REALISTIC JOB PREVIEWS AND EMPLOYEE ADJUSTMENT: THE CASE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WITHIN NAIROBI COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

There have been different findings as to whether realistic job previews influence employee adjustment. This study therefore sought to find out the relationship between realistic job previews and employee adjustment in public secondary schools' teachers within Nairobi County. The population of interest was the 80 head teachers in the 80 public secondary schools within Nairobi County, and 560 departmental heads in the same schools. Every public secondary school had a minimum of seven head of departments based on the KCSE examinable subjects, therefore giving a total of 560 head of departments in the 80 public secondary schools within Nairobi County. Sample size was picked in accordance with Cochran's sample size formula for categorical data which translated to 30 respondents; so 30 head of schools and 210 departmental heads from 30 schools were eligible for study. There were 9 districts within Nairobi County. Using quota sampling, the 80 schools were grouped according to the districts. The 30 schools whose head teachers and departmental heads were to be studied were then selected through purposive random sampling. Primary data was collected using close ended questionnaires that utilized the drop and pick method. Data was entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software Version 21; descriptive statistics; and inferential statistics. Results were presented in the form of tables and pie charts according to each question for ease of understanding. The study concluded that Realistic job previews positively and significantly influenced employee adjustment. Future studies looking to expand on the current research would also benefit from utilizing a different target population in order to detect statistical differences.

Key Words: Realistic Job Previews, Employee Adjustment, Public Secondary Schools, Nairobi County

INTRODUCTION

A total of 25% of the entire working population undergoes career transitions each year (Bauer, 2013). Organizations therefore have to hire new comers, promote and transfer employees to take the place of the separated ones. The situation is aggravated by the fact that many employees join the work floor with no idea of what they are supposed to be doing. The entry process of a newcomer in an organization is one of uncertainty and anxiety (Fang, 2013). They are strangers to the working environment, the people, the equipments and most times they have no idea where/from whom to seek help. According to Johns & Saks (2008), an organization will benefit if the new comers take as little time as possible to acquire the knowledge, behaviours and attitudes, required in settling down and becoming productive.

Realistic job previews is a balanced picture of the positive and negative aspects of work the new employee will be doing and the organizational climate, prior to the offer or taking up of a position. They are supposed to provide recruits/job applicants with realistic (both positive and some negative) information about the job/organization (Morse & Popovich, 2010).

Public Secondary Schools in Kenya are schools that are financially supported and run by the government (Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988). Teachers in public secondary schools are employed by Teachers Service Commission (TSC). TSC is also responsible for disciplinary control over teachers and maintenance of teaching standards, (Article 237[1] of the Constitution of Kenya 2010). Realistic job previews of new secondary school teachers does not take place at the HR department in TSC since TSC does not have an HR representative in the public secondary schools. It is supposed to happen at the specific school where the teacher is posted hence the responsibility is vested on the Head teachers and departmental heads in each respective school.

According to Koech, Tikoko & Chemwei (2014), there are high rates of teacher turnover in public secondary schools yet the reasons for this are not clear. High turnover in an organization is considered to be a sign of a problem in that organization because it brings about negative publicity and causes dissatisfaction amongst employees, resulting to reduced productivity (Armstrong, 2014). There is lack of formal policy for induction and decisions on new teacher induction are left to the discretion of head teachers (Lewin and Stuart, 2012). This results to haphazard informal practices which are seldom beneficial (Indoshi, 2013). It's within this context that the researcher carried out the study to examine the part played by realistic job previews practices on employees' adjustment in teachers within public secondary schools in Nairobi County.

Statement of the Problem

There are high rates of teacher turnover in public secondary schools yet the reasons for this are not clear (Koech, Tikoko & Chemwei, 2014). In 2011, Kenya lost 38.4 per cent of teachers through transitions (World Bank, 2011). Employees feel disoriented in their first day in the office Buha (2014), and some level of action needs to be taken for the employee not to feel left out. Onboarding programs (organizational socialization) are designed to help newly hired employees learn about the business and acquire knowledge, attitude and behaviour, required to participate effectively in the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979); (Wanous, 1994). Extant literature has alluded to proper onboarding having possible influence on employee adjustment. Successful socialization has shown to relate to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and decreased turnover intentions (Bauer, 2011). In contrast, inadequate socialization of teachers results to counterproductive work behaviours, unmet

expectations and higher levels of turnover (Buha, 2014). If this problem remains unchecked, it may create an induction crisis in schools and consequently affect the performance of students. One of the ways of making this problem right is by relooking at the realistic job previews, an onboarding practice among the teachers. Studies on this field are still at an embryonic stage and again, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has looked at the effect of realistic job preview practices to employee adjustment in public secondary schools within Nairobi County. This study that was done in public secondary schools within Nairobi Country therefore sought to establish if realistic job preview practices affect the way teachers adjust in the workplace. Based on the study findings, recommendations have been made to alleviate the problem of employee adjustment within the teaching sector in Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The primary concern of this quantitative research was to look at employee adjustment to realistic job preview in public secondary schools within Nairobi County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Orientation

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT)

New comers always face uncertainty when they enter a new organization or department. As a result, they use different mechanisms to try and gather information from various sources so as to be comfortable in their new surroundings. A good HRM practice that can step in to solve this problem is onboarding practices. When employees are oriented effectively, the uncertainty that surrounds them decreases. The Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) explains this situation better. URT proposes that when an employee enters an organization or assumes a new position within an organization, s/he experiences high levels of uncertainty. This

uncertainty typically causes discomfort that the employee is motivated to reduce. To reduce this uncertainty, the employee gathers information in various domains and from various sources. The information acquired then serves to make the work place more understandable, predictable, and controllable. It is through this process, as an employee gathers the necessary information to comprehend and function in his/her new environment, that successful socialization takes place.

The theory developed by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975), is one of the most dominant theories in socialization research to date. It looks into the initial interaction between people prior to the actual communication process. URT proposes that when an employee enters an organization or assumes a new position within an organization, s/he experiences high levels of uncertainty. This uncertainty typically causes discomfort that the employee is motivated to reduce. To reduce this uncertainty, the employee gathers information in various domains and from various sources. The information acquired then serves to make the work place more understandable, predictable, and controllable. It is through this process, as an employee gathers the necessary information to comprehend and function in his/her new environment, that successful socialization takes place.

The theory is relevant to the study as it focuses on realistic job preview and formal orientation. These two variables create a person's first impression in an organization and first impressions are lasting impressions. The theory suggests that new employees gather information in various domains and from various sources to make the work place more understandable, predictable, and controllable. One of the platforms during which information can be gathered is the formal orientation period. An employee who is

comfortable after gaining much information to reduce uncertainty will eventually have a smooth adjustment on their job. The theory cuts across the predictor variables of realistic job preview and formal orientation to the dependent variable which is adjustment. It therefore plays a crucial role in connecting the independent to the dependent variables in the study.

Empirical Review

Realistic Job Previews do not lower expectations, increase job satisfaction, improve ability to cope with unpleasant job circumstances and does not create a perceptual set of greater openness and honesty within the company, assert (Bernard and Daniel, 1981). Instead, one or more of three possible psychological processes operate to cause realistic job previews to aid job survival. They carried out a study based on a sample size of 320 employees from the customer service department of five retail outlets of a large Midwest retail food chain in USA. Experimental and control groups were used in the study. The study used descriptive statistics to report the findings. The study investigated three possible psychological processes underlying the use of realistic job previews (RJPs). RJPs were hypothesized to reduce turnover through lowered expectations and increased job satisfaction; improved ability to cope with unpleasant job circumstances and the creation of a perceptual set of greater openness and honesty within the company.

According to Phillips (1998), realistic job previews are related to higher performance and to lower attrition from the recruitment process, and voluntary turnover. There are also positive relationships between motivational cultural intelligence (CQ) and cross-cultural adjustment (work, general, and interaction adjustment) of global professionals, (Klaus, Cheryl and Anand 2009). This was as a result of a meta-analysis conducted on 40 studies in Singapore and it sought to explore the relationship between the

motivational factor of CQ and realistic job previews. The analysis was based on both published and unpublished reports of experiments using RJPs. The literature review involved computerized and manual searches of articles, books, reports, and papers relevant to RJPs. The analysis focused on the effects of realistic job previews on attrition from the job recruitment process, the level and accuracy of initial job expectations, affective reactions, job performance and turnover. The study used ordinary least square regression analysis.

According to Paula, Jean, Mila, Tarique and Peter (2011), the more tailored and relevant the pre-departure cross-cultural training, the more expectations were either met or positively exceeded in expatriates' adjustment prior to a global assignment. The sample size for the study comprised of seventy-three expatriates who completed questionnaires approximately ten months after arriving in their host countries. All the expatriates had pre-departure cross-cultural training, but the training varied in perceived relevance. The expatriates were assigned either to countries where their native language was spoken (e.g. Americans in the UK) or to countries where their native language was not spoken (e.g. Americans in France). A multiple regression model analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The results of the regression analysis suggest that Analyses suggest that both cross-cultural training and the language spoken in the host country affect the accuracy of expatriates' expectations prior to the assignment - and that having accurate expectations, in turn, positively affects cross-cultural adjustment. The study recommended that organizations should develop programmes that will ensure their expatriates have realistic expectations prior to their global assignments (e.g. through tailored cross-cultural training).

There is a positive relationship between realistic job information provided to employees during the

time of recruitment and job satisfaction in organizations (Bilal & Bashir, 2016). This study was conducted using quantitative data collected through 224 closed-end structured questionnaires from the employees working in telecommunication and banking sectors in Pakistan. Analysis was conducted using correlation and ANOVA.

Sutton and Griffin (2014), established that pre-job expectations are positively related to the past job experiences. This is according to a study they carried out to establish the relationship between pre entry-expectations and post entry-experiences relative to realistic job previews. The study used realistic job previews as moderators who set pre-expectations and if they match with the post job experiences of the employees then it would lead to the satisfaction of employees.

According to Earnest, Allen & Landis (2011), prior information to potential employees about the job is more important for white collar jobs as compared to blue collar jobs. This meta-analytic path analysis was conducted to establish the mechanisms linking realistic job previews with turnover. The sample size was 52 studies. The findings indicated that enhanced perceptions of organizational honesty are the primary mechanism by which realistic job previews (RJPs) influence voluntary turnover. RJPs are considered important because their design influences the information provided and the opportunity to the applicant for self-select.

Newcomers' self-efficacy and institutionalized socialization tactics are positively related to newcomer proactive behaviors, (Gruman, Saks, and Zweig 2006). The study was conducted to examine the relationship between organizational socialization tactics, newcomers' self-efficacy, proactive behaviors, and socialization outcomes. Sample size of the study was 140 cooperative management undergraduate university students who completed online surveys at the end of their work term. Newcomer proactive behaviors were seen to partially mediate the relationship between their self-efficacy and organizational socialization tactics with a number of proximal and distal socialization outcomes, while feedback-seeking and information-seeking moderated the relationship between socialization tactics and several socialization outcomes. The adjustment variables considered by the study were newcomers' self-efficacy, proactive behavior, and organizational socialization tactics all contributing to newcomers' adjustment. A multiple regression model was used to establish the relationship between the variables.

According to Choi (2014), there is weak evidence to support the proposition that social networks play a significant role in newcomer socialization. The study was carried out on 795 new hires across all departments of a large university located in the Midwestern United States by way of online survey. A three-wave longitudinal study conducted within the first 28 weeks of employment found that the study variables namely, institutionalized socialization tactics, task interdependence, and proactive personality partially help newcomers form their communication networks. The study also showed that newcomers' communication networks facilitated newcomer adjustment by mediating the relationships between proactive personality and task mastery. However, newcomers' communication networks did not mediate the relationships between the other two socialization factors – institutionalized socialization tactics and task interdependence.

According to Burke (2009), prior work quality and quantity, job interest, proactive personality, team support, and leader-member exchange each have an important role to play in the prediction of newcomer role breadth self-efficacy. In turn, newcomers who felt confident in their ability to carry out a broader and more proactive role also

enjoyed a higher level of task mastery and group fit. The successful achievement of these proximal outcomes led to other, more distal outcomes, namely performance and organisational commitment. Each of these outcomes was achieved, regardless of the socializing tactics employed by the hiring organisation. The study was carried out to determine how organizational socialization actions work in tandem to support the adjustment of organisational newcomers. This study was conducted with a group of 526 participants, drawn from a pool of New Zealand Police (NZ Police) recruits and graduate employees. A quantitative method for data gathering was adopted, with questionnaires administered over a 15-month period for police recruits and 6-month period for graduate newcomers.

New hires' adjustment is critical in maximizing the effectiveness of recruitment and selection (Perrot, Bauer, Abonneau, Campoy and Erdogan, 2014). This study was carried out to examine how organizational socialization tactics interact with perceived organizational support (POS) to influence socialization outcomes above and beyond proactive personality. POS significantly moderated the relationship between socialization tactics and three important socialization outcomes (learning the job, learning work-group norms, and role innovation), such that there was a positive relationship under low POS and a non-significant relationship under high POS. The sample size consisted of 103 blue-collar apprentices from a well-established apprenticeship program that began in the middle Ages in France. Using a time-lagged design, they surveyed apprentices in their first months of employment, while they were learning their trade (carpentry, roofing, and stone cutting). A series of moderated regression analyses was used to test the study variables.

Conceptual Framework
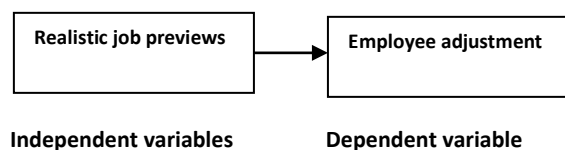
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research approach. The target population of this study was all the head teachers and Head of Departments (HoDs) of all public secondary schools within Nairobi County. An updated list of all public secondary schools in Nairobi County obtained from the County Director of Education, Nairobi County; Statistics Section (CDE Office, 2016) at Nyayo House, showed that Nairobi County had a total of eighty (80) public secondary schools as at May 2016. There were a minimum of 7 head of departments in every public secondary school based on the minimum examinable subjects in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), therefore a total of 560 HoDs in the 80 schools. The grand total population was 640.

According to the CDE, the schools are divided into 9 districts, namely: Kamukunji, Embakasi, Njiru, Kasarani, Dagoretti, Langata, Westlands, Makadara and Starehe. To determine an appropriate sample size of head teachers and HoDs, the researcher divided the target population into quotas based on the 9 districts. Respondents were then picked through purposive random sampling for ease of management since there was no sampling frame for the departmental heads. Data for this study was collected by use of a self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaire was used as a tool because it was quick to administer and the researcher was able to collect information from a large literate sample simultaneously within a given period at a lower cost. The researcher used self-administered questionnaires and applied the drop and pick method. Self-administered

questionnaires were appropriate because the respondents were expected to complete the questionnaire at their convenient time and pace. Data was entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software Version 21. Regression analysis model was used to analyze how the typical value of the dependent variable changes when one of the independent variables is varied, while the other independent variables are held fixed.

The sample size for this study was 256 respondents. The number of questionnaires that were administered was 256. A total of 256 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 100%. Majority of the respondents, 55% were male while 45% were female. The results implied that majority of head teachers and HODs in public secondary schools in Nairobi under study were male. 43%, of the respondents were aged between 35 and 44 years, 30% were aged between 45 and 54 years while those aged between 22 and 34 years were 27%. The findings implied that majority of HODs and head teachers of Secondary schools in Nairobi were aged between 35 and 44 years. 72.7% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree while only 27.3% had a Masters degree. None of the respondents had a diploma or PHD as their lowest and highest educational background respectively. This implied that majority of the respondents were literate and could understand the questions in the questionnaire. Majority, 53% of the respondents had worked as head teachers in their

respective schools for a period between 5 and 10 years. 47% had worked as head teachers for a period less than 5 years. This is an indication that they must have handled cases of newcomers into the school either by way of joining or promotion within that period. Majority, 56% of the respondents had worked as HODs in their respective schools for a period less than 5 years; 42 % had worked as HODs for a period between 5 and 10 years while only 2% had worked for a period of over 10 years.

Descriptive Analysis: Realistic Job Previews

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statements concerning realistic job previews as indicated by an overall mean score of 2.792. The respondents were neutral on the statement that all newcomers were given information on both the positive and negative aspects of the job before accepting a job interview. The same applied on verbal exchange of information taking place between the job applicant and the head teacher in which the applicant could ask questions about the job prior to an interview as indicated by a mean score of 2.85 and 2.55 respectively. Majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that newcomers were allowed to identify and raise areas of discomfort in the future job during the job preview process while majority agreed that the head teacher participates in an orientation meeting with all newcomers as indicated by mean score of 2.55 and 3.99 respectively.

Table 1: **Descriptive analysis of realistic job previews**

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std Dev
All newcomers are given information on both the positive and negative aspects of the job before accepting a job interview.	27.50%	20.80%	14.10%	14.10%	23.50%	2.85	1.54
Verbal exchange of information takes place	35.90%	13.70%	23.40%	13.70%	13.30%	2.55	1.43

between the job applicant and the head teacher in which the applicant can ask questions about the job prior to an interview.							
Employee orientation is addressed as a key issue in the working conditions of all teachers in public secondary schools.	29.70%	19.90%	25.40%	15.20%	9.80%	2.55	1.32
Newcomers are allowed to identify and raise areas of discomfort in the future job during the job preview process.	48.40%	21.50%	16.80%	6.60%	6.60%	2.02	1.23
The head teacher participates in an orientation meeting with all newcomers.	12.50%	5.10%	6.20%	23.40%	52.70%	3.99	1.39
Average						**2.792**	

Source: Research Data

Descriptive analysis of employee adjustment

The study findings indicated that respondents were in agreement with the statements on employee adjustment. Majority of the respondents agreed that existing employees in the organization understand their job and how it contributes to the success of the organisation, existing employees are confident and can deal efficiently with difficult and unexpected events on their own and that newcomers are accepted easily by existing members without reservations. This is shown by mean scores of 4.17, 4.28 and 4.26. Majority were neutral on the statement that employees think it is the top leadership's responsibility to drive the school's agenda.

Table 2:   Descriptive analysis of employee adjustment

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Standard Dev
Existing employees in the organization understand their job and how it contributes to the success of the organisation.	1.60%	1.60%	23.80%	24.60%	48.40%	4.17	0.95
Existing employees are confident and can deal efficiently with difficult and unexpected events	1.60%	2.00%	8.20%	43.40%	44.90%	4.28	0.82

on their own.						
Newcomers are accepted easily by existing members without reservations.	0.40%	7.80%	14.10%	21.10%	56.60%	4.26	1
Employees think it is the top leadership's responsibility to drive the school's agenda.	22.00%	13.30%	12.90%	25.50%	26.30%	3.21	1.51
Average						**3.98**	

Source: Research Data

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study was to ascertain the influence of realistic job previews on employee adjustment. Descriptive findings indicated that among the realistic job preview practices in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, the practice was highly segmented in giving newcomers information on both the positive and negative aspects of the job before accepting a job interview but verbal exchange of information was said to take place between the job applicant and the head teacher in which the applicant can ask questions about the job prior to an interview. The correlation results indicated a positive and significant association between realistic job previews and employee adjustment. In addition regression results indicated that realistic job previews positively and significantly influence employee adjustment.

Based on the findings, the study concluded that among the realistic job preview practices in public schools in Nairobi County not all new joiners were given newcomers information on both the positive and negative aspects of the job before accepting a job interview. However verbal exchange of information was said to be taking place between the job applicant and the head teacher in which the applicant can ask questions about the job. The study also concluded that overall realistic job previews positively and significantly influenced employee adjustment.

Recommendations of the study

Since the study findings established that realistic job previews positively and significantly influence employee adjustment, the study recommended that public secondary schools in Nairobi County should embrace more realistic job preview practices among their onboarding practices for instance: all newcomers being given information on both the positive and negative aspects of the job before accepting a job interview as well as verbal exchange of information taking place between the job applicant and the head teacher in which the applicant can ask questions about the job prior to an interview. This could help boost the employee adjustment to the job when employed.

Areas for further study

The study carried out on realistic job previews and employee adjustment in public secondary schools within Nairobi county, shows there was statistical significance between the independent and dependent variables. Since this study was focused only on public secondary schools within Nairobi County, the researcher recommended that a further study be carried out to cover a wider population and possibly scope both public and

private secondary schools in other counties and even institutions outside the educational sector so as to come up with more findings. The researcher suggests that a variety of other factors to be considered in future studies.

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