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DOWNSIZING AND PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN TRANS NZOIA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of downsizing on employee performance in commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. The study was guided by Uncertainty Management Theory. Literature was reviewed as per the study objectives. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Target population of the study consisted of 470 employees drawn from 14 commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. A sample size of 216 of employee was arrived at and stratified simple random sampling used to categorize managers, supervisors/administrators and clerical/tellers. Data was collected using the questionnaires. Validity and reliability of the study instrument were ascertained and results showed that the instrument was valid and reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson Correlation and regression analyses) at 95.0% confidence level ($P<0.05$). Analysed data was presented in form of frequency tables and percentages. The results indicated that downsizing ($r=0.508$, $p<0.000$) had significant effect on the employee performance in commercial banks found in Trans Nzoia County at varied degrees. Downsizing explained up to 49.9 % ($R^2= 0.499$) of the variance in employee performance of commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. It was established that the management of downsizing affects the performance of employees in commercial banks found in Trans Nzoia County; downsizing threatens job security, thus reducing employee commitment to workforce quality. It was concluded that increase in the management of downsizing would result to increase in employee performance. It was recommended that commercial banks managers should prepare the employees on the downsizing programs and how the organization is expected to regain after the exercise. Those who were victims of downsizing should be prepared psychologically and given full support from the management and the remaining employees. The findings of this study would be beneficial to commercial banks' management, employees and future researchers on how to handle and prepare for downsizing and understanding its effect on employee performance.

Key Words: *Downsizing, Employee Performance, Commercial Banks, Trans-Nzoia County*

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INTRODUCTION

The world of banking and finance has been in a state of constant change. Increase of regulations and massive change in customer behaviour poses a significant challenge to financial institution (Kaiser & Ringlstetter, 2010). Without a doubt, as of late, sector related to financial services everywhere throughout the world has encountered a lot of outside pressure somehow because of technological advancement, wide spread economic crisis and deregulation. This has required the capacity of money related foundations to pick the correct change prospects while showing the important level of adaptability to meet the liquid necessities of the organization after some time (Barbaroux, 2011). Accordingly, a few banks have needed to set out certain vital moves incorporating acquisition and mergers so as to be focused. This circumstance among others has put various banks under serious strain to perform subsequently, requiring continuous organizational changes to keep up the pace. The capacity to oversee and adjust to management change is a fundamental capacity required in the working environment today (Felicetti, 2009). Management of change influences employee performance in pre and past change period. During the change procedure, the conduct of the workers is incredibly affected through enthusiastic reactions. At the point when the issue of progress is acquainted with the employees, they will react with fear. They frequently behave in resistant and defensive role. It is vital to note that workers do not view change in positive perspective. Change meddles with their normal duties and they are exposed to a deviation from what they are accustomed to doing (Chemjor, 2015).

Mirabal and DeYoung (2005) views the term organizational downsizing as a set of activities, undertaken on the part of the management of an organization and designed to improve organizational efficiency, productivity and/or competitiveness, and thus an improvement in the organization's overall performance. Downsizing has been a major effort to revitalize organizations. Kroth (2008) argued that, to have the competitive edge and satisfy customers' needs, organizations engage in downsizing as a strategy for shifting the organizational structure from its present to what it should be. The need for change in organizations is due to re-engineering of business processes, increased global competition and the impact of information technology (Burke & Nelson, 2002).

In today's business environment where most organizations are forced to restructure due to economic meltdowns, downsizing has proven to be a relevant strategy to organizations. The current tendency of organizations to restructure and ultimately to downsize has a major impact on organizations themselves, on their surviving and terminated employees, on the government, and on society as a whole (Ngirande, Terera & Mutodi, 2014). In fact, it is everyone's problem, and it seems to become a trend from 2000 up to date (Svein, 2002). The late 2000's economic recession climate; particularly December 2007 has persistent and long-lasting consequences on both employees and the organizations themselves. As a result, many organizations that were operating inefficiently have been driven out of business, and most of those that have survived were forced to restructure in order to streamline their operations and achieve operating cost savings that would ensure their continued competitiveness both on the local and global markets.

Most of the organizations, while cutting their costs, attempt to reduce the size of their workforce. Downsizing is one of the defensive strategies an organization can adopt to cut costs or to make the organization more productive and profitable. But the perceived outcomes might not be achieved in all organizations, which attempted to downsize their workforce. Organizations, sometimes, fail to achieve these objectives due to one or the other reasons. The main objectives of the downsizing are to improve organizational performance, and cut the cost of production to enhance productivity and profitability. However, there are chances that the organizations face some weaknesses and threats, which may badly affect overall performance of the organizations. Weaknesses may be in term of the poor performance of the survived employees, however, threats, though external in nature, may arise in term of the laid-off employees (Ur Rehman, & Naeem, 2012). In addition, Morton and Orman (2010) also noted that consequences such as demoralization of the work force; increased worker turnover; decreased cooperation and teamwork; and increased levels of stress, anxiety, absenteeism, and mistakes can follow.

Statement of the Problem

Majority of commercial banks in Kenya have undergone numerous changes in response to customer expectations, globalization, technological development, and competition and regulation requirements (Njoroge, 2014). This has seen commercial banks retrenching aged employees to reduce their workforce, merging so as strengthen their visibility in the market, introduction of mobile banking, ATM and agency banking so as to reduce the transaction costs (Njoroge, 2014). Despite this change, some commercial banks have failed to realize expected employee performance as some of the employees feel threatened by these changes due to loss of job, status quo, security and change in work schedule (Cytonn, 2016). It has been observed that quite a number of employees in commercial banks have left the banking sector in the recent past. This has been attributed to failure to meet set targets and deadlines. These employees are ever under duress to achieve set targets which according to them are difficult to achieve. This has affected employees' efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Therefore, there was need to study the effect of downsizing on employee performance of commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County to establish the degree of its effect on employee performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was guided by uncertainty management theory to explain how changes affect employee productivity. Organizational change and pressure of irregularity results lead to vulnerability and dangers to workers 'prosperity (Terry et al., 2001). At the point when new technique, another item or new structure is initiated employees are regularly oppressed with new jobs and duties. The subject of whether this new job will fit the present one can cause job strain, and is a noteworthy cause of worker's nervousness, stress and vulnerability (Carnall, 2003). A basic component of the passionate state with change is a feeling of loss. In the underlying stages, when little is thought about the change activity, individuals have restricted learning of the proclaimed advantages. Once in a while the main thing that is sure is the information of intermittence. In this way workers just realize what they will lose, not what they will gain (Buller, 1988). Because of these reasons employees lead to fear of consequence change. Dubrin and Ireland (1993) noted that resistance to change is attributed to employee's fear of poor outcomes, the unknown, and realization of pitfalls with the change.

Van den Bos (2001) serves as the theoretical foundation for positive change orientation. Reductions in uncertainty are associated with more positive employee perceptions and behaviors (Lind & Van den Bos, 2002) and improve employee reactions and change-related outcomes (e.g., Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). From these indicators of the latent positive change orientation construct is change self-efficacy (Jimmieson, Terry, &Callan, 2004), Change self-efficacy. Employees with high levels of change-related self-efficacy believe they have the ability to deal with change-related demands and that they can function effectively during the change process (Jimmieson *et al*., 2004). Ozer and Bandura explicate a specific relationship between self-efficacy and threat appraisal when noting that threat is not a fixed property of situation events rather, threat is a relational property concerning the match between perceived coping capabilities and potentially hurtful aspects of the environment. People who believe they can exercise control over potential threats do not conjure up fearful cognitions, and, hence, are not disturbed by them.

The relationship between downsizing and performance in this study is a negative one, increased organizational downsizing leads to reduced productivity. However, if downsizing is done in the right way, it could result to the desired outcome. It is the interest of this study to address how best downsizing can be done in order to reduce the negative effects. Gitonga (2009) set out to assess different factors of downsizing and examine their commitment on employee performance, which are the bases for organization performance. The researcher embraced an cross sectional research design. The main population for this investigation was every one of the employees of Telkom Kenya at the Mt. Kenya East (Embu) Region. A sample was drawn from this population utilizing stratified sampling techniques. The investigation uncovered that downsizing at Telkom Kenya neglected to improve performance, efficiency, or benefits. Notwithstanding downsizing, Telkom has not understood efficiency gains and the organization is at present foreseeing negative impacts.

Ochoro (2011) looked to give a comprehension of the impacts of staff scaling back on the remaining employees and the proceeded with performance of the Dominion Farms. The investigation embraced an descriptive survey design. The researcher utilized the survey and as the principle research instrument for gathering information. Downsizing survival was directly and by implication related with organizational responsibility, survivors revealed less duty than unaffected representatives. Likewise downsizing survival was decidedly connected with occupation related pressure and adversely connected with organization help which converted into survival employees' low degree of responsibility. Sayed (2013) examined the effect of downsizing on trust, reliability, employee resolve and professional success opportunities and responsibility as seen by remaining workers in South Africa. A quantitative technique was utilized for this investigation just as surveys. The discoveries uncovered that there exists noteworthy intercorrelations among the key factors of the investigation that are affected by the way toward downsizing and change (communication, trust, worker duty and devotion, employee resolve and professional success opportunities) separately. It was in this manner inferred that downsizing changes the working conditions for the remaining employees where they will never again feel glad to work for the organization, diminishing their reliability towards the organization.

Rehman and Naeem (2012) explored the effect of cutting back on the performance of employees: A contextual analysis of Pakistan. The researcher proposed a reasonable model of the eventual outcomes of the downsizing and employee performance. The proposed model is the consistent coordination of the unavoidable delayed consequences of the downsizing and is bolstered by past examines on the outcomes of the downsizing. The downsizing influenced workers' reliability, observation about the activity uncertainty and their responsibilities toward the organization. Cloete (2012) explored the organization duty of those workers who survived and stayed with the retail organization following downsizing. A quantitative research design was used. The example (N=150) contained the two guys and females from various ethnic gatherings. A self-created questionnaire and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were utilized to assemble information. Measurably critical connections were found between the anecdotal attributes to be specific, residency, sex and age, and organization commitment. Workers show low normal degrees of responsibility to the organization. All the more explicitly, an immediate, positive relationship was found among regulating and full of feeling responsibility.

Kinanga and Cheruiyot (2015) looked to discover the impact decrease of workers on employee performance of Barclays bank speculated as there is no connection between decrease of workforce and employee performance. The investigation embraced a descriptive research design. Information for the investigation were gathered from a sample 183 workers of Barclays Bank South Rift region, Kenya. Questionnaires were utilized as the sole information gathering instrument. The information that was gathered from the field was examined utilizing both descriptive and inferential measurements. The discoveries set up that there was a solid positive connection of 0.982 between downsizing and the independent variable performance of employees. The outcomes showed that larger amounts of powerful downsizing prompts compelling performance of banks subsequently they have to consider applying downsizing strategy.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Trans Nzoia County, which is located in Trans-Nzoia in the former rift valley province in Kenya. Target population of the study consisted of 470 employees drawn from 14 commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County comprising of 42 managers, 109 supervisors/administrators and 319 clerical /tellers. A sample size of 216 of employee was arrived at and stratified simple random sampling used to categorise managers, supervisors/administrators and clerical /tellers. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain respondents from each department. The sample size was determined using Yamane (1967) formulae: n= sample size; N= total population of members (470); e= sampling error (0.05). Primary data of both quantitative and qualitative type was collected by the researcher through the questionnaires. The study ensured both content and construct validity were achieved. Reliability test was carried out and the results showed that a Cronbach alpha of coefficient of 0.770 was attained implying that the research instruments were reliable. Analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics used mainly the means and standard deviations, while inferential statistics employed regression and correlation analyses. Inferential statistics were used to test research questions at p-value of 5% (0.05) at confidence interval of 95%.

FINDINGS

The objective of the study was to determine the effect of downsizing on performance of employees in commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. Downsizing is one of the crucial factors during change management in an organization. To measure downsizing, a set of six statements were formulated. Several questions were asked regarding downsizing and performance of employees in commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. The statements were anchored on a five point Likert-type scale. The respondents were required to state their level of agreement with six (6) statements relating to downsizing and performance of employees, where, 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. The Relevant results were as shown in Table 1. All the variables from factor analysis results on downsizing were used in the analysis since their cut-offs were good (>0.63, meaning very good).

Table 1: Factor Analysis Results for Downsizing

Variables	Initial	Extraction
Downsizing has resulted to improved personal responsibility	1.000	0.676
Downsizing has resulted to increase efficiency, reduce cost improve efficiency and enhanced competitiveness.	1.000	0.635
Downsizing has led to Improved employee accountability	1.000	0.774
Downsizing has led to improved loyalty to your supervisor	1.000	0.690
Downsizing has resulted to equal distribution of workloads among employees	1.000	0.652
It leads to ‘charged up’ , people finding new excitement in their work, being challenged by prospect of ‘doing more with less’ or saving the organization	1.000	0.735

N= 470, n = 219, Researcher, 2017

In addition, respondents' views on downsizing and performance of employees in commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County were analyzed. The findings were presented in Table 2. The results revealed that the downsizing has resulted to improved personal responsibility (mean = 4.14; std. dev = 1.25); downsizing has resulted to increase efficiency, reduce cost improve efficiency and enhanced competitiveness (mean = 3.72; std. dev = 1.50); downsizing has led to improved employee accountability (mean = 3.79 ; std. dev = 1.20); downsizing has led to improved loyalty to your supervisor (mean = 3.58; std. dev = 1.35);downsizing has resulted to equal distribution of workloads among employees (mean = 3.98; std. dev = 1.16) and downsizing leads to 'charged up', people finding new excitement in their work, being challenged by prospect of 'doing more with less' or saving the organization (mean = 3.71; std. dev = 1.31).

The mean and the standard deviation for the question on whether the downsizing has resulted to improved personal responsibility had the highest mean (mean = 4.14; std. dev = 1.25), an indication of less variance in the views given on the question asked. It was observed that the mean and the standard deviation for the remaining five items did not vary significantly; were very close, showing that the responses on the questions asked did not vary significantly (had similar responses).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Downsizing

No	Downsizing	SD%	D%	U%	A%	SA%	Mean	SDV
1	Downsizing has resulted to improved personal responsibility	21(11.4)	2(1.1)	2(1.1)	66(35.7)	94(50.8)	4.14	1.25
2	Downsizing has resulted to increase efficiency, reduce cost improve efficiency and enhanced competitiveness.	26(14.1)	23(12.4)	15(8.1)	33(17.8)	88(47.6)	3.72	1.50
3	Downsizing has led to Improved employee accountability	8(4.3)	25(13.5)	32(17.3)	53(28.6)	67(36.2)	3.79	1.20
4	Downsizing has led to improved loyalty to your supervisor	19(10.3)	25(13.5)	35(18.9)	42(22.7)	64(34.6)	3.58	1.35
5	Downsizing has resulted to equal distribution of workloads among employees	2(1.1)	36(19.5)	18(9.7)	42(22.7)	87(47)	3.98	1.16
6	Downsizing leads to 'charged up' , people finding new excitement in their work, being challenged by prospect of 'doing more with less' or saving the organization	16(8.6)	19(10.3)	39(21.1)	39(21.1)	72(38.9)	3.71	1.31
	Overall Mean						**3.82**	**1.3**

N= 470, n = 219, Researcher, 2017

In order to establish the effect of downsizing on employee performance, their aggregate mean scores were regressed, correlated and the results obtained as illustrated in the Tables 3 and 4. This aided in answering the research question: What is the effect of downsizing on performance of employees in Commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County? This was tested using significance of regression and correlation coefficients at 95.0% confidence level.

Results revealed that the relationship of strategic recruitment and selection process on service delivery variables was linear, positive and significant. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.470 implied a relatively weak relationship of strategic recruitment and selection process and service delivery in the County Government of Bungoma. The coefficient of determination, R-square of 0.221 implied that 22.1% of the variance in service delivery of the County Government of Bungoma was accounted for by strategic recruitment and selection process with the significance value of p = 0.000 which was less than 0.05. The unstandardized regression coefficient (B) value of strategic recruitment and selection process and service delivery was 0.384, correlation coefficient (β) of 0.470 and with a t-test of 9.789 and significance level of p = 0.000, which further confirmed existence of a significant and positive linear correlation of strategic recruitment and selection process and service delivery of County Government of Bungoma. This indicated that a unit change in strategic recruitment and selection process would result to change in service delivery of County Government of Bungoma by 0.384 in the same direction. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, strategic recruitment and selection process was significant in predicating the degree of service delivery in the County Government of Bungoma.

Table 3: Correlation between Downsizing and Employee Performance

		Downsizing	Employee performance
Downsizing	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	185	
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	0.508**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	185	185

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Table 4: Regression Results of Downsizing on Employee Performance

Model Summary [c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	0.706a	0.499	0.482	0.51376	0.499	29.538	6	178	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Downsizing
b. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.779	6	7.797	29.538	0.000b
	Residual	46.983	178	0.264		
	Total	93.762	184			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Delivery
b. Predictors: (Constant), Downsizing

Coefficients [a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients S.E.	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.100	0.304		3.614	0.000
	Downsizing	0.489	0.068	0.508	7.214	0.000

Significance level ≤ 0.05

In investigating the influence of downsizing on the employee performance of commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County, the study established a coefficient of correlation (r) as 0.508**, P<0.01 at 99.0% confidence level. This showed that there existed a significant positive relationship between downsizing and the employee performance of

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commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. This implied that the employee performance of commercial banks increase with an increase in downsizing and a decrease in downsizing leads to a decrease in their employee performance. Regression results revealed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.499, meaning that downsizing could explain up to 49.9 % of the variance in employee performance of commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. The F test gave a value of (1, 184) = 29.538, P<0.01, which supported the goodness of fit of the model in explaining the variation in the dependent variable. It also meant that downsizing is a useful predictor of employee performance of commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County. The unstandardized regression coefficient (β) value of downsizing was 0.508 with a t-test of 7.214 and significance level of p<0.001. The regression equation to estimate the employee performance of commercial banks in Trans Nzoia County as a result of downsizing was hence stated as: employee performance = 1.100 +0.489 downsizing.

The results of this study compared favourably with Kinanga and Cheruiyot (2015) established that there was a strong positive correlation of 0.982 between reduction of employees and the dependent variable employee performance. Rori (2009) concluded that employee downsizing can lead to short term improvements in profitability, however long term gains may be lost due to poor planning, implementation and monitoring. A good employee downsizing programme, therefore, is one that is based on the business organization's mission and vision guided by a clear workforce strategy effective performance of commercial banks hence they need to consider applying downsizing. However, Sayed (2013) concluded that downsizing does change the working conditions for the surviving employees in which they will no longer feel happy to work for the organisation, decreasing their loyalty towards the organisation. Ochoro (2011) also indicated downsizing negatively associated with organizational support which translated into surviving employees' low level of commitment. Gitonga (2009) revealed that downsizing at Telkom Kenya failed to improve performance, productivity, or profits. Despite downsizing, Telkom has not realized productivity gains and the organization is currently anticipating negative effects.

CONCLUSION

The study established that the management of downsizing affects the performance of employees in commercial banks found in Trans Nzoia County. It was established that downsizing threatens job security, thus reducing employee commitment to the quality program and that downsizing reduces levels of communication in general, adversely affecting employee commitment thereby threatening workforce quality. Increasing in the management of downsizing would result to increase in employee performance. Specifically, the study concluded that proper management of downsizing such as equal distribution of workloads for the remaining employees, specifying the purpose of downsizing and why it was necessary to undertake results to increase in personal responsibility and 'doing more with less' or saving the organization. It was recommended that commercial banks managers should prepare the employees on the downsizing programs and how the organization is expected to regain after the exercise. This would assure the remaining employees that the program was undertaken to better their remuneration and increase improve the performance of the organization. Those who were victims of downsizing should be prepared psychologically and given full support from the management and the remaining employees.

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