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HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMABAY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Every organization needs standard strategies to provide better or improved services to the stakeholders. Most of governmental organizations are meant to be socially stable in providing quality services to each and every person associated to such organizations. However, there has been instances of unsatisfactory service delivery and implementation of various programs at the devolved government units which have been linked to strategy implementation problems. Devolved governments have experienced unprecedented change and at the same time faced with many challenges in service delivery and development. The study is anchored on; Resource Based View theory, Stakeholder theory, Schumpeterian Theory and Institutional theory. The objective of the study was to determine the effect of human resource practices on strategy implementation of service delivery in the county government of Homabay, Kenya. The research adopted a descriptive research design. The target population constituted 116 respondents. Stratified sampling technique was employed and the sample size of 90 was realized. The study used a questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The Pilot study was conducted on employees of county government of Kisumu. Further, regression equation model was developed to test the relationships between the variables. ANOVA was performed to analyze the effects of various relationships at the variables level as well at item level. The findings indicated Human Resources practices had more effect on the service delivery of the county government of Homabay; Kenya. The study recommends for the organizations to embrace to human resources practices for improved services deliverance.

Key words: *Human Resources Practices, Strategic Implementation, Service Delivery*

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INTRODUCTION

Management needs to marshal resources behind its strategy execution process in order for it to be productive. A scarcity of resources might slow down the process, whilst the plethora of funds would waste organizational resources and lower financial performance. As a consequence, capital allocation must be pretty evenly split and properly considered in order to facilitate strategy implementation. Financial resources might be a stumbling block to strategic plan implementation. Given the limiting or even scarce financial resources available, as well as social economic factors, management frequently finds it necessary to prioritize its initiatives in order to determine which ones are most critical to implement (Sum &Chorlian, 2013).

Strategic implementation is the process that puts plans and strategies into action to reach goals. The implementation makes the organization's plans happen. Strategic implementation is critical to any organization's success, addressing the, who, where, when, and how of reaching the desired goals and objectives. It focuses on the entire organization (Zeps, &Ribickis, 2015). Implementation occurs after environmental scans, SWOT analyses, and identifying strategic issues and goals. Implementation involves assigning individuals to tasks and timelines that will help an organization reach its goals. Implementation follows a six-step process namely, envision, activate, install, ensure, and recognize (Radomska, 2014). The implementation of strategy remains one of the most difficult areas of management. Its success depends both on the selection of an appropriate strategy and converting that strategy into action.

Devolved systems are often used in Africa in the form of local government bodies or federal systems (Ronald, 2002). Such systems can be found in countries such as Liberia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Africa, among others (Burugu, 2010). Liberia is divided into 15 counties, each of which has governor, and each county elects one senator to the Liberian Senate. In Uganda, the decentralized system of government resembles the form of local government, with the goal of lowering the workload of central officials in remote areas, establishing political and administrative autonomy, and ensuring efficiency and productivity in local governments. The decentralized system of the Republic of South Africa facilitates the supply of goods and services to communities in a sustainable manner, facilitates social and economic development, and conducts other responsibilities. Rwanda's devolved system delegated planning, budgetary management, and customer service to local officials (Kauzya, 2007).

Human resources, rather than just the traditional framework of money and land, now occupy a prominent significance in the organization's strategy. Large corporations, such as Microsoft, place so much importance on hiring professional individuals, providing them with wide - ranging mentoring and coaching, and pushing their employees to new heights in effort to accomplish exceptional service, and this serves as the foundation of their strategy and firm performance over their competitors. As an impetus for hard work, the company should create confidence in its employees about their future in the organization and future advancement opportunities. Strategy implementation is likely to be successful when congruence is achieved between several elements crucial to this process (Mwatsuma, *at. el,* 2017).

The availability of resources in terms of employees, skills, expertise, funding, and time is regarded as a critical component of strategy implementation. As a result, appropriate resource allocation is critical for an organization's existence and success. The budgeting process, training and development of people to enhance level of abilities within the company, and the availability of tangible resources such as assets for use in the organization are all examples of resource allocation. The allocation of resources must be oriented toward the fulfillment of objectives. Objectives must be clearly stated, together with strategic priorities for resource allocation. Their preferences attract more resources for their pet reports (Chowrasta, 2011)

Human resources provide organizations with qualified and willing employees to carry out its plans. The objective at hand is to create a variety of human resource practice choices that will aid in the implementation of the organization's plan and increase its competitiveness (Edmunds &Wollenberg, 2013). Unskilled labor will never be able to push devolution forward. Finance availability, interest rates, federal regulations, and taxation are all important macroeconomic aspects in the economics of a country. The financial resources of the national government are insufficient to sustain the successful execution of the devolution concept. The county lacked the financial resources to retain some of the professionals who will aid in the long-term implementation of the devolution agenda (Chaudoir, Dugan & Barr, 2013).

Abuya (2011), on a study of challenges of Implementation of Strategic Plans at Action Aid Kenya found out that resources can be a real challenge to Implementation of Strategic Plans. Their use as a “strategic weapon” to gain competitive advantage is essential together with adequate allocation of material resources to facilitate successful implementation. Action Aid had an ambitious plan yet it was not possible to implement strategies which require more resources than could be made available. The researcher noted that too little resources stifled the ability to carry out the strategic plan to the fullest.

A study on the impact of strategic human resource management on organizational performance was performed by Alişkan (2010). The research showed that firms are endeavoring to be as competitive in the market as possible, stretching out to manage their human resources in order to obtain the required organizational performance. Cost cutting, attaining sales targets, improving the number of customers, increasing market share, increasing productivity, manufacturing innovative solutions, and allocative efficiency are just a few of the objectives. In efforts to realize these performance metrics, human resources play a vital role. Nonetheless, organizations first should acknowledge the expectations placed on employees, so that individuals can demonstrate their abilities, be motivated, and behave in the manner specified by the organization in order to achieve performance.

Al-Adwani (2014) investigated the impact of strategic human resource management on organizational goals accomplishment. According to the findings, Kuwait Finance House (KFH) employs HRM techniques that motivate employees to give their best effort in order to fulfill the organization's goals and objectives. The questionnaire's positive and undeniable numerical results demonstrated that KFH has a healthy implementation of HRM techniques that are very well among the bank's employees. This experiment should be reproduced in other Kuwaiti organizations as a model for implementing HRM practices that assure organizational effectiveness.

Ragui and Gichuhi (2013) investigated the effect of strategic HRM in the implementation of strategic planning by Kenyan higher education training institutions. As per the findings, Kenya, like other developing countries, has to implement initiatives in HEIs to secure investments and growth. The degree and scope of efficiency by which the critical factor of SHRM is dealt with determine the extent to which the integration may be realized. This research shed light on SHRM and its relevance on strategic planning compliance. The study enabled the education sector in accomplishing its mission of supporting to growth in terms of achieving the Vision 2030 goal of eradicating poverty through knowledge dissemination, ultimately boosting the current growth trend.

In their study investigated the impact between strategy implementation and performance in Kenyan county administrations, Abass, Munga, and Were (2017) revealed that: A case study of the Wajir County government found that strategic implementation training was vital and had a significant association with organizational performance. They recommended that county government administrators support and enable staff with the required skills and knowledge to guarantee that the plans are implemented appropriately.

Statement of the Problem

There has been instances of unsatisfactory service delivery and implementation of various programs at the devolved government units which can be linked to strategy implementation problems. Devolved governments have experienced unprecedented change and at the same time faced with many challenges in service delivery and development. The management of devolved funds is faced with many challenges and this has affected implementation of key development strategies (Momanyi, *at.el*.2018). County governments have no alignment due to various organizational processes being created in isolation such as improper Strategy development, poor budgeting, operational planning with the Spatial/Sector Plans that are developed by different groups of people with different frameworks adopted hence resulting to non-alignment between individual performance, departmental performance and organizational goals. Harrington, (2016) noticed that Strategy implementation can be seen as a series of interventions concerning organizational structures, key personnel actions, and control systems to ensure desired standards of performance are met. Momanyi, Senaji, and Were, (2018) concludes that human resources and Financing have significant effect on strategy implementation in devolved governments in Kenya. The study recommends that the top management of all counties in Kenya should ensure they put in place adequate measures and policies that improve human resources for better implementation of strategies. Awuor (2017) explored the factors influencing strategy implementation and performance of International Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya at Mercy Corps and found that staff engagement, technological factors, external environment, resources availability, appropriate strategic decision, and inclusivity affected strategy implementation. Most of the studies in the empirical review never zeroed on human resource practices on the service delivery. Thus, the study sought to provide information on the effect of human resources practices on service delivery in county government of Homabay, Kenya

Study objective

To determine the effect of human resource on strategy implementation of the service delivery in county government of Homabay, Kenya

Research Question

What is the effect of Human resource on strategy implementation of projects in county government of Homabay, Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review;

Resource Based View

RBV (Penrose, 1959) illustrates the reasoning for resolving causal linkages between resources, capabilities, and competitive advantage, which leads to a resource-based theory of competitive advantage. It makes at least three important points about the relationships between a firm's resources, productive opportunities, and profitable firm growth. Resources may have a variety of roles, allowing them to be used in a variety of situations. Leaders must identify the most profitable use of the resources at their disposal.

Resource allocation is a critical management function that enables policy implementation. The majority of an institution's resources are financial, physical, human, technological, and good. Nepotism, tribalism, organizational politics, and a lack of training and managerial abilities among managers are some of the reasons that impede reasonable resource allocation (Pearce et al, 2011) Thus, employee training is defined as the process of recognizing, assuring, and improving employees' knowledge, skills, and capacities through organized activities, need to help them perform their current and future strategic responsibilities in state agencies to the greatest extent possible (Rotich and Odero, 2016)

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County governments should enable department heads and other administrators involved in strategic planning to be effective leaders in the process by providing them with the necessary information and skills through on-the-job training. Furthermore, strategic planning should be included in employee training programs at all levels so that personnel entering the service have the right mindset, abilities, and competencies in strategic management. These theoretical considerations will be relevant to strategy implementation. Any effort or attempt by any organization to implement its plans would necessitate the use of resources, both real and intangible, such as funds, human resources, and even buildings and other types of infrastructure. Simultaneously, intangible resources like as skills come in help during strategy execution.

Stakeholder Theory

According to Stakeholder theory (Freeman 1994), organizational managers will be clear about how they want to carry out business activities, precisely what type of connections they want and need to develop with their stakeholders to enable them to deliver on their purpose. Stakeholder theory is managerial in the sense that it reflects and drives how managers behave rather than addressing solely management theorists and economists. This encourages managers to communicate a shared understanding of the value they provide and what brings its main stakeholders together.

Stakeholder theory starts with the notion that values are fundamentally and explicitly a part of everything in carrying out business operations. It urges managers to communicate their shared understanding of the value they offer, and even what binds its main stakeholders together.

Stakeholders, human resource issues, insufficient financial resources, a lack of effective control and evaluation mechanisms, leadership and poor coordination, social cultural elements, and political considerations are all hurdles to strategy execution. As a result, appropriate measures must be implemented to ensure that strategy implementation proceeds smoothly (Galgallo, 2015). Strategic plan implementation has been examined. Many Determinants of Strategic Plan Implementation from around the world have been found as a result of these reviews. Management, managerial conduct, institutional policies and resource allocation, business culture, communication, leadership, and top management support have been recognized as the primary determinants of strategic plan implementation. As a result, this theory is useful to county government stakeholders involved in strategy execution.

Schumpeterian Theory on Innovations

According to Schumpeterian Theory (Schumpeter's, 1934), theory emphasizes the role of proper strategy implementation and the pursuit of opportunities for unique value and generating activities that would expand the circular flow of income through risk taking, proactivity by organizational leadership, and innovation that aims to foster opportunity identification. Strategic management is the process of developing an organization's long-term goals and strategy. It is an ongoing activity in which all managers at all levels are encouraged to strategically focus on the long term, have a strong external orientation, and be mindful of tactical and operational difficulties that arise in the short term (Hammuel, 2011).

According to Kenneth (2014), devolution provides county governments with the space to design innovative models that fit the terrain of their unique sector needs, as well as the scope to determine their governance system priorities and the authority to make autonomous decisions on sub-sector resource allocation and expenditure. During strategic planning, resource restrictions are visible in county governments, particularly those that rely on the national government for funding. The strategic planning concept is concerned with where we are now, where we want to be, how we will get there, who must do what, and what we are doing now that may deserve modification or not Human, financial, physical, and technological resources are all examples of organizational resources. Adequate resources are required for successful strategy execution. Most firms fail to implement strategies owing to a lack of resources (Abass et al 2017). As a result, this theory is applicable to finance assistance for plan execution in county government.

Institutional Theory

Organizations, as per institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan 1977), are a mechanism throughout which social values and beliefs are embedded in organizational structure and represented in organizational transformation. According to the hypothesis, the institutional environment might have a greater impact on the development of formal structures in an organization than market pressures. Organizations are adopting practices that are common in their context, such as specific job titles, procedures, and organizational responsibilities. Adoption and prominent exhibition of these institutionally approved 'trappings of legitimacy' contribute to the preservation of an aura of good faith in organizational activities. Legitimacy in the institutional environment contributes to the smooth operation of organizations.

However, these formal frameworks of legitimacy can impede efficiency and jeopardize an organization's competitive position in its technical context. Organizations frequently separate their technical core from these legitimizing mechanisms in order to mitigate this harmful effect. When a strategy is operationalized, particular persons are assigned duties, strategy-supportive budgets are established, and personnel are aligned with the strategy. The process of institutionalizing a strategy include creating organizational competence to support the new plan (Arshad, 2012)

At this point new and existing organizations will adopt the structural form even if the form doesn't improve efficiency. Therefore, this theory is relevant to social economic factors on strategy implementation in county government.

Conceptual Framework

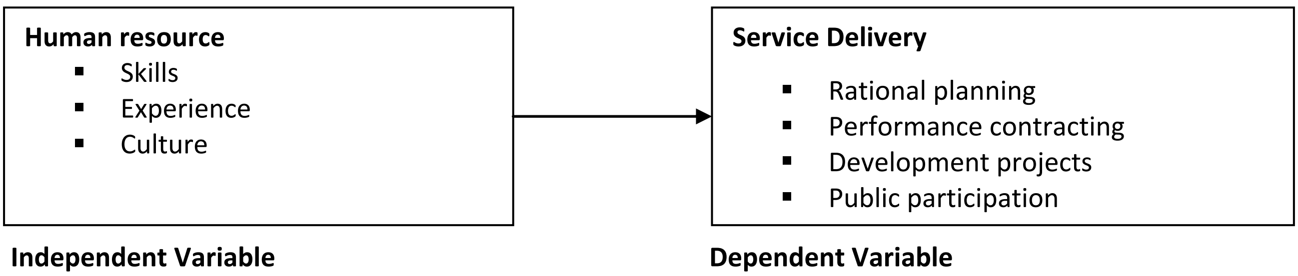

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research adopted a descriptive research design. According to Creswell (2014) a descriptive research design is used to analyze a phenomenon, to generate hypotheses, and to validate a method through data to be collected by using questionnaires.

Target Population: Population refers to the entire group of people or phenomena of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate, Sekaran (2010). Population of a study is a complete group of entities sharing common features (Zikmund, 2010). It therefore refers to an entire group of individuals, events, or objects having common observable characteristics. The study population in this research will constitute of 116 respondents (County Executive officers, Chief Officers, Directors, Sub County administrators ward administrators and village administrators) in all the department of county Government) According to Cox (2010) target population is the entire set of units for which the study data will be used to make inferences.

Sample and Sampling Technique: According to Cooper & Schindler, (2006) a sample refers to a subset of an entire target population. An acceptable sample size in surveys differs significantly whereas Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) indicates that a sample up to 30% is suitable; other scholars such as Cooper and Schindler (2006) argued that a formula can be used to determine the sample size. This study therefore will employ suitable a formula to determine the sample size. Yamane (1967) formula will be adopted in this study at a confidence level of 95% as shown in the equation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n- Sample size,

N -Population size

e - Margin of error

$$n = \frac{116}{1 + 116(.05)^2}$$

n=90 respondents

Research Instrument: The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in a Likert scale of five points *(5=strongly Disagree 4=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 2=Agree, 1= strongly Agree)*

Pilot Test: Prior to administering the surveys, a pilot test was undertaken. A pilot study is a small study conducted in preparation for a bigger study. It is used to evaluate research methods, data collection instruments, sample recruitment strategies, and other research methodologies (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). During the pilot phase, questionnaires was delivered to 15 employees from the county government of Kisumu. Cooper and Schilder (2011) recommended that the pilot test consist of 10% of the total sample size. The questionnaires were self-administered and stamped following receipt throughout the pilot research. They were coded and analyzed using the SPSS software. However, at this stage, the study focused on the reliability and validity of the research tools that have been modified from past pertinent studies.

Data Analysis: Data processing is the collection and manipulation of data to produce information that can be used for decision-making (Miles et al., 2019). Bazeley (2020), on the other hand, defines data analysis as the process of transforming, modelling, and cleaning data to get meaningful information that can be used for decision-making. The nature of the data generated was both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The study used descriptive statistics to analyze the data using percentiles, the mean and standard deviation for qualitative data. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics technique such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentage. SPSS version 25 was used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis and presented in prose form. The study will also analyze the data using inferential statistics which include correlation and regression analysis. Pearson Regression correlation was used to measure the strength and direction of linear relationship between variables. If the correlation coefficient is zero, then it indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables. The researcher will use the multiple linear regression model to determine the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables.

$y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$

Where;

Y= Service Delivery

α =constant

β_1 = parameter estimate

X_1 = Human Resources strategy(practices)

ε is the error of prediction.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study involved 90 questionnaires being dispatched for data collection, 90 questionnaires were returned completely filled, representing a response rate of 100% which was good because of over average and for generalization of the research findings to a wider population.

Descriptive Statistics for Human Resource practices

There were six items examining the influence of green employee training on employee pro-strategy behavior in counties in Kenya. The mean scores across the three cadres were 3.4778 (SD=.6663, N=45), 2.5231 (SD=.6018, N=36) and 3.8519 (SD=.7925, N=90) Others, Middle Level and Top Management respectively. The overall mean score for the same was 3.1333 (SD=.8253, N=90), an indication that Strategy Implementation was not fully implemented in the counties in Kenya. Respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the implementation which sought to establish whether training needs analysis (TNA) to identify environmental-based knowledge gaps was done (Mean=2.52, SD=.974). They were further non-committal on Stakeholder analysis which asserted that their sub counties provided them with strategy training to help develop knowledge and skills they required for Service Delivery (Mean=3.44, SD=1.153).

Inferential statistics

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis presented in Table 1 focused on the relationship between Human Resources Strategies and Service Delivery. The findings reveal significant correlations that highlight how these constructs may correlate with service delivery.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis

		Service Delivery	Human Resources
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	90	
Huma Resources Practices	Pearson Correlation	.660**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	90	90

Findings showed that there is a strong positive correlation between service delivery and human resources practices, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.660 ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that higher levels of human resources are associated with service delivery indicating that effective support and guidance can significantly enhance service delivery.

Analysis of linear regression;

Linear influence of Human Resources practices on Service Delivery

This tested the direct influence Human Resources practices on Service Delivery.Regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between the independent or predictor variables and a dependent variable.

$y = -0.007 + 0.259X_1$

Where;

Y is Service Delivery

X_1 is Human Resources Strategy

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ragui and Gichuhi (2013) investigated the effect of strategic HRM in the implementation of strategic planning by Kenyan higher education training institutions. As per the findings, Kenya, like other developing countries, has to implement initiatives

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in HEIs to secure investments and growth. The degree and scope of efficiency by which the critical factor of SHRM is dealt with determine the extent to which the integration may be realized. This research shed light on SHRM and its relevance on strategic planning compliance. The study enabled the education sector in accomplishing its mission of supporting to growth in terms of achieving the Vision 2030 goal of eradicating poverty through knowledge dissemination, ultimately boosting the current growth trend.

According to Harrington (2016), the process of putting plans into action in order to achieve performance objectives. An organization can establish out its future and seize opportunities it gives by implementing strategy. Human Resources strategy implementation can also be considered as a sequence of interventions including organizational structures, experienced team activities, and control systems in order to ensure that targeted performance requirements are fulfilled. It is a collaborative process of implementing strategies, policies, programs, and action plans that enables a company to use its resources to capitalize on possibilities in a competitive context.

Inter-agency coordination: Close collaboration between the tax authority, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and other relevant bodies is vital for effective intelligence sharing, joint operations against tax crimes, and seamless prosecution of offenders. Data enhancement: Efforts should be made to improve the quality, granularity, and integration of economic, tax, and compliance data across various government agencies. Robust data ecosystems can power enhanced analytics, risk profiling, and evidence-based decision.

Areas for further studies

Based on the research done, it can be suggested that similar research should be replicated in other counties such that it can be proved whether the strategy implementation is in line with the strategic plans for other counties and cascaded down to other sub counties.

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