

INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT KENYA REVENUE AUTHORITY, NAKURU BRANCH, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a very important facet of modern day human resources management. Employers adopt strategic human resource strategies to continuously enhance their employees' performance. Employers have adopted human resources policies and practices with an aim of improving their employees' performance. However, despite such policies and practices, it remains unclear why employee performance has been perennially low. Therefore, the study assessed the influence of human resources strategies on employee performance at KRA offices in Nakuru with a view of increasing employee productivity. The study employed a descriptive research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data was collected using questionnaires which were administered by the researcher at KRA offices in Nakuru. Data analysis was done with the aid of SPSS. Hypotheses were tested using the p-value approach at 95% level of confidence and the results were presented in tables. The coefficient of correlation for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is 0.792, which shows a strong positive correlation. The value of R-square of 0.627 implies that 62.7 % of the variation in employee performance at KRA is explained by the independent variables. The study established that quality training strategies had the most influence on employee performance while bonus payment strategies had the least influence.

KEYWORDS: Quality Training, Work-Life Balance, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are facing increased competition due to globalization, changes in technology, political and economic environments and therefore prompting them to adopt innovation strategies on their employees as the ways to prepare them to adjust to the increases above and thus enhance their performance (Evans *et al.*, 2002). According to Armstrong and Baron (2004), people and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interests of the employing organization, are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and as constituting a major source of competitive advantage. Cole (2004) emphasize that the HR function brings in the strategic value of people in organization by making contribution to value added and contribution to competitive advantage. Effective HRM strategy systematically organizes all individual HRM measures to directly influence employee attitude and behavior in a way that leads business to achieve its competitive strategy. In view of the fact that the goals and the necessities of each of the competitive strategy types are different, the management of HR should be aligned with the overall corporate strategy. The firm can thus obtain a competitive advantage and thus achieve superior performance (Kelliher & Perret, 2001).

There has been a debate by numerous researchers whether HR strategies should always be positively related to

employees' performance. Universalistic scholars argue that there is a universal set of HRM best practices that can improve employees' performance (Lau & Ngo, 2004). Contingency scholars hold different points of view and argue that the assumptions underlying the human resources management strategy-performance link are applicable only under high external fit conditions, termed the 'best fit' school (Boxall & Purcell, 2008). Although most of the studies speak of human resources strategies leading to improved employees performance, such a one-way line of causation is unsatisfied (Edwards & Wright, 2006). The usual key critique of human resources innovation strategies and employees performance is that sound theoretical development that explains how such human resources strategies operate is absent (Becker *et al.*, 2001). Accordingly, a better understanding of the role of human resources strategies in creating and sustaining employees' performance should be achieved through further theoretical development and empirical evidence. According to Amos *et al.*, (2004), the effective management of individual performance is critical to the execution of strategy and the organization achieving its strategic objectives. Performance cannot be left in anticipation that it will develop naturally, despite the employee's natural desire to perform and be rewarded for it. This desire needs to be accommodated, facilitated and cultivated.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to succeed, organizations have to obtain and utilize human resources effectively. Organizations need to design their human resources in ways that fit into the organization's structure as this it will make the organizations achieve their goals and objectives. Corporate organizations in Kenya contribute around 16.3% to the national gross domestic product and employ 25% of the labor force. Furthermore, the majority of studies in human resources strategies have adopted the resource-based view perspective which tends to ignore contextual variables, particularly competitive strategies, which influence employees' performance. The scarcities of such studies showing association between human resources strategies and organizational performance and also the mediating role of competitive strategies in the Kenyan context makes it important to further explore the critical role of human resources strategies. As the role of corporate organizations continue to increase in importance in Kenya, they continue facing the challenges of improving quality and improving people skills, managing workforce diversity, responding to greater globalization and stimulating innovation and change. The importance of understanding the critical drivers of employee performance is thus of paramount importance if the revenue targets set by government and the need to eliminate deficit financing is to be met. This study therefore sought to establish the influence of human resources strategies on employees' performance at Kenya Revenue Authority, Nakuru Branch, Kenya.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study was to establish the influence of human resource strategies on employee performance at Kenya Revenue Authority, Nakuru Branch, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To establish the influence of quality training strategies on employee performance at Kenya Revenue Authority, Nakuru Branch, Kenya.
- To examine the influence of bonus payment strategies on employee performance at Kenya Revenue Authority, Nakuru Branch, Kenya.

- To evaluate the influence of work life balance strategies on employee performance at Kenya Revenue Authority, Nakuru Branch, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource strategies are formal approaches used in managing people. For the purpose of the study, we will limit ourselves to quality training strategies, bonus payment strategies and work life balance strategies which are perceived to directly affect employee performance.

Quality Training Strategies and Employee Performance

The objective of training is to achieve a change in the behavior of those trained. This means that the trainees shall acquire new manipulative skills, technical knowledge and skills on the job in such a way as to aid in the achievement of organizational goals (Archieve, 2008). Grobler et al., (2006) described training as the use of specific means to inculcate specific learning, using techniques that can be identified and described. These techniques and methods should be continually improved. Training is not only aimed at improving the employee`s knowledge and skills with regard to his or her functional and administrative duties, but the acquisition of certain virtues and attitudes like diligence, willingness, integrity, loyalty and responsibility is also within its scope. At any organizational level, training is very important to meet corporate goals. In line with the above, Lane and Robinson (2009) are of the opinion that training impart positively, effectively for optimum performance to archive corporate goals of the organization. Quality training allows one to have a better job understanding and quality of work. In practice the nature, content and extent of training received by personnel should be reconciled with the needs of the organization for staff trained in particular fields. Training needs to be given under the guidance of a knowledgeable instructor. It is necessary that, person responsible for the training of a particular employee or group of employees should have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to do a meaningful job (Stahl, 2009). Training ensures that individuals are more productive as they acquire the necessary skills. Training from the time of employment is considered to be a necessary and continuous personnel function. In Asia, revenue authorities encourage employee training opportunities for all its employees to insure that services they provide to the community are made more effective (Chevalier, 2007).

Bonus Payment Strategies and Employee Performance

Organizations are only able to achieve success through their people and the hard work that they do. Team members need to feel motivated, inspired and empowered by their managers in order to want to perform at their peak and one of the core challenges facing both leaders and organizations how to connect with and motivate these groups of individuals to deliver as a team and ensure a productive and efficient workforce. Financial incentives are widely used by employers to drive and reward performance (Becker et al, 2001). In recent decades, the compensation packages of a growing proportion of firms include incentive pay schemes pay schemes linking pay to employee or company performance. The growth in incentive pay has been fostered by widespread concern over the existence of inefficiencies in the workplace and the belief that incentive pay can raise productivity growth and improve profitability. The incentives may involve relating employees' pay to their individual performance, as with piece rates or most sales commissions; or relating pay to the performance of their working group or team; and/or to the performance of the whole firm (Brown & Heywood, 2002). Schemes that connect remuneration to firm-level performance commonly involve employees participating in

property rights, as “residual claimants” to the firm’s profits. These forms of incentive schemes, which include profit sharing and employee share ownership, are often referred to as employees’ financial participation. According to Taylor and Pierce (1999) the appraisal/merit component clearly has deleterious effects on staff members' organizational commitment and attitudes towards supervision, particularly among high performing employees. They report that the bonus system lead to a perception of unfairness and cite studies with similar outcomes.

Work Life Balance Strategies and Employee Performance

Work-life balance is a daily effort to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self-care and other personal activities, in addition to the demands of the work place. This is assisted by employers who institute policies, procedures, actions and expectations that enable employees to easily pursue more balanced lives. There have been arguments that there seem to be underlying empirical assumptions regarding the interaction between productivity and WLB. Unfortunately, the current econometric evidence is still limited in this area (Green, 2006). The question of WLB-enhancing practices, their implementation and effectiveness has recently been taken up by in the management literature. Firms with a more skilled workforce are more likely to implement work-life balance-enhancing practices. According to Gray and Tudball (2003) this leaves us with a dilemma: Policymakers are concerned that firms are failing to introduce sufficient measures to ensure a sensible work-life balance for their employees because the costs of doing this are too high in competitive global markets. On the other hand, the academic literature seems to believe all firms should be adopting positive work-life balance schemes given their apparently positive impact of employee performance, particularly in more competitive markets. The current review, along with recent developments in work-life theory and practice, has further highlighted the risk that policies to improve work-life interaction may have the opposite effect (Macky & Boxall, 2008). Studies indicate that work-family policies and practices that change working arrangements, such as flexibility and work hours, should be developed and implemented in combination with assessments and realistic adjustments to workload. It is also noteworthy that the industry studies emphasize workload and expectations of long hours as significant impediments to the uptake and/or beneficial impact of flexible work arrangements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. According to Owens (2002), descriptive research design is a systematic, empirical inquiring into which the researcher does not have a direct control of independent variable as their manifestation has already occurred or because the inherently cannot be manipulated. The target population comprised all 148 employees at KRA offices in Nakuru, Kenya. Statistical approaches were used to determine the sample size which was found to be 108. In this study an appropriate method to collect the primary data was a questionnaire survey. For the purposes of this study, quantitative data was collected using a closed-ended questionnaire. The primary data was sourced from the answers the participants gave during the survey process. The data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Out of 108 questionnaires that were issued to the sampled respondents, 96 of them were filled and returned. Of the returned questionnaires, 8 were incorrectly filled and thus were not used in the final analysis. Therefore, 88 were correctly filled and hence were used for analysis representing a response rate of 81.5%.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the findings, majority of the respondents were male (55.7%) while the female respondents were

44.3%. The study attributed this trend to the existing gender gap in employment in the public sector in Kenya. Majority of the respondents were of the age group 46 – 55 years (38.6%) while the least age group was below 25 years (2.3%). This shows that the sample used by the study was well distributed in terms of age and could therefore give reliable information. Furthermore, the researcher attributed this trend to the fact that employment opportunities in the public sector in Kenya have stagnated in the last decade. Majority of the respondents had a university degree qualification (55.7%). Furthermore, more than 83% of the respondents had a bachelors or a master degree further indicating that high qualification levels required for one to join the organization. It also showed that the respondents were knowledgeable and would thus give valid and reliable information appertaining to human resource strategies and employee performance at KRA. In terms of working experiences, majority (38.6%) had worked for the organization for between 5 – 9 years. Cumulatively, more than 71% had worked for the organization for more than 5 years while less than 28.5% of the respondents had worked with the organization for less than 5 years. The researcher therefore concluded that majority had enough experience with the organization's strategies and thus would provide credible information with regard to human resource strategies and employee performance.

Influence of Quality Training Strategies and Employee Performance

The study sought to establish the influence of quality training strategies on employee performance at KRA, Nakuru Branch, Kenya... The results of the analysis on factors associated with quality training strategies and how it influences employee performance are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Influence of Quality Training Strategies and Employee Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization has well planned training programs that enhance employee capacity	88	4.15	.767
All training programs in our organization are undertaken after a systematic needs analysis.	88	4.11	.756
The organization puts a lot of emphasis on training programs for all employees	88	4.18	.736
The training programs in the organization has improved my knowledge skills and attitudes towards my job	88	4.08	.805
Our organization offers employee training based on long term needs of the employee	88	2.17	.978
The organization undertakes an evaluation program to understand the relevance of the training	88	2.09	.883
Our organization continuously reviews its training programs and activities to meet the changing needs of the market.	88	3.89	.897

As depicted in Table 1, the findings indicate that the respondents agreed that their organization had well planned training programs that enhance employee capacity (M=4.15, S.D=0.767), that all training programs were undertaken after a systematic needs analysis (M=4.11, S.D=0.756), that their organization puts a lot of emphasis on training programs for all employees (M=4.18, S.D=0.736), that the training programs had improved their knowledge skills and attitudes towards their job (M=4.08, S.D=0.805) and that their organization continuously reviewed its training programs and activities to meet the changing needs of the market (M=3.89, S.D=0.897). However the respondents disagreed when asked whether their organization offered employee training based on long term needs of the employee (M=2.17, S.D=0.978) and whether the organization undertook an evaluation program to understand the relevance of their training (M=2.09, S.D=0.883).

Influence of Bonus Payment Strategies and Employee Performance

The study sought to establish the influence of bonus payment strategies on employee performance at KRA, Nakuru Branch, Kenya in line with the second objective. The results of the analysis on factors associated with bonus payment strategies and how it influences employee performance are shown in Table 2. As depicted in Table 2, the results show respondents agreed that bonus payment was based on individual employee performance ($M=4.17$, $S.D=0.825$) and that bonus payments were performance based and did not affect annual salary increments at KRA ($M=3.85$, $S.D=0.933$). Further, it was established the respondents disagreed when asked whether the organization always ensured that the bonus payments made to the employees were proportionate to the annual organization performance ($M=2.23$, $S.D=0.991$), or whether the organization reviewed the bonus payments to employees against market factors and thus enhanced their commitment to the organization ($M=2.41$, $S.D=0.973$).

Table 2: Influence of Bonus Payment Strategies and Employee Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization has a structured and effective employee reward systems	88	3.44	.989
The reward system has an inbuilt bonus payment that enables bonus payments for employees	88	3.14	.819
Bonus payment in our organization is based on individual employee performance	88	4.17	.825
Bonus payments are performance based and do not affect annual salary increments at KRA	88	3.85	.933
Our organization always ensures that the bonus payments made to the employees are proportionate to the annual organization performance	88	2.23	.991
The organization reviews the bonus payments to employees against market factors and thus enhancing my commitment to the organization	88	2.41	.973

However the respondents were unsure whether their organization had a structured and effective employee reward systems ($M=3.44$, $S.D=0.989$) or whether the reward system had an inbuilt bonus payment that enabled bonus payments for employees ($M=3.14$, $S.D=0.819$).

Influence of Work Life Balance Strategies and Employee Performance

The study sought to establish the influence of work life balance strategies on employee performance at KRA, Nakuru Branch, Kenya in line with the last objective. The results of the analysis on factors associated with work life balance strategies and how it influences employee performance are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Influence of Work Life Balance Strategies and Employee Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization has adopted a flexible working time mechanisms that suits my individual needs	88	2.13	.954
The organization always pays employees on time for extra time worked above the regular working hours	88	2.39	.994
The organization appreciates the role of the outside factors on employee performance and works towards providing support against such factors	88	3.12	.986
Our organization also sponsors family events which always motivate me to perform better at work	88	3.41	.990
Our organization values employee wellness and has included recreational facilities and activities for its employees at the workplace	88	2.27	.981
The organization actively participates in employee welfare activities and contributes to the success of such welfare activities	88	4.19	.859

As depicted in Table 3, the results show that respondents agreed that the organization actively participated in employee welfare activities and contributed to the success of such welfare activities (M=4.19, S.D=0.859). Further, it was established that the respondents disagreed that the organization had adopted a flexible working time mechanisms that suits their individual needs (M=2.13, S.D=0.954), that the organization always paid employees on time for extra time worked above the regular working hours (M=2.39, S.D=0.994) and that the organization valued employee wellness and had included recreational facilities and activities for its employees at the workplace (M=2.27, S.D=0.981). The respondents were however unsure as to whether the organization appreciated the role of the outside factors on employee performance and worked towards providing support against such factors (M=3.12, S.D=0.986) or whether the organization sponsored family events which always motivated them to perform better at work (M=3.41, S.D=0.990).

Employee Performance

The study sought to measure the dependent variable. The results of the analysis on factors associated with employee performance are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Employee Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization's HR strategies have enabled me to meet my annual work targets	88	4.18	.834
The strategies have enhanced my punctuality in meeting my work deadlines	88	4.31	.761
The human resource strategies have also enhanced my time management skills at work which makes me plan and perform better	88	4.26	.827
Our organization's strategies have made me develop new work initiatives that enable me achieve results faster	88	3.67	.967
The strategies always enhances my work output which is seen in my individual work outcomes	88	3.81	.984
The organization's strategies have also enhanced my interaction skills which enhance my ability to perform better at work	88	3.84	.869

As depicted in Table 4, the results show that respondents agreed that the organization's human resource strategies had enabled them meet annual work targets (M=4.18, S.D=0.834), that the strategies had enhanced their punctuality in

meeting work deadlines (M=4.31, S.D=0.761), that the human resource strategies had also enhanced their time management skills at work which made them plan and perform better (M=4.26, S.D=0.827), that the organization's strategies had made them develop new work initiatives that enable them achieve results faster (M=3.67, S.D=0.967), that the strategies always enhanced their work output which is seen in individual work outcomes (M=3.81, S.D=0.984) and that the strategies had also enhanced their interaction skills which enhanced their ability to perform better at work (M=3.84, S.D=0.869).

Inferential Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine if the independent variables predicted employee performance at KRA and the output is depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Model Summaries

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.792a	.627	.611	.4218
a. Predictors: (Constant), quality training strategies, bonus payment strategies, work life balance strategies				

From Table 5, the coefficient of correlation for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is 0.792, which shows a strong positive correlation. The value of R-square of 0.627 implies that 62.7 % of the variation in employee performance at KRA is explained by the independent variables. The study further conducted a multiple regression analysis and the findings of the model are depicted in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.18	.566		1.356	.782
1 Quality Training Strategies	.473	.167	.433	3.248	.007
Bonus Payment Strategies	.232	.114	.232	1.843	.044
Work Life Balance Strategies	.318	.113	.296	2.263	.018
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance					

As depicted in Table 6, quality training strategies is a predictor of employee performance. Since p-value (0.007) < 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and affirm that there is enough evidence to conclude that quality training strategies is useful as a predictor of employee performance. The second hypothesis predicted that there is no significant influence of bonus payment strategies on employee performance. The results show that bonus payment strategies predict employee performance. Since p-value (0.044) < 0.05 level of significance, we reject the null hypothesis and affirm that there is enough evidence to conclude that of bonus payment strategies is useful as a predictor of employee performance. The third hypothesis predicted that there is no significant influence of work life balance strategies on employee performance. The results indicate that work life balance strategies predict employee performance. Since p-value (0.018) < 0.05 level of significance, we reject the third null hypothesis and affirm that there is enough evidence to conclude that work life balance strategies is a predictor of employee performance. The fitted multiple linear regression equation generated from the study is:

$$Y = 6.18 + 0.473X_1 + 0.232X_2 + 0.318X_3$$

Where: Y = Employee Performance, X_1 = Quality Training Strategies, X_2 = Bonus Payment Strategies, X_3 = Work Life Balance Strategies

From the multiple regression models, holding quality training strategies, bonus payment strategies and work life balance strategies constant, employee performance would increase by 6.18. It was established that a unit increase in quality training strategies would cause an increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.473, a unit increase in bonus payment strategies would cause an increase in employee performance by a factor of 0.232 and a unit increase in work life balance strategies would cause an increase in employee performance workforce by a factor of 0.318.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that all training programs should be undertaken after a systematic needs analysis and that there should be a continuous review of training programs and activities to meet the changing needs of the market. Similarly, organizations should offer employee training based on long term needs of the employee and that they should undertake evaluation programs to help understand the relevance of their training programs. Secondly, it was concluded that the organization should ensure that the bonus payments made to the employees were proportionate to the annual organization performance and that organization should review the bonus payments to employees against market factors. Similarly, the organization should have a structured and effective employee reward systems which contains an inbuilt bonus payment that enables bonus payments for employees. Finally, the study concluded that for enhanced employee performance, the organization should adopt a flexible working time mechanisms that suits individual needs, that it should always pay employees on time for extra time worked above the regular working hours and that it should value employee wellness and had include recreational facilities and activities for its employees at the workplace.

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