management systems can prove worthwhile.

3.0 Theoretical Framework: Theory X and Y.

The theory X and Y initiated by Douglas McGregor suggested two alternatives and extreme perspectives to human beings. As propounded by Theory X, the employee is seen as mainly lazy, resistant to change and not responsive to motivation (Scammel, 2004; Long et al., 2012; Boon et al., 2018). Additional report showed that the situation calls for a controlled environment with strict rules, threats and punishments. The views were that employees in such organization tend to perform poorly in areas of productivity, and these results to aggressions and conflicts. **Theory Y**, on the other view, strives to maximize the employees' individual goals and efforts by giving workers greater job involvement and autonomy. The implication of this is that they are given the opportunity to grow and achieve their own goals within the organization (Ajagbe et al., 2016; Ahenkan et al., 2018). They are perceived as positive and open to development. Lees-Marshment (2001) argued that the goals of senior management are to make employee happy and satisfied with their work performance. Under these assumptions, there is an opportunity to align personal goals with organizational goals by using the employee's desire for fulfillment as the inspiring factor. Consequently, McGregor stressed that Theory Y management does not imply a soft approach. He identified that some people may not have attained the level of maturity assumed by Theory Y and therefore could need tighter controls that can be relaxed as the employee develops.

3.1 Implications of Theory Y Management

Baines & Egans (2001) argued that should Theory Y holds, the political party can do many things to harness the motivational energy of its employees and supporters.

- i) Decentralization and Delegation:** Should political parties decentralize control and lower the number of levels of management, each official will have more subordinates and consequently will be forced to delegate some responsibility and decision making to them.
- ii) Job Enlargement:** Broadening the scope of an employee's and party member's job adds variety and opportunities to satisfy ego needs (Harris, 2001).
- iii) Participative Management:** Consulting employees and party members in the decision making process taps their creative capacity and provides them with some control over their work environment.
- iv) Performance Appraisals:** Having the party members set objectives and participate in the process of evaluating how well they were met.

Boon et al. (2018) opined that with proper implemented, such an environment would result in a high level of motivation as employees and party members work to satisfy their higher level personal needs through their jobs. And it is important for us to note that theory X and Y are still relevant today and are guiding principles of positive approaches for

management, to party development and to improve democratic culture.

3.2 Human Capital Theory

Wring (2002) argued that human capital theory suggests that education or training raises the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills. Be that as it may, raising workers' future income by increasing their lifetime earnings. They authors provide an explanation that links investment in training with workers' wages (Devi & Nagurvali, 2012; Long et al., 2013; De Bruyn, 2014). In particular, their theory draws a crucial distinction between general education and firm-specific training. Harris (2001) suggested that education or training raise the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills. Other authors provided different explanations for how education is related to employee productivity. Ajagbe et al. (2016) posited that one is based on the argument that the higher earnings of educated employees simply reflect their superior ability acquired during the process of education, rather than through skills and knowledge. Spencer (1973) argued that education is used as a market signal to indicate the potential productivity of employees. Downs (1957) maintained that productivity is largely characteristic of jobs rather than of employees. Employers use education credentials to choose employees because well educated employee workforce can be trained for particular functions more quickly and at a reduced cost than their less-educated peers. Farley (2005) suggested that education enhance an individual's ability to successfully deal with disequilibria in altering economic circumstances. Such ability includes that of perceiving a given disequilibrium, analyzing information, and reallocating resources to act. Another argument is based on the conditions of production. Harris (1999) argued that the organization of production, such as the extent of discretion, anticipation in decision-making, responsibility sharing, and information available to employees, all affect employees 'utilization of their ability to act. Karen (2005) suggested that education can improve productivity only if complementary inputs exist, which include training, contract terms, and management practices; they point out that economists and other social scientists have overestimated the payoffs resulted from increased formal education while they have ignored the complementary inputs and conditions. Baines & Egans (2001) maintained that differences in capital accumulation, productivity, and therefore, output per employee are basically connected to various social infrastructures across countries. Such social infrastructure includes the institutions and government policies that determine the economic environment, within which individuals accumulate skills and firms accumulate capital and produce output.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODS

The results reported here are based on a study of Nigerian dominant political parties actively engaged in political marketing and management. In this study, 400 respondents were chosen as the sample size (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Clow & James, 2014). The authors distributed 400 copies of the printed quantitatively designed interview questions to the 4 participating political parties purposively selected to serve as representative sample from the list of 63 parties registered for the 2011 general elections. The potential respondents were asked to indicate from their experience the strategies for attracting and managing talents in each of their political parties. In the end, 100 participating officials were selected from each of the 4 parties, a 3-tier levels of officials were adopted as the sample selection approach (i.e. National, State and Local Government Area). The selection process was designed to reflect uniquely hierarchical input, identification and evaluation of political party management practice. A total of 311 copies of the questionnaire were returned, out of which 300 were complete and usable resulting in a net response rate of 75%. One hypothesis was stated and tested in the study.

For this particular purpose, a judgmental sampling method (Carrie & Kevin, 2014; Crisan & Borza, 2015) was employed since it was solely based on the convenient choice of the researcher who identified the parties that practice succession planning and talent management in Nigeria. Their experience, wisdom and expertise formed the data for this study as they cannot be ignored. Convenience sampling (Boeije, 2010; Burns & Bush, 2014) was also used based on the time schedule of the respondents and financial constraints. Finally, stratified sampling (Brynard et al., 2014; Buckley, 2015) was used since the population was divided into 3 strata to cover the three levels of managing a national party in Nigeria. This involved four different parties selected on the basis of their dominance in the political market, and to satisfy sampling requirement.

5.0 Results and Analysis

In this study, the analysis process was carried out collecting and scientifically processing the data collected from the interviewed respondents. Hence, among the 400 copies of questionnaires administered, 311 were returned. After editing, only 300 were found usable and suitable for our purpose. This amounted to 75% response rate. Adams and Lawrence (2015) argued that this is an appreciably high response rate, considering that the average top executive survey rates are in the range of 15% and 20%. Dan (2012) stressed that collecting data for such a country-wide study with a large population is difficult due to the numerous obstacles that could be encountered. Demographic characteristics of the total sample in the study are presented in table 1.0 below. In all parties, more than half of the participants were male with the share of male respondents being highest (60.4%). The party subsamples are similar with respect to the age level, education, marital status, position in the party. Our main motivation for limiting the survey to certain states within a geopolitical zone was only the concentration of the officials of the parties being studied.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics of Party Respondents

	PDP	ANPP	ACN	APGA	TOTAL SAMPLE
Target respondents	100	100	100	100	400
Actual respondents	85	70	80	65	300
Share of female (in %)	39.6	46.0	49.5	49.3	46.1
Share of male (in %)	60.4	54.0	55.5	50.7	53.9
Response rate (in %)	85%	70%	80%	65%	75%
Average age in years (standard deviation in bracket)	(17.68)	(16.09)	(14.12)	(12.56)	(15.44)
Share of respondents who completed university education (in %)	26.4	14.5	36.5	17.3	24.4
Share of respondents who are employed or self employed (in %)	37.6	43.5	55.0	62.7	48.6
Share of respondents who are married	23.4	17.0	23.6	7.4	9.0

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

5.1 Strategies for Attracting Talents

Attracting talents to a political party is of utmost consequence since those talents raise the reputation of the party, and increase its image rating and credibility in the mind of the electorate. It also brings to bear on the activities of the party skill and competences in the manner things are done. This is very critical in positioning the party as a product in the minds of the electorate, essentially because the PATH (Promise, Acceptance, Trust, and Hope) through which the party travels to gain a space in the voter’s mind is hinged on reputation built by a number of talents that people the party. Consequently, our study got the party functionaries to confirm from their experience the strategies usually employed to attract talents for political parties. Table 2.0 below showed the result from the analysis of the strategies for attracting talents to political parties among selected political parties in Nigeria.

Table 2. Strategies for Attracting Talents to Political

S/N	RESPNSES	PDP	ANPP	ACN	APGA	TOTAL	%
1	Promise of generous reward	5	3	1	1	10	3.3
2	Visit and follow-up	2	4	2	1	9	3
3	Involvement at party hierarchies	3	2	1	1	7	2.3
4	Offers and inducements	6	3	5	1	15	5
5	Evidence of growth and success	4	3	1	1	9	3
6	All of the above	65	55	70	60	250	83.4
	TOTAL	85	70	80	65	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

KEY: PDP = People Democratic Party
 ANPP = All Nigeria People Party
 ACN = Action Congress of Nigeria
 APGA = All Progressive Grand Alliance

The analysis of party responses on the strategies for attracting talents to political parties indicated a somewhat general consensus among the parties that attracting talents to political parties are a consideration for party survival. They identified the following as the specific strategies to employ:

- ✚ Promise of generous reward (3.3%)
- ✚ Visit and follow-up (3.0%)
- ✚ Involving at party hierarchies (2.3%)
- ✚ Offers and inducements (5.0%)
- ✚ Evidence of growth/success (3.0%)
- ✚ All of the above (83.4%)

With the above findings, it is not enough to attract talents that will boost the reputation of the party. The current states of our political environment require that deliberate efforts be made to manage these talents for party continuity and survival. Thus, the study proceeded to the next step to determine how best to manage these talents for optimal results. The result is shown on table 3 below.

Table 3. Strategies for Managing Talents for Party's Survival and Continuity

/N	RESPNSES	PDP	ANPP	ACN	APGA	TOTAL	%
1	Human Resource Development Policy	1	1	2	3	7	2.3%
2	Delegation of Authority	2	1	3	2	8	2.7%
3	Motivation	2	1	1	3	7	2.3%
4	Performance appraisal	1	2	3	2	8	2.7%
5	Job Description and Specification	3	1	4	1	9	3.0%
6	Harmonious Working & Relationships	4	1	2	2	9	3.0%
7	Manpower Planning & Control	1	2	1	1	5	1.7%
8	Research and Development	1	1	4	1	7	2.3%
9	All of the above	70	60	60	50	240	80%
	TOTAL	85	70	80	65	300	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2011

From the result on table 3.0 above, respondents identified the strategies for managing talents in political parties as follows:

- ✚ Human Resource Development Policy (2.3%)
- ✚ Motivation (2.7%)
- ✚ Performance appraisal (2.3%)
- ✚ Job description and specification (3.0%)
- ✚ Harmonious working relationships with party hierarchies manpower planning and control (1.7%)
- ✚ Research and Development (2.3%)

Be that as it may, a preponderant percentage of the respondents (80%) believed that all the factors listed above combine as the strategies for managing talents for party’s survival and continuity.

5.2 Test of Research Hypothesis

The test of hypothesis is pertinent here to determine whether a political party survival is dependent on the aforelisted strategies. Consequently, we state as the hypothesis that:

Ho: A political party’s survival does not depend on the strategies for attracting and managing talents. In order to test this hypothesis, we move a step further to engage in a statistical analysis, using one way analysis of variance. The results are shown on table 4 below:

Table 4. Result of ANOVA Statistical Analysis of the Strategies for Attracting and Managing Talents in a Political Party

		SUM OF SQUARE	DF	MEANS SQUARE	F-CALCULATED	F-TABULATED	SIG LEVEL	DECISION
Nicher	Between groups	0.914	3	.305	.777	.520	X=0.05 (3.44) OR X=0.01 (5.72)	Reject Ho
	within groups	8.236	21	.392				
	Total	9.150	24					
Leader	Between groups	1.410	3	.470	1.075	.381	X=0.05 (3.44) OR X=0.01 (5.72)	Reject Ho
	within groups	9.180	21	.437				
	Total	10.590	24					
Challenger	Between groups	1.372	3	.457	.687	.570	X=0.05 (3.44) OR X=0.01 (5.72)	Reject Ho
	within groups		21	.666				
	Total		24					
Follower	Between groups	1.202	3	.401	.827	.494	X=0.05 (3.44) OR X=0.01 (5.72)	Reject Ho
	within groups		21	.484				
	Total		24					

Decision Rule: Reject Ho if F-Calculated > F-Tabulated. Otherwise, accept.

The decision rule required us to reject Ho if F-Calculated > F-Tabulated. Otherwise, we accept at x = 0.05 (or P>0.01). Thus, in table 4.0 we rejected the null hypothesis which says that: “A political party’s survival does not depend on the strategies for attracting and managing talents”. This means that a political party’s survival and continuity depend on the listed strategies for attracting and managing talents.

6.0 Summary of Findings

This study found that strategies for attracting talents to a political party include: Promises of generous reward system, visit and follow-up, involvement at top hierarchies of the party, offers and inducements, evidence of growth and success. On the other hand, the strategies for managing talents within a political party include: HR or membership development policy, delegation of authority / responsibility, motivation, performance appraisal, job description/specification, harmonious working relationships with management and other members, manpower planning and control, and research and development initiatives. Finally, our study also showed that a political party's survival depends on the optimal application of the afore listed strategies.

7.0 Conclusion of the Study

This study has successfully investigated the strategies for attracting and managing talents in modern political parties with the aid of empirical evidence from Nigeria's electoral process. In this study, the authors found that political party management is about more than just floating a political party. It holds the potential to influence all aspects of a party's behavior in succession planning and talent management is part and parcel of party management processes. In this study, attracting and managing talents in political parties increase the degree to which political party loyalists abide by the political culture and orientation. In another perspective, the elite theories of democracy argued that only certain people are capable of deciding what is done or rather should be done in government. This is more pronounced in Nigerian brand of democracy where political parties engage in consensus-building and caucus decision-making processes to determine the fate of the majority. If party leaders who engage in this decision-making processes do not have the requisite capacity in the form of talent, it is suicidal entrusting such responsibility on them. The corollary of the foregoing argument is that political parties owe the duty of producing leaders, or politicians elected as representatives not delegates. Thus, a well developed talent in politics is not supposed to respond to public outcry but should make informed decisions, even with market oriented background. This study reported that attracting and managing talents are what political institutions require to do for their parties to survive. In addition, attracting and managing talent at all levels of the party should be the concern of party management. Party leadership should encourage, and indeed engage in participative management, consulting members in decision making process. This approach has the potential of enabling them identify talents as well as tap from the creative capacity of members. Consequently, this leads to greater control over the political environment as well as improve organizational culture. Furthermore, effective management of talents in a party reduces incidences of defection and increases their productivity. In addition, every good succession planning system is dependent on the strategy. Thus, mentoring (not necessarily god-fatherism) is one of the cheapest, most effective and most fulfilling methods of closing the gap in succession planning and talent management processes.

8.0 References

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