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Research Article

FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING RECITAL: EXPERIENTIAL SCRUTINY OF HUMAN RESOURCE' BEST PRACTICES IN BANKING, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper assessed the influence of human resource management best practices on employees' performance among accessible pensionable banking employees in Dodoma City, Tanzania. Quantitative and qualitative paradigms were employed using mixed sequential approaches. Data collection was from documentary reviews, interviews, observations and questionnaires. Purposive and convenience sampling, descriptive statistics, correlation, regressions and ANOVA techniques were adopted. It was revealed that a bundle of human resources best practices, knowledge management (KM) and organizational learning (OL) have great influence on employees' performance. While training and development assures the individual of competences, compensation and reward contribute a lot to employees' motivation to perform.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational performance continues to be a contentious issue in the management research circles. While some scholars equate performance to economic success of a certain activity (Javier, 2002), others encompass specific areas of firm outcomes such as financial, product market and shareholders returns (Richard *et al.*, 2009). Performance is a broader indicator including quality features, consistency, effectiveness and efficiency. According to Chien (2004), major factors in determining organizational performance include: leadership styles, environment, job design, organizational culture, model of motive and human resource policies.

The focal point in the science of management is to discover and formulate "laws of behavior" that will increase productivity depending on the ability to generate "smart" actions. The growing tendency of organizations to recognize the potentials of improving human resource management practices has been invigorated by contemporary management scholars. The rise of organizational learning has made institutions to engage in the utility of best practices to attain organization strategic objectives. While fewer searchers have examined the linkage between best practices of human resources management,

employee's performance is still considered a "black box" that lacks clarity (Gerhart, 2005).

Banking Sector in Tanzania

The banking sector in Tanzania has engaged itself in deploying the functions of best practices of human resource management (Tanzania Banking Sector Report, 2017). The banking sector is dominated by two former state banks; CRDB and NMB, holding as of September 2018 35% of total banking assets and a combined 40% of the deposits. The top 5 largest banks have over 50% of the total banking assets.

Banking institutions have to articulate their core values to attract definite customer segments to enhance positioning in their significant core of financial, marketing and stakeholders' engagement (Lew, 2009). Efforts have been made by human resources management theorists to ascertain a causal link between traditional management practices and performance (Den Hartog *et al.*, 2004). Many scholars however, have focused on potential contribution of human resource practices on improving performance (Mubezi, 2008). In recent times, many banks have faced high employee turnover and poor relations with thoughtful consequences on productivity in Tanzania. This paper assesses the influence of organizational

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learning, knowledge management recital and human resources best practices on performance.

Knowledge management

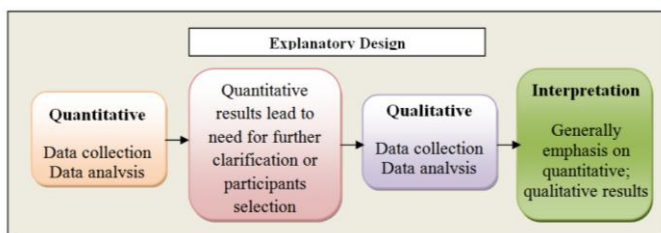
Knowledge has become the primary factor of production in which company's profitability depends upon based on its ability to learn and adapt. Knowledge management (KM) is gaining recognition as a key determinant of value in the market, organizational success and competitive edge. KM challenges, key drivers, strategies, process techniques have remained difficult to embrace yet so beneficial. Learning ability has been proven to increase when organizations knowingly employ dynamic processes that help nurture, leverage and motivate people to improve and share their capacity to act through encapsulation on the notion of Knowledge Management (KM).

Organizational learning

Learning is a process of transformational change encompassing cognitive, behavioral and cultural aspects in which creation, utilization, and institutionalization of knowledge take place (Chiva *et al.* 2007). Organizational learning (OL) is the process by which organizations learn by means of interactions between its members through practices, socialization and institutionalized in stable mechanisms to form collective achievements. (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2002). Knowledge resulting from these interactions proffers a new way of categorizing scholarly contributions into positivistic, interpretive with a resource-based orientation, interpretive with a knowledge-based orientation and organic approaches (Patriotta, 2003). Shared knowledge left over entrenched in organizational systems, structures and culture to be accessed by other members (Argote, 2011). A *best practice* can be inclusive of evidence - value-based practices produce superior results has become a standard way of complying with legal or global ethical requirements.

Both quantitative and qualitative paradigms were employed from a mixed sequential approach beginning with a qualitative interview for exploratory purposes followed up with a questionnaire. Open and closed-ended questions, emerging and predetermined approaches and both qualitative and quantitative data analysis was conducted.

Figure 1 Mixed method design model, sequential explanatory design



Source Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007)

Conceptual Framework

According to Cooper & Schindler (2014), in each relationship, there is at least one independent variable (IV) and one dependent variable (DV) though it is harder to explain the causal link between variables without mentioning the second independent variable with contingent effect on the original IV – DV relationship. The IVs include recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation, performance management, employment security, employee voice, information sharing, job design and career planning.

While the moderating variables include knowledge management (KM) and organizational learning (OL) in which together have an impact on employee's performance. The concepts and the governing theories led to the development on impacts of HRM best practices on employees' performance. The bundle of HRM practices, being influenced by knowledge management and organizational learning. Ideally, surge of employee skills and abilities promote positive attitudes, increase motivation with expanded responsibilities leading to increased individual employee performance. The model is designed to conceptualize the problem, display variables relationships and probable strategies for improving the practices and their impact on organizational performance.

The Harvard Framework and Incentive Contract Theories

The framework is based on the belief that, the problems of historical personnel management can only be solved when general managers develop a viewpoint of how they wish to see employee's involvement in enterprise development, human resources management policies and practices may to achieve goals and objectives (Armstrong, 2003). Human resources management is likely to remain a set of independent activities, each guided by its own practice tradition. Similarly, the credence of the model insists that managers develop a viewpoint of how they wish to see employees' involvement in performance while recognizing the importance of 'trade-offs' between the interests of business owners, employees and acknowledges a broad range of contextual influences on management's choice of strategy.

Incentive contract and Normative Theories

People are motivated to perform when there is a promise of a reward as incentives in form either tangible or intangible to reinforce a positive behavior or action. Previous studies indicate that if the person timely receives the reward, the effect of the incentive is greater; however, it tends to decrease as delay lengthens. Thus, there is a dire need for organizations to develop valuable incentives as a strategic move to raise labor productivity (Skinner, 1950).

The theory asserts that if bundles of human resources management practices are integrated and applied then greater labor productivity can be achieved (Balgobind, 2007). Appropriate human resource practices tap into employee's commitment and motivation leading to greater productivity derived from commitment, goal setting and job design for coherent integration of behavioral theories to explain performance. Individual performance depends on necessary knowledge, skills, appropriate role and understanding of the contexts. The influence of applicable bundles of integrated human resources practices on productivity is recognized.

HRM Best Practices and Employees' Performance

Organizational effectiveness depends on HR practices with great influence on employee attitudes, behaviours, perceptions and organizational climate. Human resources management practices i.e., training, selection, career planning, employee participation, job definition, performance appraisal and compensation) correlated positively with the employee performance (Soomro *et al.*, 2011). HRM practices like training, employee participation in decision making was found significantly related with banks' performance Nayaab *et al.*, (2011).

A positive interconnectedness between bundles of human resources management practices, such as, training, information sharing, employment security, strategic alignment of HRM to business strategy (Fey, 2000). The investment in human resources management practices and strategic alignment of HRM to corporate strategy is a driver for moving the enterprises from mediocrity to excellence.

Certain sets of human resources management practices as “best practices” or “high performance” “sophisticated” or “professional” argued the most appropriate term is “Best HRM practices” (Gnan & Songini, An enduring question is whether or not there exist a single set of policies or practices that represents a universally superior approach to managing people. Theories on best practices suggest that certain human resources management practices either separately or in combination yield improved organizational performance.

There seem to be no agreement on what constitutes HRM practices. Over the years, researchers have proposed various lists of practices; however, there is no agreement on what or which qualifies as an aspect of human resources management (Gould-Williams, 2007). However, there are some practices that form the core of the various proposed lists of practices.

Recruitment, training and job security

Recruitment and selection can play a fundamental role in shaping an organization’s effectiveness, performance, acquisition of knowledgeable employees with skills and aptitudes to make accurate prediction regarding future capabilities (Neuman, 2014). Organizational performance depends on effective human resource strategies beyond recruitment and maintenance of commitment and motivated workforce (Al-Ahmedi, 2009).

Training has the distinct role in the achievement of organizational goal by striking a balance between its interests and those of the workforce (Stone, 2002). For training to have a better effect on performance, its design and delivery should be well executed. The organizational commitment is a relative strength of an individual’s identification and involvement in a particular organization depends on effective training and development programs (Pool & Pool, 2007). Adequate training produces marked improvements in employee communication and proficiency of performances as well as extending retention time.

Benefits of employment security, free contribution of knowledge and efforts to enhance productivity encourage people to take a longer-term perspective on jobs and performance. In a study of the financial performance of 192 banks indicate a significant relationship between employment security and the bank’s return on assets being an important measure of financial performance (Pfeffer, 1998).

Appraisal, participation and information sharing

An investigation on the relationship between performance appraisal, participation and information sharing on employment outcomes with reference on Bank of Ceylon, Head Office, found a weak but positive relationship between performance appraisal satisfaction and employee outcomes. The study recommended that performance appraisal system helps to improve job performance and motivation at work (Megira, 2017). And also there is an impact of performance appraisal

satisfaction on employee outcome, thus work performance on production outcome (Weerakkody & Mahalekamge 2013).

When people work together, share ideas and build on one another’s ideas for the benefit of the enterprise can have an impact the effectiveness on the performance of the entire enterprise. The lack of communication and information sharing disrupts works and brings about enterprise mediocrity. Direct participation of staff help an organization to fulfill its mission and meet its objectives through own ideas, expertise and efforts towards problem solving and decision making is termed as employee involvement. Organizations that tap the people strength shall be stronger and aggressive than those that cannot. In the long run, companies’ inefficiencies attract competition, and may disappear if the management philosophy do not changes (Apostolou, 2000).

Knowledge management and job design

A study conducted by (Malkanthy & Ali, 2016) in Sri Lanka on Impact of job design and employees’ performance at the People’s Bank of Ampara District using correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between job design and employees’ performance. The relationship was significant (correlation coefficient was 0.958 and significant at 0.01 level). Career planning often seeks to identify needs, aspirations and opportunities for individuals’ career to support that goal. A well-planned career development system along with internal advancement opportunities based on merit, results in high motivation among employees with a positive impact on the firm performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design was sought to establish the impact of best practices of human resources management on employees’ performance. A sequential mixed method was employed to obtain the necessary and required information (Yin, 2011). Both random and purposive sampling techniques were used. The sample size of 41 respondents identified from stratified identification technique including managerial and non-managerial employees from CRDB Bank PLC. Purposive sampling technique was used for managerial employees so as to meet the predefined group of managers and the convenience technique since it suits the non-managerial employees due to their relative ease of access (Kothari, 2012)

To maximize the reliability and validity of the tools to minimize the possible instrumentation error and a pilot study was conducted on 4 Bank Officers drawn from the four (4). 4 respondents other than the 41 targeted samples were used in the pilot study which is approximated to 10% (Creswell, 2009). The reliability of the scale was measured using the Cronbach’s Alpha. The Cronbach’s Alpha scale measured at 0.736 for the independent variables questions. Accuracy of data was sought in several ways of triangulation from data collection methods, investigators, theories and data sources (Neuman, 2014).

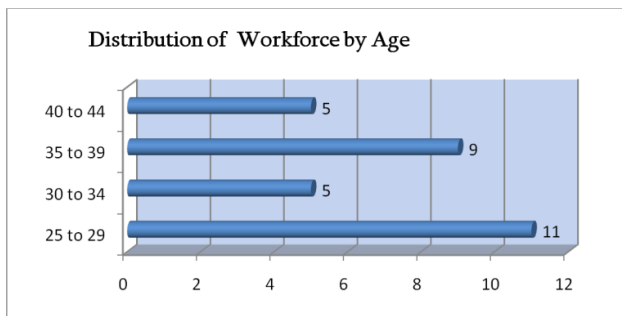
Data were analyzed by using computer applications responsible for research and surveys IBM SPSS V.20. Descriptive analysis provided the means, standard deviations and range of scores for the variables. Correlation analysis was used to evaluate the degree of relationship between the variables. Regression analysis was used to evaluate the contribution of independent variables in explaining the dependent variable, when the other variables are controlled. For this, ANOVA for regression was

used (Creswell & Clark, 2010). The process ended with methods of qualitative data interpretation including the following: word and phrase repetitious, primary and secondary data comparisons, search for missing information and metaphors and analogues (Creswell & Clark, 2010)

RESULTS

Practices of human resources affect the service delivery dimensions, employee motivation, increases in production, profit making, organizational growth and customer satisfaction. It is also assumed to affect knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and employees' behavior and may thus affect the performance of an organization (Den Hartog *et al*, 2004).

The strategic fit between organizational strategy best practices of human resources management within the organization are important factors in explaining the link between human resources management and organizational performance. From the findings we can depict that most of the respondents were at middle age, energetic, mature and self-understanding; The Bank's workforce is well-distributed in terms of age. CRDB Bank PLC can engagement career planning, training and development strategies as best practices of human resources management and retention strategy to improve employees' performance.



The research showed that, the effect of the impact of organizational learning and knowledge management processes is evident by the Bank's heavily investment on the ICT which is a factor of knowledge management strategy for example services like sim-banking, internet banking(CRDB Annual Report, 2017).

Knowledge management and performance

Table 3 Coefficients for performance

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	4.696	.110	42.869	.000
	KM	.161	.227	.133	.482

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source Researcher's field data, 2018 (IBM SPSS v.20)

On testing for magnitude and direction of the relationship between implementation of best practices of human resource management and employee's performance., the Pearson (r) correlation coefficient between recruitment and selection against performance was 0.032 and a *p*-value of 0.866; between training and development against performance was 0.409 and a *p*-value of 0.025; between compensation and reward against performance was 0.562 and a *p*-value of 0.001; between performance appraisal and management against performance was 0.350 and a *p*-value of 0.058; between employee voice and participation against performance was -0.080 and a *p*-value of 0.676; between career planning and performance was 0.612 and a *p*-value of 0.000.

Knowledge management and organizational learning on performance

Table 1 Knowledge management and organizational learning on performance

		Performance	KM	OL
Pearson Correlation	Performance	1.000	.133	.133
	KM	.133	1.000	1.000
	OL	.133	1.000	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Performance	.	.241	.241
	KM	.241	.	.000
	OL	.241	.000	.
N	Performance	30	30	30
	KM	30	30	30
	OL	30	30	30

Source Researcher's field data, 2018 (IBM SPSS v.20)

From the study it was submitted that, a mean for performance was 4.73 and standard deviation of 0.521, which interprets that KM and OL do influence positively on dependent variable. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was 0.133 for both KM and OL when acted on dependent variable, while *p*-value was 0.241 (Table 1). This means positive and significant perform increases in the same direction as KM and OL increases. This was observed by the heavily investment on ICT by the Bank. The technologies employed in the services are another sign of knowledge management strategy. This can be supported by the interviews done on the four managers on the implementation of the HRM practices (Table 2)

Table 2 ANOVA for regression on performance

ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	.140	1	.140	.507	.482 ^b
	Residual	7.727	28	.276		
	Total	7.867	29			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), KM

Source Researcher's field data, 2018 (IBM SPSS v.20)

The measure for moderating effects for MVs submitted a mean square of 0.140 and a positive significance of 0.482 which means a significant linear relationship between MV and DV.

Table 3 Coefficients for performance

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	4.696	.110	42.869	.000
	KM	.161	.227	.133	.482

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source Researcher's field data, 2018 (IBM SPSS v.20)

The results for whether MVs predict the results of DV were submitted that, there was significance, *B*-value was 4.696 units, and this interprets that when no influence of MVs the DV is 4.696. This means a positive relationship when you increase MVs. (Table 3).

Table 4: Regression for HRM practices

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.718 ^a	.516	.390	.569

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career Planning, Employee Participation, Performance Appraisal and Management, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Compensation and Reward

Together the bundled HRM practices were found to have an R Square value of 0.516 or to contribute 51.6% to employee's performance (Table 4). Therefore, the bank should be aware that its performance depends on the employee's performance by 51.6%. Nonetheless, managers should understand that knowledge management and organizational learning contribute 98.2% and 97.6% respectively on employees' performance.

Table 5 ANOVA for regression of HRM practices

Model	ANOVA ^a				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.931	6	1.322	4.089	.006 ^b
Residual	7.436	23	.323		
Total	15.367	29			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Career Planning, Employee Participation, Performance Appraisal and Management, Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Compensation and Reward

Source: Researcher's field data, 2018 (IBM SPSS v.20)

Other performed tests and the results showed an *F*-value of 4.089 with a significance level of a *p*-value of 0.006 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. This shows a significant linear relationship between HRM practices and employee's performance.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper assessed the influence of human resource management practices on banking employees. It was found that, knowledge management and organizational learning significantly moderates the relationship between HRM best practices and employee's performance. By increasing the moderating variables of knowledge management and organizational learning leads to an increase in the effects of employee's performance. Separately when tested for significance and contribution, knowledge management contributes 98.2% and organizational learning 97.6% to employees' performance.

Effective recruitment and selection can motivate employees to increase performance though it must be shoved with other HRM practices a more significance effect on employee's performance. Similarly, employees training and development in a well-structured-manner assures the individual of competence to perform in the most effective way. In addition, career planning, compensation package; rewards, performance appraisal and leadership have great influence on employee's performance.

Recommendations

To improve financial performance of commercial banks, management should embrace best practices of human resources linked to overall strategy by fostering knowledge management, organizational learning recital, effective recruitment and selection, well designed human resource planning programmes through competency-based management approach, implement active reward policies, improved training and development and keep on advancing new technologies.

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