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ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING ON EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF KENYA PORTS AUTHORITY, MOMBASA, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the role of Human Resource Planning in an organization. It was based on a case study of Kenya Ports Authority a parastatal under the ministry of Transport and its headquarters based in Kilindini District. Planning is very important to our everyday activities. Several definitions have been given by different writers what planning is all about and its importance to achieving our objectives. It is amazing that this important part of HR is mostly ignored in HR in most organizations because those at the top do not know the value of HR planning. Organizations that do not plan for the future have fewer opportunities to survive the competition ahead. This paper will discuss the importance of HR planning; the six steps of HR planning that is: Forecasting; inventory, audit, HR Resource Plan; Actioning of Plan; Monitoring and Control. Literature was reviewed from various sources on the role of the organization in the Human Resource Planning as well as the career development needs of the employees and the importance of career development and strategies the organization can adopt to facilitate it. The case study approach employed, in 7,111 employees of Kenya Ports Authority which formed the population sample. The data collection instruments were consist of the questionnaire for the employees. The employees were grouped into clusters according to departments. Random sampling of was used in selecting the sample the number selected in each department will reflect the total number of employees in that department. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviations figures and tables) to describe the population. The findings indicated the extent to which the organization was involved in its human resource planning and the career development of its employees to assume the higher positions in the organization.

KEYWORDS

human resource planning, employee performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Companies intending to gain a sustained competitive advantage should help their employees raise their skills by receiving continuous training so that they can learn new things need to ensure quality improvement of the products and services of the company.

Bratton and Gold (2007) define HR planning as 'the process of systematically forecasting the future demand and supply for employees and deployment of their skills within the strategic objectives of the organization'. According to Werner and DeSimone (2006), human resource planning helps companies predict how changes in their strategy will affect their HR needs.

Planning the workforce needs of any company is very critical and important especially in the rapid changes in external market demands. Koch and McGrath (1996) found a positive relationship between HR planning and labor productivity

Generally, organizations come in all shapes and sizes and more often exhibit differences than similarities. However, one common factor among these organizations is their "achieved success" which dependent on the skill, knowledge and experience of the employees in the organization (Development and Learning organizations, 2011).

Abundant studies exist that documented the significant relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance. For instance, Katou (2008) noted that HRM practices have a direct influence or effect on subordinate attributes such as human skills, attitudes and behaviour, the so-called HRM outcomes, which in turn enhances organizational performance. Accordingly, Pfeffer (2000) observes that human resources have been essential in sustaining organizational performance.

Experience has shown that some HRM policies and practices always do better than others, and thus all organizations or firms are implored to adopt the best practices. Although abundant studies may be claimed to exist in the HRM practices, however, a lot of these studies examining human resource practices issue only focused on certain variables. A review of literature conducted by Khan (2010) identified five key HRM practices, that is, training and development, recruitment and selection, compensation and reward, performance appraisal, and employee participation. Interestingly, these practices are part of the ten HRM practices that was utilized in this study to evaluate the impact of these HRM policies on organizational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION AND MEANING OF HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

Bratton and Gold (2007) define HR planning as 'the process of systematically forecasting the future demand and supply for employees and deployment of their skills within the strategic objectives of the organization'.

Katou (2008) noted that HRM practices have a direct influence or effect on subordinate attributes such as human skills, attitudes and behavior, the so-called HRM outcomes, which in turn enhances organizational performance.

As some HRM policies and practices always do better than others, organizations are implored to adopt the best practices. Although abundant studies may be claimed to exist in the HRM practices, a lot of these studies examining the human resource practices issue only focus on certain variables. For instance, literature by Khan (2010) identifies five of the ten HRM practices that were utilized in the study.

2.2. HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

The staffing selectivity process plays essential roles in the workforce planning process. Although, the selectivity process is one of the difficult tasks to perform, however, it has a major influence on organizational performance. The organizational performance also will depend on the right number of workers, the proper required skills and motivated workers with positive behaviour to increase organizations performance Größler and Zock, (2010). Wilk and Cappeli (2006) have noted that not all the staffing selectivity process is suitable to apply because some of the selection tools are costly and some are suitable only for certain organizations. Proper choices or selection tools in staffing selectivity process is very important in order to get correct information about candidates for correct positions within organizations. Hagan (2006) noted that staff selection depends on the understanding the job, sufficient performance and outcomes, and motivated individuals. Although, for this to be effective, the whole process of selecting candidates should also be based on the compatibility between workgroup in term of values, goals, personality, behavior and as well as skills Levesque, (2005).

Career planning is the deliberate process through which someone becomes aware of his or her personal skills, interests, knowledge, motivations, and other characteristics; acquires information about opportunities and choices; identifies career-related goals; and establishes action plans to attain specific goals (Dessler, 2008). A well-functioning career planning system may encourage employees to take more responsibility for their own development, including the development of the skills viewed as critical in the company (Doyle, 1997). A well-planned career development system along with internal advancement opportunities based on merit, results in high motivation among employees, which has an impact on firm performance (Milkovich & Boudreau, 1998).

2.3. HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND RECRUITMENT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Training and development deals with the skills and competencies of the employees acquired through series of training and development programmes. In today's competitive environment driven by the knowledge economy, certain attributes and competencies of personnel are an integral component of organizations' competitiveness. There is no doubt that highly knowledgeable and skilled subordinates or employees will enhance productivity, improve quality of goods and services, bring positive changes in processes and help to deliver quality service to clients. In other words they enhance an organization's competitiveness and performance. In essence, training and development yields tangible outcomes such as enhanced productivity, superior quality of products and services, and resource maximization or optimization. It also generates intangible results such as: high self esteem, enhanced morale, and satisfaction of subordinates which is as a result of additional skills, knowledge and abilities gained during the training and development programmes (SKAs). Due to the importance of training and development, Kundu (2000) has advised that firms should invest heavily in training their employees for effective implementation of customer-oriented strategies. Similarly, Blair and Sisakhti (2007) established that investments on training and development produce enormous benefits. Authors like Bitner & Zeithmal (2004) have affirmed that expenditures on training and training yields strategic competitive advantage to firms and organizations. Jarventaus (2007) also affirmed that a dynamic business environment requires organizations that invest heavily on the training of their employees as this helps to develop organizational ability which enables them to positively respond to new challenges. Other studies have also found that comprehensive training and development programs are positively related to staff retention, productivity, and organizational effectiveness (Lee & Bruvold, 2003; Arago'n-Sa'ncheze (2003). Jarventaus (2007) and Delaney & Huselid (1996) have reaffirmed the presumed positive relationship between training and development, and organizational performance. Overall, training and development is significantly related to organizational performance.

Commonly, researchers and scholars have utilized both non-financial and financial metrics to measure firm or organizational performance (Dyer & Reeves, 1995; Khan, 2010). Thus, both non-financial and financial measures are most used by the researchers. Some of the financial measures are sales, profit, and market share while non-financial measures also may include the followings: efficiency, quality, productivity, and the behavioral and attitudinal measures such as satisfaction, intention to quit, and commitment.

2.4. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

According to DuBrin, (1986), a convincing case can be made for the use of formal career development programs. Ideally, a properly planned and executed program serves the good of organizations, the individual, and society. The following are what he considers to be some of the potential benefits of an effectively conducted Career Development Program (CDP). Career development helps identify the link between attaining individual and organizational goals and Communication of concern for the welfare of individuals. An organization that helps employees plan their careers is demonstrated by its actions that it cares about its employees' welfare. The payoff to the organization is a high degree of employee loyalty and commitment. Properly executed career development programs are one way of contributing to the good of society. People with satisfying careers enjoy better mental health than their dissatisfied counterparts.

A career development program is a logical response to the charges that an organization is not fulfilling its responsibilities towards women, selected minorities, or ethnic groups. Without a solid program for career development, it is difficult for previously discriminated groups to advance into higher level positions. Several studies demonstrated that when the enterprise makes a determined effort to help its employees plan their careers, the result is lower turnover and personnel costs. (Glueck, 1978). When employees properly plan their careers, they are less likely to experience obsolescence and mid career crisis. Burnout too can sometimes be minimized. According to Glueck (1978) the broad purpose of career development is therefore to enhance each employee's current performance, enable individuals to take advantage of future job opportunities and fulfill their employer's goals for a dynamic and effective workforce.

According to Saleemi (1997), several benefits are expected to be derived from career planning by individual employees. These benefits are

- a) If supported by top management, career development planning would result in increased employee loyalty and commitment to the organization.
- b) Employees feel strongly motivated to participate in the training program and realize their greatest potential.
- c) Career planning and development sustain the level of employee morale at a higher level and contribute to their development and productivity to the organization.
- d) Career planning programs make easier for the management to appraise the performance of individuals. When promotion is linked to experience and productivity of the employees, career planning and development programs would help enterprises realize benefits.
- e) Self appraisal by the employees is likely to be more incisive and open minded as far as career prospects of an individual are concerned.
- f) Training programs would be directed to be more in coordination with the career prospects of employees.
- g) Saleemi (1997) point lastly that Career counseling would be helpful in moving towards the career path effectively, as far as employees are concerned, and thus paves the way for the employees to utilize the opportunities for advancement in the organization effectively.

2.4.1 HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development is an ongoing, formalized effort by an organization that focuses on developing and enriching the organizations human resources in light of both the employee and the organizations needs. The organization is the entity that has primary responsibility for instigating and ensuring that career development takes place. Specifically, the organization's responsibilities are to develop and communicate career options within the organization to the employee. The organization should carefully advise an employee concerning possible career paths to achieve that employee's career goals. Human resource personnel are generally responsible for ensuring that this information is kept current as new jobs are created and old ones are phased out. Working closely with both employees and their managers, human resource specialists should see that accurate information is conveyed and that interrelationships among different career paths are understood. Thus, rather than bearing the primary responsibility for preparing individual career plans, the organization should promote the conditions and create the environment that will facilitate the development of individual career plans by the employees (Byars et al 1997).

In (Dessler 2005), a survey was conducted to illustrate the range of career management practices employers can engage in. The researchers surveyed 524 organizations in the United Kingdom to determine how often they used 17 career management practices. Posting job openings was the most popular practice. The other top career practices, in descending order, formal education; career oriented performance appraisals; counseling by managers; lateral, developmental moves; counseling by HR; retirement preparation; and succession planning (Baruch & et al 2000). Sun Microsystems has a relatively formal and well thought out program. It maintains a career development centre staffed by certified counselors to help employees fill development gaps and choose career opportunities at Sun. The firm believes its program helps explain why its average employee tenure of four years is more than twice that estimated at other Silicon Valley firms (BNA Bulletin to management, September, 2000).

The employer's career development responsibilities depend somewhat on how long the employee has been with the firm. Before hiring, realistic job previews can help prospective employees more accurately gauge whether the job is indeed for them, and particularly whether a job's demands are a good fit with a candidate's skills and interests. Especially for recent college graduates, the first job can be crucial for building confidence and a more realistic picture of what he or she can or cannot do: Providing challenging first jobs (rather than relegating new employees to 'jobs where they cannot do any harm') and having an experienced mentor who can help the person learn the ropes, are important. Some refer to this as preventing reality shock, a phenomenon that occurs when a new employee's high expectations and enthusiasm confront the reality of an unchallenging and boring job.

After a person has been on the job for a while, an employer can take steps to contribute in a positive way to the employee's career. Career oriented appraisals in which the manager is trained not just to appraise the employees but also to match the person's strengths and weaknesses with a feasible career path and required development work – is one important step. Similarly, providing periodic, planned job rotation can help the person develop a more realistic picture of what he or she is (and is not) good at, and thus the sort of future career moves that might be best.

Firms can also provide mentoring opportunities. Mentoring may be formal or informal. Informally, mid- and senior- level managers may voluntarily help less experienced employees- for instance, by giving them career advice and helping them navigate political pitfalls. Other informal means- such as increasing the opportunities for networking and interactions among diverse employees- can also be effective (Ragins, 1997). Firms may also have formal mentoring programs. For instance, the employer may pair protégés with potential mentors. Many provide instructional manuals to help mentor and protégé better understand their respective responsibilities.

3.0. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used was a descriptive survey that explored on the impact of strategic management practices in public sector organization in improving its performance. This was chosen because of its usefulness for trying to test theoretical models by using them in real world situations and its applicability to real-life, contemporary, human situations and its public accessibility through written reports.

3.2. TARGET POPULATION

The research put into consideration a total of 365 employees, out of the total population of 7,111 working in the chosen company. This included the heads of departments and junior staff, from all departments selected as KPA sample representation. The survey method employed was stratified random sampling technique.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

- A. **QUESTIONNAIRE** - Semi-structured questionnaires were developed, to be administered to the respondents.
- B. **INTERVIEW** - Semi-structured interviews were carried out with the heads of department.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS & PRESENTATION

The data was presented both quantitatively and qualitatively and was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as use of frequency tabulation tables, percentiles and measures of central tendency. The data analysis procedures involved three sets of activities which include editing, coding and frequency tabulations. The data was presented using bar graphs, pie charts, tables and percentiles.

4.0. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A vast majority of the respondents seem to concur that the Organization is not addressing their career development satisfactorily. For instance, there is almost unanimous agreement amongst the respondents that the Organization does not have an elaborate policy on employees' career development.

While most of the respondents agree that the Organization should avail information on available opportunities to employees, there is also an assertion that the Organization does not advertise available job opportunities to the employees to a large extent. Moreover, most of the respondents do not agree with the statement that promotions are tied to performance appraisal results. This of course could be due to the lack of the tool (performance appraisal) as was indicated in the past section. The general picture that comes out however is that while employees are aware that career development is necessary, the few initiatives put in place by the Organization do not seem to be effective.

An interview with the Human Resource manager shed light on the role that the Organization should play in employee career development. The department considers training and development as one of its core functions. It is indeed through this function that the issue of career development is addressed. Some of the programs put in place by the Organization to address employee career development include formal education and training programs, counseling services, workshops and seminars on career development, performance appraisal counseling, Organization career path, career progression, job rotation, career information systems, mentoring arrangements and a policy that favors internal recruitment to fill vacant slots.

According to the department, these programs are considered effective to a large extent in supporting employee career development. This differs from the general employee (read respondent) perception that they are not effective. This in addition to the indication by a large number of the respondents that some of the programs stated by the management as being present in the Organization are actually not there.

These include to a large extent, performance appraisals and counseling services. Mentoring and career information systems were also claimed by very few respondents to be present. Although the purported performance appraisal counseling is deemed to be an informal one, the respondents give little indication of any performance appraisal counseling.

The disparity between the information given by the human resource department and the data gotten from the employees' questionnaire could probably be explained partly by the fact that the employees were sampled from different departments. Some of these departments may have programs such as informal performance appraisal or informal mentoring arrangements. It goes without saying however that the absence of these programs is stated almost unanimously by the respondents, even across departments.

However, management considers career development as an important activity that it should engage in, and is aware of the role it should play. The implementation of the same across departments however seems wanting, hence the disparity in respondents' responses.

5.0. CONCLUSION

The results drawn from this study highlight the fact that no matter what the context is the understanding of the senior management about the importance of staff capacity development seems clear. This is also due to the reason that the senior management has a full overview of the business targets as well as the processes to achieve those targets and hence could judge which appropriate strategy would suit under what circumstances.

This in turn could be attributed to the role of senior management in such policy development. This role as witnessed is more dominant in the learning organizations environment and hence the senior management could effectively support the staff capacity development process in that environment.

The primary data of the study help to draw the conclusion that senior management of both the categories view that trainings are more reliable interventions to produce prominent results with respect to staff capacity development. As staff performance is the main focus of all the major strategies of the learning organizations, so their selection of the candidates is primarily based not only on academic background relevant to the job, but also motivation on part of the employees to pursue their careers in the same field. In such cases, when the staff is sent on a training that suits their jobs, it produces much stronger impact on their performance. This is because these trainings not only serve the purpose to address the current issues of the jobs but also contribute towards career development of the individuals. The staff feels motivated as they could clearly relate their benefit to those trainings and hence learning is high.

In the conventional organizations context, the interest of the individuals is least sought by the organization to express their opinion about their jobs. This may result in coerced decision leading to the fact that the individual is working there because of the need to have a job and not because of the profession. In such cases, the learning graph is low and the individuals are unable to produce the required impact. This indicates that if the staff development activities are designed in line with the individuals' career goals, then the motivation for participation increases and learning graph is high which is then reflected in their work.

The management in the learning organization is more supportive of the individuals' capacity development, so the environment is more promising for individuals' career development. This also helps us generalize that individuals' development is an imperative to attain organizational development. Based on this generalization, it can be said that once a proper match of the individuals and the jobs is achieved, then career development of those individuals becomes a shared responsibility of the organizations and the individuals.

It can be further concluded that though there is a difference of commitment level towards career development but the senior management as a whole belonging to both the categories believes that the process should be formally supported by the organization. It is further added that this commitment is higher in the learning organizations context but it does not exist in the formal form and hence they do not feel bound to the process.

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