

## **Effect of Human Resource Management Onemployee Performance in Diplomatic Missions**

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**Abstract:** *The Government of Kenya maintains that there hasn't been satisfactory performance in the public sector over the years specifically in the area of public resource management; a situation that has hampered the realization of sustainable economic growth. The current performance practice by the government has not been effectively cascaded to all the government sectors/department, hence impacting negatively on the delivery of service to stakeholders. This study therefore investigated the influence of human resource management on employee performance in six Kenyan diplomatic missions namely Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia, Sweden, Japan and Australia.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Management, Organizational performance, Diplomatic missions, Performance management.*

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### **I. Introduction**

In the past, the Kenyan Government launched various reforms aimed at improving service delivery. For instance, the Civil Service Reform of 1993 was launched with the aim of increasing service efficiency and productivity. The major objectives of the program were to minimize costs, enhance public sector performance, and capitalize on gains arising from reform initiatives (Opiyo, 2006). The Kenyan Government also initiated Results-Based management (RBM) under the Economic Recovery Strategy in which it introduced rewards and sanctions to influence quality of service in public institutions (GOK, 2003). The program was piloted in state corporations where performance appraisals were introduced across the public sector. This system was introduced by the government with the aim of shifting public institution's focus to a more market-oriented approach in service delivery (Obong'o, 2009).

The appraisal system is designed to run concomitantly with ministerial tenures and the government's fiscal year. It sets the acceptable standards of quality in each category of service delivery which is gauged against specified benchmarks. The system requires oversight from trained personnel who handle managerial and supervisory functions through an interactive process to ensure a mutual agreement between the supervisors and appraisers (GOK, 2009). The major objective of performance contracts is to enhance accountability among public sector officials since it measures the extent to which they achieve the negotiated target outcomes on an annual basis. The rationale behind performance contracting was that it could increase performance, clarify objectives, incorporate customer orientation, and boost productivity, reduce costs, and improve service levels (GOK, 2003).

Nevertheless, there has been unsatisfactory performance on the public sector over the years specifically in the area of public resource management; a situation that has hampered the realization of sustainable economic growth (GOK, 2010). Despite the efforts made by the government through issuance of several circulars on the importance of both individual and group performance in service delivery, issues of efficiency and effectiveness have remained a challenge to many government departments and administrators. The current performance practice by the government has not been effectively cascaded to all the government sectors/department, hence impacting negatively on the delivery of service to stake holders. This study examined how human resource management influence the performance of employee at diplomatic missions.

### **II. Literature Review**

Performance is a component of the effectiveness of an organization which involves a systematic approach to measuring sustainable success by evaluating the people who work in them and finding ways of developing their capabilities both as teams and individually. Cascio (2006) defines performance as the extent of achievement of the organizational mission that comprises of an individual's job. It is also described as the accomplishment of a specific task in relation to predetermined standards that dictate the accuracy, cost, speed, and completeness in a manner that absolves the individual concerned from the fulfilment of all contractual

liabilities. According to Daft (2000), performance is the organizational ability to achieve its objectives in an effective and efficient manner by using the resources available. Ricardo and Wade (2001) agreed with Daft when they stated that organizational performance is essentially the accomplishment of the set goals and objectives. One of the major challenges facing the modern management practice is the development of performance measures which can be vital in creating organizational intelligence and providing actionable data for management purposes.

Performance process is a strategic and integrated approach which aims at delivering sustainable success through the improvement of employee performance, and development of teams and individuals (Armstrong & Baron, 1998). It is based on the assumption that people, and not capital, provide organizations with competitive advantage (Reynold & Ablett, 1998). In reference to the Goal-Setting Theory, Locke and Latham (1990) argue that employees who participate in the goal-setting process are more likely to be motivated to achieve them than those to whom goals are dictated. Performance must include measurement techniques aimed at introducing positive change in institutional culture, systems, and processes by setting mutual performance goals, soliciting management confirmation or modification of the goals, and disseminating those goals to all relevant parties to ensure a common pursuit (Muzalifah and Izah, 2011).

According to Armstrong and Ward (2005), performance can be utilized to achieve a range of objectives, and therefore, it does not have a uniform objective. It is, thus, important for organizations to adopt dimensions of performance that fit their objectives, culture, and business strategy. It is also important to note that performance is not an antidote for all kinds of organizational ailments and an organization must, therefore, clarify its performance objective. Performance is also a strategy that permeates all areas of human resource management such as culture, style, and communication structures (Brown & Armstrong, 1999). Human resource management is based on the assumption that people are the key elements on which organizational performance depends (Armstrong, 2006).

Human capital is becoming increasingly important in a fast-changing competitive environment since it is considered as a major source of competitive advantage. The development of Human Resource Systems contributes significantly to an organization's competitive advantage because they produce specific competencies (Esra, 2010). According to Nafuko, Hairston and brook (2006) there is a clear link between human resource development and productivity. Firms can, therefore, achieve a competitive edge by focusing their efforts on developing and retaining human capital through a creative culture and long-term learning. Therefore, organizational performance can be greatly influenced by the implementation of an appropriate array of human resource policies and processes.

### **III. Methodology**

The study was designed as a cross sectional descriptive study survey of six Kenya's diplomatic missions namely Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zambia, Sweden, Japan and Australia. The target population comprised of 98 employees at the six diplomatic missions. The target population was made up of the head of mission, deputy head of mission, political officers, service providers, local staff and other attaches. The study carried out as a census or a complete enumeration in which the entire population of 98 employees at the six Kenya missions participated.

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data, while qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. The descriptive statistics comprised of frequencies, percentages and measures of central tendency such as mean and standard deviation. The inferential statistics included Pearson Correlation and multivariate regression analysis. The statistics were generated using Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were presented in frequency tables, distribution tables, pie charts, and bar graphs.

### **IV. Major Findings**

The study's first objective was to assess the impact of human resource management on performance levels of employees in diplomatic missions. The participants were requested to indicate the extent of the success of the human resource management function at the embassy at achieving the desired human resource outcomes. Interview questions were basically on encouraging team building, support to communication and feedback, facilitation to understanding institution's vision, ensuring employee's recognition and value, meeting employee's remunerations, address to employee motivation, monitoring job satisfaction, matching qualifications to assignments, skills and training, employee succession and turnovers, and the like.

The study established that human resource management has significant influence on employee performance in diplomatic missions. This was inferred from Pearson Correlation ( $r=0.714$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and regression analysis ( $t=4.702$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The study established that human resource management contribute to the performance function at the diplomatic missions by facilitating understanding of Embassy's vision, objectives and values, encouraging team building, supporting communication and feedback mechanisms, ensuring that

employees feel valued and recognized, meeting employees' remuneration expectations, facilitating orientation and understanding of the workplace practices and matching assignments with employee qualifications.

Human resource management function also improves employees' performance at the diplomatic missions by increasing the percentage of performance goals met or exceeded, improving talent retention, reducing employee turnover, carrying out organizational assessment on performance trends, review of strategies, restructuring operations and workforce planning, enhancing employee motivation, monitoring of job satisfaction, availing a comprehensive sources of information for understanding the operations at the diplomatic missions, carrying out workforce analysis on roles, employee skills, employee demographics, ensuring orderly successions, development planning regarding on-the-job learning, training and mentorship, improving internal flexibility or job rotations and through employee training.

## **V. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study findings revealed that employee performance in diplomatic missions is impacted upon by human resource management. Human resource management enhances productivity of employees and ensures that diplomatic missions have the required human capacity to achieve organizational goals. Human resource management enhances aligns the employees to performance objectives, motivates and ensure that the employees are committed to the achievement of diplomatic missions. Moreover, human resource management function plays a key role in performance evaluation at the diplomatic missions.

## **VI. Recommendations**

The study recommends the following human resource areas for improvement of worker performance in missions in the following areas the following areas: understanding of diplomatic vision, objectives and values by all stakeholders, team building, communication and feedback mechanisms, performance appraisal, training especially on home country's strategic interests, orientation and understanding of the workplace practices and matching assignments with employee qualifications, talent retention, management of employee turnover, employee performance monitoring and evaluation.

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