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EFFECT OF SELECTION PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE IN NYANZA REGION, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The success of any organization depends on the quality of its human resources and in today's competitive world, proper management of human resources through stringent selection practices can influence the quality of the workforce which in turn can influence the competitive advantage of an organization through their commitment. The present study aimed at determining the effect of selection practices on organizational commitment in county public service in Nyanza region, Kenya. The study was guided by the Resource based view theory which emphasizes the strategic value of human assets and continous work place learning by suggesting that the survival of an organization is based on its ability to retain its internal resources. The study adopted a cross- sectional correlational design with a study population of 9258 respondents from which a sample size of 404 was determined. The researcher employed stratified random sampling to select six counties in Nyanza region with each county representing a stratum. A random sample was taken in proportion to the stratum's size when compared to the population using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table and then the subsets of the strata pooled to form a random sample. Construct and content validity were ensured by seeking the opinion of experts. The Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for the questionnaire was .826 indicating a high level of reliability. Descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, means and inferential statistics of correlation and regression analysis were used. The null hypothesis was tested at 5% significance level. Pearson's product moment correlation results showed that a significant positive relationship existed between selection practices and organizational commitment (r = .232, p = .000). This meant that selection practices influenced organizational commitment in county public service. The study therefore concluded that proper implementation of selection practices and policies in county governments is vital to achieve person-job fit as well as person-organization fit which increases employee intentions to show higher level of commitment and also helps in reducing the costs of county governments regarding turnover ratio. The study recommends that county governments use effective selection practices to enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

KEY WORDS: Selection practices, Organizational commitment

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INTRODUCTION

Human resources are a significant important resource to an organization and therefore the costs of turnover of talented employees is a threat to organizational growth and success. Furthermore, additional costs are enforced on organizations through hiring and selection. These antagonistic effects can be truncated though stringent selection practices which influence the quality of the workforce of an organization. According to Collins (2001), organizations need to get the right people on the bus and in the right seats to succeed. This can only be achieved through effective and efficient selection practices. Selection is reflected by the fit between the person's skill and job. Poor fit implies improper selection that results in mismatch between the employees' ability and the job requirement. Good selection ensures that there is a person-job fit which is the match between a person's knowledge, skills and abilities and the competencies of a specific job ("demands-ability fit") which is related to higher performance and lower turnover. Caldwell, Chatman and O'Reilly (1990) in their study found that rigorous recruitment and careful selection procedures resulted in high level of organizational commitment. According to Wright, McMahan and McWilliams (2003), the initial impact of HRM practices on employees' commitment begins with selection. As such, leaders and various ministries need to hire quality workers who show the best potential to fit the job positions to maximize employee commitment and retention (Kamoche, 2003).

Problem statement

The public service in most African countries for a long time has been characterized by corruption, low productivity inefficiency, lack of transparency and accountability (Deloitte, 2014). The question of ethnicity has also impinged heavily on the workplace and manifests itself mostly through favoritism in recruitment, career advancement and provision of training opportunities (Kamoche, 2003). In Kenya, the public service faces a myriad of challenges and one of the greatest challenges in its mandate delivery is the recruitment of suitable candidates due to factors such as corruption, poor performance, low staff morale, shortage of critical skill, lack of transparency and high attrition rates as employees join the private sector and other employment opportunities. A close scrutiny on Kenyan counties showed rampant corruption especially in the staffing function due to nepotism and favouritism. The present study thus studies the effect of selection practices on organizational commitment in county public service, Nyanza region, Kenya.

Objective

To determine the effect of selection practices on organizational commitment in county public service in Nyanza region, Kenya.

Hypothesis

H0₁ There is no significant effect of selection practices on organizational commitment in county public service in Nyanza region, Kenya.

Theoretical Background

This study was guided by the Resource -Based View which emphasizes the strategic value of human assets and continous work place learning. A central premise of the RBV is that firms compete on the basis of their resources and capabilities (Peteraf & Bergen, 2003) and hence the need to select the right human resources. The framework suggests that human resources constitute a source of competitive advantage because they can create value, are rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resource (Barney, 1992; Wright, McMahan & McWilliams, 1994). Therefore, with so many HRM challenges, recruitment and selection of qualified employees has become a very critical HRM function and can become a tool of sustainable competitive advantage through enhancing commitment of employees.

The Concept Selection

Selection involves asking the right questions and using the right assessments to help determine fit and usually involves determining the characteristics required for effective job performance, interviewing the applicant, and then measuring each applicant on characteristics against company's those the expectations relative to other candidates (Shah, 2012). The recruitment process has been highly impacted by the increased orientation towards selecting the right talent (Snell, 2006). Dhanalakshmi BalanagaGurunathan (2014) emphasize that good selection and use of assessment centres or other realistic job preview mechanisms help set clear expectations as to the nature and requirements of the role and not just a job description to enhance higher levels. engagement Wright, McMahan McWilliams (2003) argue that the initial impact of HRM practices on employees' commitment to the firm begins with selection and staffing. MacDuffie (1995) suggests that recruitment and hiring practices of a firm influences skills. knowledge employee and commitment of the workforce. Arthur (1994) suggests that enhanced selectivity will help ensure employeejob fit which leads to enhanced employee motivation. Paul and Anantharaman (2003) explain that rigorous selection process through written tests, programming tests and interviews help the recruiter to identify talented candidates and this process makes sure that only competent people get into the firm. To drive

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quality into a selection and recruiting process therefore, organizations should first define which quality is for each position and ground the selection process on the foundation of a proper specification of the requirements of the job.

Empirical Review

Varuni and Suresh (2014) in their study found out that talent acquisition would be successful if managers understood the talent attraction aspect and made recruitment and selection more systematic to assure better person job and organization fit. Juhdi, Pa'wan, Hansaram and Othman (2011) established in their study that HR practices positively contribute to organizational commitment. Pearson's correlation test indicated organizational commitment was positively related to person-job fit (r = .467, p < .01) and that person-job fit was the strongest predictor of organizational commitment ($\beta = -.296$, p=.000) among other HR practices. Guyo, (2015), studied the role of Human Resource Management in development of organizational citizenship behaviour among the civil servants in Kenya and found that recruitment and selection elements developed organizational citizenship behaviour among the civil service through use of selection procedures that are predictive of employee going beyond the work context, the organizations seeking out applicant pools comprised of individuals committed to causes other than themselves, and using situational interviews to identify which applicants are most willing to engage in citizenship behaviours. In their exploratory study, Personorganization fit: Gaining competitive advantage through successful talent acquisition, Jani, and Saiyed, (2017) found that person-organization fit can be used as an important tool for talent acquisition ensuring positive outcomes like favourable work-place attitude and increased tenure. The study further noted that identifying person/organization fit is paramount in the recruitment process and that organizations should never hire if they think there is going to be a mismatch between the candidate and the culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY Research Design

The study was carried out in Nyanza region which currently includes Kisumu, Siaya, Homabay, Migori, Kisii and Nyamira counties using cross-sectional correlational research design. The target population in this study comprised all county public service board members (42), HR officers (HROs) and the civil servants (9216) working in the devolved ministries in the six counties in Nyanza region at the time of the study totaling to 9258 respondents. A total sample size of 404 was determined using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. As per the table, a total population of 9216 is equivalent to a sample size of 368 while a population of 42 is

equivalent to 36 aggregating to 404. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents in all the six counties with each county representing a stratum. The researcher then employed purposive sampling to select key respondents from each of the county public service boards and Human resource officers who have the responsibility of acquisition and selection of talent at the county level. A random sample from each stratum was then taken in proportion to the stratum's size and then the subsets of the strata were pooled to form a random sample.

Research Instruments

Both questionnaires and interviews were used for collecting primary data. Interviews were used to get information from the key informants (county public service board members and HR officers) while questionnaires were administered to the employees as the main instrument.

Validity and Reliability

Validity of research instruments was ensured through designing of the relevant questions and seeking the opinion of the experts. Reliability on the other hand was ensured through Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha which was used to determine the consistency of the instruments. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the entire questionnaire was 0.826 hence considered reliable.

Data Analysis

Data generated from the questionnaires and interviews was analyzed at 5% level of significance using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages and means and inferential statistics of correlation and regression analysis.

The statistic regression model for the study was as shown:

$$y=\beta_{01}+\beta_1X_1+\varepsilon_i$$

Where:

Y= value of the dependent variable (**Organizational Commitment**)

 β_1 = coefficient of independent variable

 X_1 = independent variable (selection practices)

 ε_{i} = error term, 0.05, which captures any other variable that may not have been included in the equation

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study generated a pool of 324 responses out of the 404 distributed questionnaires providing a response rate of 80.2%. Bailey (2007) set the adequacy bar at 75% and therefore the 80.2% response rate for this study was considered excellent for data analysis and reporting.

Demographic data

Demographic data were analyzed in terms of gender, age, level of education, level of management and period of work with current employer. Majority of respondents were male, 233 (71.9%) and the remaining 91(28.1%) were female. This shows that the county

public service workforce is not well represented in terms of gender and that women are still marginalized especially in employment. Chapter 13 of the Kenyan constitution which deals with the public service stipulates that one of the values and principles of public service as per section 232, (i) (i) is affording adequate and equal opportunities for appointment, training and advancement, at all levels of the public service, for both men and women. Section 27(8) states that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender. These provisions as enshrined in the constitution have therefore been violated in county public service as per the research findings of this study.

The respondents in this study were in different age categories and majority of them, 79 (24.4%) were 50 and above years old followed by 64 (19.8%) who were aged between 36-40 years, then 55 (17%) who were between 31-35 years old, 45 (13.9%) who were between 41-45 years old, 35 (10.8%) who were between 46-50 years old, 28 (8.6%) who were aged between 26-30 years and 18 (5.6%) who were between 20-25 years old. This shows that the study was well represented to get the different opinions from all the age categories. The fact that respondents in the category of 40 years and above were the majority also shows that these employees were likely to show organizational commitment in counties.

Regarding the level of education of respondents, a majority of the respondents, 171 (52.8%) were degree holders followed by 79 (24.4%) who were diploma holders and lastly 74 (22.8%) who held a master's degree. This shows that county public service staff qualifications are skewed towards bachelor's degree and had enough qualifications to understand well the issue at study. This could be explained by the fact that the entry point for job group K is degree level and the diploma holders are older experienced employees who have been progressing from lower grades. For the three levels of management, 50.6% were at the lower level, 42% were middle level managers and 7.4% were top level managers.

In terms of seniority indicated as period or number of years the respondents had worked for their current employer, 39.5% had worked in their counties for a period of between 6-10 years, 27.2% had worked for their current employer for 3-5 years, 21.6% had worked for 1-2 years and 11.7% had worked for less than a year. The county system of governance has been in existence since March 2013 and therefore the fact that a majority of the respondents had worked for their current employer for more than 6 years shows that they depicted some form of commitment, either affective, continuance or normative

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA

The results showed that most employees agreed 161 (49.7%) and strongly agreed 44(13.6%) to the statement that their employer asked the right questions during selection, mean (SD) of 3.52 (1.027). 155(47.8%) disagreed and strongly disagreed 15(4.6%) respectively that their employer matched the required characteristics against organizational requirements, mean (SD) of 3.01 (1.099) and a majority of the respondents 176(54.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed 21(6.5%) respectively that their employer used assessment centres and other job preview mechanisms to set clear the expectations of the job, mean (SD) of 2.85 (1.039). Additionally, a majority of employees 160(49.4%) disagreed and strongly disagreed 18(5.6%) that their employers used situational interviews to identify applicants who were most willing to commit themselves to the organization. mean (SD) of 2.98 (1.029).

Regarding the use of validated tests by employers to identify individuals with personality traits that predispose them to commit themselves to the organization, 157 (48.5%) respondents disagreed and 33 (10.2%) strongly disagreed respectively, mean (SD) of 2.80 (1.085). On the statement on whether employers gave new hires jobs suited to their talents and engaged their interest to ensure fit, a majority of the respondents disagreed 183 (56.5%) and strongly disagreed 52 (16%) respectively, mean (SD) of 2.36 (1.030).

From the above responses, employees were asked the right questions during selection but the employer did not match the required characteristics against organizational requirements, did not use assessment centres and other job preview mechanisms to set clear the expectations of the job, did not use situational interviews to identify applicants who were most willing to commit themselves to the organization, did not use validated tests to identify individuals with personality traits that predisposed them to commit themselves to the organization and that did not give new hires jobs suited to their talents. This is therefore an indication that the selection practices were not designed to ensure person-job fit which is likely to affect organizational commitment of employees. As found out by Dhanalakshmi and BalanagaGurunathan (2014), rigorous recruitment and careful selection procedures result in high level of organizational commitment and that good selection and use of assessment centres or other realistic job preview mechanisms help set clear expectations as to the nature and requirements of the role and not just a job description to enhance higher engagement levels.

Regarding affective organizational commitment, results indicated that a majority of the respondents disagreed 128 (39.5%) and strongly

disagreed 21 (6.5%) that they would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with their current employers, mean (SD) of 3.08 (1.246), that they felt as if their organization's problems were their own, mean (SD) of 2.85 (1.169) as affirmed by 138 (42.6%) who disagreed and 29 (9%) strongly disagreed respectively to this statement. Further, 214 (66%) disagreed and 19 (5.9%) strongly disagreed that they did not feel like part of the family at their organization, mean (SD) of 2.44 (0.941), that they did not feel emotionally attached to their organization, mean (SD) of 2.55 (1.005) as indicated by 198 (61.1%) who disagreed and 19 (5.9%) strongly disagreed to that issue and that they did not feel a strong sense of belonging to their organization, mean (SD) of 2.41 (0.967) as confirmed by a majority who disagreed 204 (63%) and strongly disagreed 32 (9.9%) respectively. On the other hand, 123 (38%) agreed and 35 (10.8%) strongly agreed that they enjoyed discussing their organization with people outside it, mean (SD) of 3.12 (1.188). A majority also agreed 139 (42.9%) and strongly agreed 33(10.2) that they could easily become as attached to another organization as they are to their current employer. mean (SD) of 3.20 (1.156) and that their current organization had a great deal of personal meaning for them, mean (SD) of 3.29 (1.139) as portrayed by 149 (46%) who agreed and 36 (11.1%) strongly agreed respectively.

This is an indication that the employees were not willing to spent the rest of their career with their current employer, that they did not feel that the their organization's problems were their own, that employees felt as part of the organization's family, they felt emotionally attached to their organization and that they felt a strong sense of belonging to their organization. Employees also enjoyed discussing their organization with outsiders, they could easily become as attached to other organizations just like they were to their current ones and that their current organization had a great deal of personal meaning to them. This meant that employees showed identification, involvement and loyalty with their organization regardless of the fact that they were not willing to spend the rest of their career with their current employer and that they did not feel that the their organization's problems were their own. This therefore was likely to make the employees want to stay with the organization.

On continuance aspect of organizational commitment in county public service, results showed that most of the employees disagreed 198 (61.1%) and strongly disagreed 44 (13.6%) that were not afraid of what would happen if they quit their job without having another one lined up, mean (SD) of 3.06 (1.217). They also disagreed 151 (46.6%) and strongly disagreed 30 (9.3%) that it would be very hard for them to leave their organization even if they wanted to,

mean (SD) of 2.83 (1.235) and that too much in their life would be disrupted if they decided they wanted to leave their organization, mean (SD) of 3.06 (1.217) as indicated by 128 (39.5%) who disagreed and 23 (7.1%) strongly disagreed to the statement. Additionally, a majority of employees disagreed 136 (42%) and strongly disagreed 24 (7.4%) that it wouldn't be too costly for them to leave their organization, mean (SD) of 2.89 (1.149) and that they felt they had too few options to consider leaving their organization, mean (SD) of 2.89 (1.178) as shown by 146 (45.1%) who disagreed and 24 (7.4%) strongly disagreed respectively. They also disagreed 145 (44.8%) and strongly disagreed 24 (7.4%) that one of the few serious consequences of leaving their current organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives, mean (SD) of 2.93 (1.217) and that one of the major reasons they continued working for their organization was that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice, mean (SD) of 2.90 (1.222) as indicated by 146 (45.1%) who disagreed and 26 (8%) strongly disagreed respectively to the concerned issue. However, 153 (47.2%) agreed and 40 (12.3%) strongly agreed that staying with their current organization was a matter of necessity as much as they desired, mean (SD) of 3.36 (1.123).

These responses are an indication that employees were afraid of the consequences of quitting their job without having another one lined up, that it was not very hard for them to leave their organization, that much of their life would not be disrupted if they decided to leave their organization, that it would be too costly for them to leave their organization and that they did not have few options to consider leaving their organization. The employees also did not continue to work for their current employer because of scarcity of available alternatives, that it would not require personal sacrifice to leave their current employer and that for them staying with their current employer was a matter of necessity.

Further, results indicate that most respondents 187 (57.7%) agreed and 37(11.4) strongly agreed to the statement that people these days moved from company to company too often, mean (SD) of 3.57 (0.998) and that a major reason they continued to work for their organization was that they believed that loyalty was important and therefore felt a sense of moral obligation to remain, mean (SD) of 3.06 (1.202) as affirmed by 121 (37.3%) who agreed and 48 (14.8%) strongly agreed respectively. On the contrary, majority of employees disagreed 197 (60.8%) and 38 (11.7%) strongly disagreed that they did not believe that a person must always be loval to their organization. mean (SD) of 2.40 (1.010), that jumping from organization to organization did not seem at all unethical to them, mean (SD) of 2.96 (1.174) as shown by 132 (40.7%) who disagreed and 20 (6.2%) and

strongly disagreed respectively. Most employees also disagreed 175 (54%) and strongly disagreed 35 (10.8%) to the statement that if they got another offer for a better job elsewhere they would not feel it was right to leave their organization, mean (SD) of 2.58 (1.120), and that they were taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization, mean (SD) of 2.88 (1.170) to which 145 (44.8%) disagreed and 22 (6.8%) strongly disagreed respectively. Further, 176 (54.3%) disagreed and 25 (7.7%) strongly disagreed that things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers, mean (SD) of 2.65 (1.081) and that they did not think that wanting to be a company man/woman is sensible anymore, mean (SD) of 2.78 (1.092), as confirmed by 165 (50.9%) who disagreed and 16(4.9) strongly disagreed respectively.

The responses show that people these days move from company to company too often, that the employees major reason for their continuing to work for their organization was that they believed that loyalty was important and therefore felt a sense of moral obligation to remain, that employees felt that people must always be loyal to their organization, that it is unethical to jump from organization to organization, that they would leave their organization if they got a better offer elsewhere, that they were not taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization, that things were not better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers and that it was sensible to be a company man/woman.

Correlation between selection practices and organizational commitment

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient on the relationship between selection practices and organizational commitment showed a positive and significant relationship between selection practices and organizational commitment (r=.232, p=.000).

Regression analysis for selection practices and organizational commitment

Regression coefficient for the effect of selection practices on organizational commitment in county public service was insignificant (β =0.050, p=0.53). This means that one unit increase in selection practices caused 0.050 units increase in organizational commitment.

HYPOTHESES TESTS

Regression results showed selection practices to have a beta coefficient of .050 at 0.53 level of significance. This means that selection practices explained 5% variation in organizational commitment and as the p-value shows, selection practices did not have a significant effect on organizational commitment and thus the hypothesis was affirmed that:

H0₂ There is no significant effect of selection practices on organizational commitment in county public service in Nyanza region, Kenya.

The results confirmed those of Koc, Cavus, and Saracoglu, (2014) who in their study established that recruitment and selection did not have a significant effect on organizational commitment. They however differed from those of Guyo (2015), who found a strong positive effect of recruitment and selection on organizational citizenship behaviour among civil servants in Kenya. He established that recruitment and selection explained a variation of 49.3% in organizational citizenship behaviour among civil servants in Kenya. Juhdi, et al. (2011) in their study found person-job fit to have a significant effect on organizational commitment. It was found to be the strongest predictor among other HR practices and explained 30% variation in organizational commitment.

The regression equation is thus as follows:

i)Y = β 0 + + β 1S_p + ϵ) becomes:

ii) $O_c = 56.925 + 0.050 S_P + 0.05 \epsilon$

Where:

 $O_c = \mbox{organizational}$ commitment and $S_p = \mbox{selection}$ practices

CONCLUSION

Correlation results showed a positive and significant relationship between selection practices and organizational commitment. The study therefore concluded that proper implementation of selection practices and policies can make county public service employees increasing their intentions to show higher level of commitment towards organization. This can also help in reducing the costs of county governments regarding turnover ratio because of achieved personjob fit as well as person-organization fit.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that county governments use effective selection practices to enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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