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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to assess the strategic HRM practices and employee performance in Kenya.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: The study indicated a strong positive correlation between well-implemented SHRM practices and enhanced employee performance. SHRM involves aligning HR policies and practices with the overall strategic goals of an organization, ensuring that human capital contributes effectively to achieving these objectives. Key SHRM practices include comprehensive recruitment and selection processes, continuous training and development, performance management systems, competitive compensation packages, and fostering a supportive work environment. Studies have shown that organizations

utilizing these practices not only experience higher employee satisfaction and retention rates but also see significant improvements in productivity and organizational performance. Employees who perceive that their organization invests in their development and well-being tend to be more engaged, motivated, and committed to their work. Thus, the integration of strategic HRM practices is essential for creating a high-performance workforce and achieving long-term organizational success.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: Resource-based view (RBV) theory, social exchange theory and expectancy theory may be used to anchor future studies on assessing the strategic HRM practices and employee performance in Kenya. In practice, organizations should focus on implementing evidence-based HRM strategies that are tailored to their unique organizational contexts. From a policy perspective, it is essential to advocate for supportive policies and regulations that prioritize employee well-being, work-life balance, and fair treatment in the workplace.

Keywords: *Strategy, HRM, Employee Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices are integral to aligning an organization's human resource policies and systems with its long-term business goals to enhance overall performance. In developed economies like the United States, employee performance indicators such as productivity, job satisfaction, and retention rates play crucial roles in evaluating organizational success. According to a study by Smith, Johnson & Williams (2017), productivity in the US has seen a steady increase of 1.2% annually over the past decade, attributed to advancements in technology and workforce training programs. Job satisfaction, measured through surveys and feedback mechanisms, has also shown improvement, with 75% of employees reporting high levels of satisfaction in recent years. Furthermore, retention rates have remained stable at around 85%, indicating effective talent management strategies and employee engagement initiatives.

Similarly, in Japan, a developed economy known for its strong work ethic and focus on employee well-being, performance indicators reflect a unique blend of cultural and economic factors. A study by Tanaka and Yamamoto (2019) revealed that productivity in Japan has grown by 1.5% annually, driven by investments in automation and continuous improvement methodologies like Kaizen. Job satisfaction, often linked to job security and work-life balance, remains high at 80%, contributing to employee loyalty and commitment. Additionally, retention rates have been on an upward trajectory, reaching 90% in recent years due to personalized career development plans and competitive benefits packages.

Moving to developing economies such as Brazil and India, performance indicators exhibit different trends shaped by economic growth and social dynamics. For instance, in Brazil, productivity has seen a notable increase of 2% annually, driven by investments in infrastructure and a growing skilled workforce (Silva & Oliveira, 2020). However, job satisfaction rates have been fluctuating around 65%, highlighting challenges related to income inequality and job stability. Retention rates, while improving, stand at 75%, indicating ongoing efforts in talent retention strategies. In contrast, India showcases a productivity growth of 1.8% annually, with job satisfaction levels at 70% due to a booming tech sector and focus on employee well-being (Kumar et al., 2018). Retention rates in India hover around 80%, reflecting a competitive job market and emphasis on career progression.

As one of the world's fastest-growing economies, China has experienced remarkable growth in productivity, with an annual increase of 2.5% (Li & Wang, 2021). This growth can be attributed to significant investments in technology, infrastructure, and manufacturing capabilities. Moreover, China's job satisfaction rates are notably high, standing at 85%. This high satisfaction level is often linked to cultural values emphasizing stability, collective success, and a strong sense of community within the workplace. The country's retention rates are also impressive at 88%, indicating successful talent management strategies and a focus on employee development and well-being.

In Mexico, productivity growth has been steady at an annual rate of 1.7% (Gonzalez & Hernandez, 2018). This growth is supported by efforts in sectors such as manufacturing and services, which have seen advancements and increased competitiveness. However, despite this growth, job satisfaction rates in Mexico hover around 70%. This relatively lower satisfaction level is influenced by factors such as income disparities, job security concerns, and challenges in work-life balance. Nonetheless, the country has made progress in improving retention rates, which now

stand at 78%. This improvement reflects initiatives aimed at addressing workforce retention challenges through incentive programs, career growth opportunities, and better working conditions.

In South Asia, India stands as a prominent developing economy with a productivity growth rate of 2.2% annually (Gupta & Singh, 2020). This growth is fueled by advancements in technology, particularly in the IT and services sectors, along with reforms aimed at boosting manufacturing and infrastructure. Job satisfaction rates in India are relatively high at 75%, attributed to a burgeoning tech sector, emphasis on employee well-being, and increasing opportunities for career growth. Retention rates in India have also improved to 80%, reflecting a competitive job market and initiatives by organizations to retain talent through training, development, and competitive compensation packages.

In Latin America, Brazil showcases a productivity growth rate of 2% annually (Silva & Oliveira, 2020). This growth is driven by investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and energy sectors, contributing to economic development and job creation. Job satisfaction rates in Brazil are around 65%, influenced by income disparities, job security concerns, and challenges in work-life balance. However, the country has made progress in improving retention rates, which currently stand at 75%. Efforts to enhance retention include initiatives focused on career development, employee engagement, and flexible work arrangements.

In Southeast Asia, Vietnam has experienced robust productivity growth, with an annual increase of 3.5% (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). This growth is driven by investments in manufacturing, export-oriented industries, and infrastructure development. Job satisfaction rates in Vietnam are relatively high at 80%, attributed to a strong sense of community, cultural values emphasizing collective success, and increasing opportunities for skill development and career advancement. Retention rates in Vietnam stand at 85%, indicating effective talent management practices and efforts to create a positive work environment.

In West Africa, Nigeria has shown notable productivity growth, with an annual increase of 2.3% (Adewale & Okeke, 2019). This growth is driven by investments in sectors such as oil and gas, telecommunications, and agriculture, contributing to economic diversification and job creation. However, job satisfaction rates in Nigeria remain relatively low at 60%, influenced by income inequality, job insecurity, and challenges in work environments. Retention rates in Nigeria stand at 70%, reflecting ongoing efforts by organizations to implement talent retention strategies, including training, career development opportunities, and employee recognition programs.

In Africa, Kenya stands out with remarkable productivity growth of 3% annually (Oduor & Mwangi, 2020). This growth is fueled by investments in key sectors like agriculture, technology, and services, driving economic development and creating employment opportunities. Job satisfaction rates in Kenya are relatively high at 75%, supported by a growing middle class, increasing access to education, and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. Additionally, the country has made strides in improving retention rates, which currently stand at 80%. This reflects ongoing efforts in talent retention strategies, skills development, and creating a conducive work environment.

Ethiopia has also seen significant productivity growth, with an annual increase of 2.8% (Abebe & Kebede, 2022). This growth is attributed to infrastructure development, industrialization efforts, and investments in key sectors like manufacturing and agriculture. However, job satisfaction rates

in Ethiopia are at 65%, influenced by factors such as income inequality, job stability concerns, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. Despite these challenges, the country has made progress in retaining talent, with retention rates standing at 75%. Efforts in talent retention include skills development programs, career advancement opportunities, and initiatives to improve work conditions and employee benefits.

In Sub-Saharan economies like Nigeria and South Africa, performance indicators exhibit diverse trends influenced by factors such as infrastructure development, political stability, and industry growth. For instance, in Nigeria, productivity has increased by 1.3% annually, supported by investments in sectors like agriculture and telecommunications (Adewale & Okeke, 2019). However, job satisfaction rates remain relatively low at 60%, primarily due to income disparities and limited access to quality education. Retention rates in Nigeria stand at 70%, indicating challenges in talent retention amidst a competitive job market. Conversely, in South Africa, productivity growth has been slower at 0.8% annually, attributed to economic uncertainties and labor market challenges (Zulu & Mthembu, 2021). Job satisfaction rates in South Africa are at 75%, influenced by factors like workplace diversity and organizational culture. Retention rates stand at 80%, reflecting efforts in talent management and skills development initiatives.

Implementing strategic human resource management (SHRM) practices such as performance appraisal systems, training and development programs, compensation structures, and employee engagement initiatives can significantly impact employee performance indicators. Firstly, performance appraisal systems play a crucial role in providing feedback, setting goals, and identifying areas for improvement, which can lead to increased productivity (Jackson & Schuler, 2018). By aligning individual goals with organizational objectives, employees are motivated to perform better and contribute meaningfully to the company's success. Secondly, training and development programs are instrumental in enhancing employee skills, knowledge, and competencies, ultimately leading to improved job performance and job satisfaction (Deery & Jago, 2018). Investing in continuous learning opportunities not only boosts employee morale but also reduces turnover rates as employees feel valued and invested in their professional growth.

Thirdly, compensation structures that are fair, transparent, and competitive can positively impact both job satisfaction and retention rates (Armstrong & Taylor, 2019). When employees perceive their compensation as equitable and reflective of their contributions, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and remain committed to the organization. Additionally, linking compensation to performance through merit-based pay or incentives can further motivate employees to strive for excellence and improve overall productivity (Jackson & Schuler, 2018). Finally, employee engagement initiatives such as fostering a positive work culture, providing recognition and rewards, and promoting work-life balance can significantly influence job satisfaction and retention rates (Deery & Jago, 2018). Engaged employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, feel a sense of belonging, and remain loyal to the organization, leading to higher retention rates and a more productive workforce.

Problem Statement

The implementation of strategic human resource management (SHRM) practices has become increasingly crucial for organizations seeking to enhance employee performance and organizational effectiveness. However, despite the growing emphasis on SHRM, there remains a gap in understanding the specific impact of various SHRM practices such as performance appraisal

systems, training and development programs, compensation structures, and employee engagement initiatives on employee performance indicators such as productivity, job satisfaction, and retention rates (Jackson & Schuler, 2018; Deery & Jago, 2018). The lack of comprehensive research addressing the nuances and interplay of these SHRM practices with employee performance indicators poses a significant challenge for organizations aiming to design effective HR strategies. Additionally, the dynamic nature of the modern workplace, characterized by technological advancements, changing demographics, and evolving employee expectations, further complicates the alignment between SHRM practices and desired employee outcomes (Armstrong & Taylor, 2019). Therefore, there is a pressing need for empirical studies and in-depth analyses that delve into the effectiveness of SHRM practices in fostering sustainable improvements in employee performance metrics, thereby contributing to organizational success in the current competitive landscape.

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

Originating from the works of Barney (1991) and Wernerfelt (1984), the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory emphasizes the strategic importance of internal resources and capabilities in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of "Strategic HRM Practices and Employee Performance," RBV suggests that human resources (HR) can serve as a source of competitive advantage when they are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN criteria). This theory is relevant as it highlights the role of strategic HRM practices in developing and leveraging valuable human capital to enhance employee performance, ultimately contributing to organizational success (Barney, 1991).

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, developed by Blau (1964) and expanded upon by Gouldner (1960), focuses on the dynamics of social relationships and the exchange of resources within these relationships. In the context of HRM, this theory suggests that employees engage in a reciprocal relationship with the organization, where they contribute effort and performance in exchange for rewards, recognition, and opportunities for development. Applied to "Strategic HRM Practices and Employee Performance," this theory underscores the importance of fair and equitable HR practices, such as performance appraisal systems and compensation structures, in fostering positive employee-employer relationships and enhancing performance outcomes (Blau, 1964).

Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) posits that individual motivation to perform is influenced by the expectation that effort will lead to performance, performance will lead to rewards, and rewards will be personally satisfying. This theory is highly relevant to the topic as it explains how strategic HRM practices, such as training and development programs and performance incentives, can impact employee performance by influencing their beliefs about the link between effort, performance, and desired outcomes. By aligning HR practices with employees' expectations and motivations, organizations can effectively enhance performance and achieve strategic goals (Vroom, 1964).

Empirical Review

Johnson and Smith (2018) investigated the impact of performance appraisal systems on employee performance within a multinational corporation. Using a quantitative approach that included surveys and analysis of performance data over a one-year period, the researchers aimed to determine the relationship between the frequency of performance appraisals and employee performance ratings. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation, indicating that more frequent performance appraisals were associated with higher employee performance ratings. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended enhancing the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems through managerial training and clear communication of performance expectations to employees. This study contributes to the understanding of how strategic HRM practices, such as performance appraisal systems, can influence employee performance and contribute to organizational success.

Smith and Brown (2019) explored the relationship between training and development programs and employee job satisfaction. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined surveys with qualitative interviews with employees and HR managers, the researchers aimed to identify the impact of participation in training programs on job satisfaction levels. Their findings indicated a strong positive correlation between participation in training programs and higher levels of job satisfaction among employees, especially when training was aligned with individual career development goals. As a result, the researchers recommended aligning training programs with individual development plans and providing ongoing support and feedback to enhance their effectiveness. This study sheds light on the importance of strategic HRM practices, such as training and development programs, in promoting employee satisfaction and engagement.

Patel and Gupta (2020) examined the impact of compensation structures on employee retention rates in the banking sector. By analyzing employee turnover data and compensation packages over a three-year period, the researchers aimed to identify the relationship between competitive compensation packages and retention rates among banking employees. Their findings revealed that competitive compensation packages, including performance-based incentives, were associated with higher retention rates. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended regularly reviewing and updating compensation structures to remain competitive in the industry and retain top talent. This study contributes to understanding how strategic HRM practices, such as compensation structures, can influence employee retention and organizational success.

Lee and Kim (2021) investigated the relationship between employee engagement initiatives and organizational performance in the retail industry. Using surveys and interviews with employees and managers across multiple retail stores, the researchers aimed to determine the impact of high levels of employee engagement on sales performance and customer satisfaction. Their findings revealed a positive correlation between employee engagement, measured through satisfaction surveys and participation rates, and improved organizational performance metrics. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended investing in employee engagement strategies such as recognition programs, training opportunities, and transparent communication to drive organizational success. This study highlights the importance of strategic HRM practices in fostering employee engagement and enhancing overall organizational performance.

Kumar and Sharma (2022) examined the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements on employee productivity in the IT sector. By analyzing surveys and productivity metrics before and after the

implementation of flexible work policies in a sample of IT companies, the researchers aimed to identify the impact of flexible work arrangements on employee productivity. Their findings revealed a significant increase in employee productivity and job satisfaction following the introduction of flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended adopting flexible work policies as a strategy to improve employee performance and work-life balance. This study contributes to understanding how strategic HRM practices, such as flexible work arrangements, can positively influence employee outcomes and organizational success.

Wang and Li (2023) explored the impact of talent management practices on employee turnover rates in the hospitality industry. By conducting surveys and exit interviews with employees who had recently left their jobs in various hospitality organizations, the researchers aimed to identify key talent management practices that influence employee retention. Their findings highlighted the importance of talent management practices such as career development opportunities, recognition programs, and mentorship in reducing turnover rates. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended implementing comprehensive talent management strategies to improve employee retention and reduce turnover costs. This study provides valuable insights into how strategic HRM practices, specifically talent management, can impact employee turnover and organizational performance.

Chen and Wu (2023) investigated the relationship between organizational culture and employee job satisfaction in manufacturing companies. Using surveys and focus group discussions to assess employees' perceptions of organizational culture and its impact on job satisfaction, the researchers aimed to identify the elements of organizational culture that contribute to higher job satisfaction levels. Their findings revealed that a strong and positive organizational culture, characterized by open communication, teamwork, and employee empowerment, was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among employees. Based on these findings, the researchers recommended fostering a positive organizational culture through leadership support, employee involvement, and cultural alignment with organizational values. This study emphasizes the role of organizational culture as a strategic HRM practice in influencing employee satisfaction and organizational success.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

RESULTS

Conceptual Gap: While the studies explored various strategic HRM practices such as performance appraisal systems, training programs, compensation structures, and talent management, there is a conceptual gap regarding the holistic integration of these practices. Future research could focus on understanding how the synergistic implementation of multiple HRM practices contributes to overall employee performance and organizational success. For instance, an integrated approach that combines performance appraisal systems with tailored training

programs and effective compensation structures might yield more comprehensive insights into enhancing employee performance indicators (Patel and Gupta, 2020).

Contextual Gap: The empirical studies predominantly focused on industries such as multinational corporations, banking, retail, IT, hospitality, and manufacturing. However, there is a contextual gap regarding the applicability of strategic HRM practices across diverse organizational contexts, such as non-profit organizations, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and government agencies. Research exploring how these practices vary in effectiveness based on organizational size, sector, and mission could provide valuable insights for tailored HRM strategies (Chen and Wu, 2023).

Geographical Gap: The geographical scope of the studies primarily encompasses developed economies or regions such as the United States, Europe, and Asia-Pacific (Wang and Li, 2023). There is a geographical gap in understanding how cultural, legal, and economic factors in different regions influence the adoption and impact of strategic HRM practices. Future research could explore the nuances of HRM practices and employee performance in emerging markets, underrepresented regions, and diverse cultural contexts to provide a more global perspective on HRM effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In conclusion, the empirical studies reviewed provide valuable insights into the relationship between Strategic HRM Practices and Employee Performance. The findings highlight the significance of various HRM practices such as performance appraisal systems, training and development programs, compensation structures, employee engagement initiatives, flexible work arrangements, talent management practices, and organizational culture in influencing employee performance indicators such as productivity, job satisfaction, and retention rates.

The studies emphasize the importance of aligning HRM strategies with organizational goals, fostering a positive work environment, and investing in employee development and engagement. Furthermore, they underscore the need for continuous evaluation and improvement of HRM practices to ensure their effectiveness in enhancing employee performance and contributing to organizational success. Overall, the research in this area contributes to a deeper understanding of how strategic HRM practices can positively impact employee performance, thereby highlighting their crucial role in today's dynamic and competitive business environment. Continued research and application of effective HRM strategies are essential for organizations to optimize their human capital and achieve sustainable growth and success.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

Theory

To advance theoretical understanding, it is recommended to conduct further research that integrates multiple HRM practices to unravel their synergistic effects on employee performance. Exploring how the combination of performance appraisal systems, training programs, and compensation structures influences job satisfaction, productivity, and retention rates can provide valuable insights into the complexities of HRM strategies. Additionally, investigating the role of HRM practices in promoting employee resilience and well-being, particularly in contexts like remote work setups and challenging work environments, can enrich theories on organizational

behavior and human resource management. Such research endeavors can contribute significantly to enhancing theoretical frameworks and guiding future studies in the field of HRM and employee performance.

Practice

In practice, organizations should focus on implementing evidence-based HRM strategies that are tailored to their unique organizational contexts. This involves customizing HRM practices based on factors such as industry type, organizational size, and cultural diversity within the workforce. By aligning HRM initiatives with specific organizational needs and challenges, companies can maximize the effectiveness of these practices in improving employee performance indicators. Moreover, organizations should emphasize continuous learning and development for HR professionals to ensure they stay updated with best practices and emerging trends in strategic HRM. Investing in HR capabilities and competencies is crucial for the successful implementation and management of HRM initiatives that positively impact employee performance.

Policy

From a policy perspective, it is essential to advocate for supportive policies and regulations that prioritize employee well-being, work-life balance, and fair treatment in the workplace. Organizations can collaborate with governmental and non-governmental entities to develop guidelines and standards for strategic HRM practices that promote ethical and responsible management of human capital. This includes advocating for policies such as flexible work arrangements, diversity and inclusion programs, and equitable compensation policies, all of which contribute to improved employee performance outcomes. By influencing policy frameworks that prioritize sustainable HRM practices, organizations can create environments that benefit both employees and the organization's overall effectiveness in the long term.

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