Original Article

Assessment of Relationship Between Human Resource Planning Strategies and Job Satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Human resource planning encompasses predicting quantity, quality and category of human resources requirements in organizations to ensure that they are suitably redeployed and utilized optimally by organizations. Accurate predictions ease the rationalization of staff to improve its performance and create a conducive working environment. In that regard, organizations in the public and private sectors are formulating and deploying several strategies to enhance employee job satisfaction and gain a competitive edge. Despite the emphasis on job satisfaction, a review of available literature indicated limited focus on the relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction. This paper assessed the relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction in Kenya's Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments. The study used the equity theory and the target population was all employees engaged by the 14 counties in Kenya's Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments. Three counties: Kisumu, Bomet and Kakamega, which had employed 14,361 workers were sampled. The study sample consisted of 374 respondents, who arrived at the study using the Morgan and Krejcie sampling formula. A questionnaire was used to collect data analysed using SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics and presented using tables. Regression analysis indicated that human resource planning strategies are positively and significantly related to job satisfaction (B = 0.939, p = .000). Thus, the study concluded that a significant relationship exists between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction in Kenya's Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments. The study recommends that county governments in the Lake Region Economic Bloc in Kenya emphasize implementing forecasting and restructuring strategies objectively and rationally to enhance employees' job satisfaction.

APA CITATION

Omosa, J., Mwangi, G., Igoki, C. & Muriithi, R. (2024). Assessment of Relationship Between Human Resource Planning Strategies and Job Satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya. *East African Journal of Business and Economics*, 7(1), 285-294. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajbe.7.1.2011

INTRODUCTION

As highlighted by Wesonga (2021), human resource planning strategies are not just a necessity but a boon for organizations. They optimize staff levels, a crucial factor determined by the demand and supply of workers (Weiss, 2015). By forecasting shortages and surpluses, these strategies enable efficient sourcing and staff engagement planning. In the case of a labour shortage, they pave the way for capacity enhancement through recruitment, selection, retraining and reskilling. Similarly, surplus labour within an organization is effectively managed through layoffs and redeployment (Azmi, 2019). Griffins (2016) further emphasizes that skill gaps can be managed using techniques such as employment of new staff, transfers, job rotation and retrenchment.

Human resource planning strategies, as the backbone of successful human resource management programs, are instrumental in ensuring job satisfaction. They ensure that organizations have the right people with the right skills, numbers, and positions (Wekesa & Kitainge, 2020). These strategies, by analysing the dynamic HR requirements of organizations and formulating activities necessary to meet these needs, significantly contribute to job satisfaction. For instance, demand forecasting focuses on employment trends, productivity, and the growth and expansion of an organization. This forecasting is crucial as it provides a roadmap for organizations to transition from their current manpower position to their desired future state. Therefore, labour forecasting is a continuous, dynamic process that requires modifying and updating interrelated practices as conditions change (Yunus & Munjuri, 2020).

As DePamphilis (2018) points out, human resource planning often necessitates restructuring. This restructuring involves altering work processes and procedures to ensure the optimal utilization of available human capital. Meyer and Hamilton (2014) recognize that employees are the backbone of all organizations, and the structural roles they undertake interact; thus, effective relationships guarantee better organizational outcomes. Soni (2016) emphasizes that the management's focus should be on matching the right person for the job to enhance overall synergy in organizations. Restructuring strategies are derived from the corporate strategy, which is intricately linked with the mission and vision of the organization (Soni, 2016). In essence, these strategies aim to meet stakeholder expectations. The dynamics in today's environment make organizational restructuring not just a choice but a necessity (Meyer & Hamilton, 2014). Therefore, organizational plans need to be flexible to adapt to the ever-changing operational requirements. Restructuring methods in human resource planning encompass cost reduction, process changes and employee reorganization.

Job satisfaction entails employee happiness and is crucial to positive organizational outcomes. It encompasses the pleasure and contentment employees derive from their work-related tasks, which are influenced by organizational policies, strategies, and practices (Parvin & Kabir, 2017). Job satisfaction also includes the attitudes employees hold towards job-related factors. These attitudes are evaluative tendencies based on direct or indirect experiences (Wagner, 2017). Job satisfaction triggers cognitive and affective responses from employees, which are reflected in their expressions of like or dislike towards their work and work environment. Positive attitudes, therefore, lead to higher job satisfaction (Cherry, 2019). Employees with high job satisfaction are typically happy, productive, flexible, and loyal to their organizations (Robbins, Judge & Sanghi 2019). Thus, job satisfaction is a psychological state derived from fulfilling personal desires and expectations from work and work-related practices.

Statement of the Problem

Job satisfaction is a critical factor that directly impacts employee motivation, productivity and general well-being (Chery, 2019). Satisfied employees are likely to be engaged and loyal and exhibit higher performance. Understanding factors influencing job satisfaction is essential for creating a positive work environment and attaining organizational success (Robin et al., 2017). The Lake Region Economic Bloc is comprised of 14 counties, each with its unique socio-economic and political factors. These counties in Kenya face challenges such as skills mismatch, low productivity and high turnover (Chebet, 2015; Kibet, 2016), which may be attributed to Human resource planning and job satisfaction. Therefore, assessing human resource planning strategies in the bloc will enhance understanding and tailoring of forecasting and restructuring strategies to meet specific challenges in the counties. A review of past studies on human resource planning strategies in Kenya indicates their focus on how they influence performance (Maina & Kwasira, 2015; Wekesa & Kitainge, 2020). Thus, this paper, with its novel focus on job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Block County governments in Kenya, sought to assess human resource planning strategies related to job satisfaction and provide insights into effective strategies to promote job satisfaction and lead to overall organizational effectiveness to fill the existing gap.

Objective of the Study

The study objective was to assess the relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya.

Study Hypothesis

In the study the following null hypothesis was tested:

H_{01}: There is no statistically significant relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forecasting and Restructuring Strategies and Job Satisfaction

A forecasting strategy entails forecasting the demand for and supply of labour. In demand for labour forecasting, the focus is on the analysis of employment trends, productivity, availability and the growth and expansion of an organization (Yunus & Munjuri, 2020). At the same time, the supply of labour checks the availability of labour with the requisite skills to fill vacant positions identified in the labour demand forecast. Demand for labour forecasting gives a road map on how organizations transition from the present position of human resources to the desired position in the future (Yunus & Munjuri, 2020).

Pam (2014) investigated the role of demand forecasting in determining the requirements of employees by public companies domiciled in Nigeria. The core objective of the study was to find the potency of demand forecasting in determining employee requirements. The study adopted a survey method. A sample size of 349

respondents was used in the study, drawing five organizations in the public sector from the following strata: top managers, middle managers, and lower managers. Data collection was done using questionnaires, and the data gathered was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings from the study indicated that public organizations in Nigeria employ forecasting strategies to estimate employee requirements. Besides, it was found that the forecasting strategies did not guarantee accurate determination of employee requirements in public organizations. However, the study was based in Nigeria, which contextually differed from Kenya.

A restructuring strategy involves altering work processes and procedures so that the available human capital can be used optimally (Hamilton, 2014). People are the pillar of all organizations because the structural roles they undertake, interact with, and effective relationships guarantee satisfaction as a positive outcome. The focus here is on matching the right person for the job remain motivated while performing tasks. Restructuring strategies are drawn from the corporate strategy, which is connected with the company's vision and mission (Soni, 2016). Essentially, they aim to meet stakeholder expectations in today's environment and make organizational restructuring organizational (Hamilton, 2014). Therefore, organizations must make flexible plans to suit the ever-changing business environment—restructuring methods in human resource planning include process changes and employee reorganization.

Aregawi and Vijaya (2023) studied organizational restructuring effects on the satisfaction of workers at the Ministry of Peace, Ethiopia. The research purposed to explore the impacts of restructuring on job satisfaction in Ethiopia, Ministry of Peace. The study sampled 173 participants from the Ministry of Peace participated in the study. A quantitative research approach was employed, and Spearman's rank correlation was used to analyse the collected data. The study showed that organizational restructuring strongly correlated with employee satisfaction in the Ministry of Peace, Ethiopia. Further, the study recommended that further study should focus on other governmental institutions to ascertain the determinants of job satisfaction. This study focuses on Kenyan counties to fill the existing gap in terms of literature on government entities.

Muchlisa, et al. (2023) investigated the effect of organizational restructuring on job satisfaction in Selayar Regency. The study analysed the organizational restructuring effect on job satisfaction as a mediating variable at the Selayar Islands Regency Public Works and Spatial Planning Service. The study used 170 participants to engage in data collection. Study hypotheses were tested using SEM PLS version 3.0. The study results showed an indirect relationship between organizational restructuring and job satisfaction. In essence, job satisfaction had to be a key consideration when restructuring.

Theoretical Framework

The study was founded on equity theory; it emphasizes the perception of employees about the way they are treated in organizations and a comparison of how workers in the same or other organizations are treated. A perception of equitable treatment leads to satisfaction, while inequitable treatment causes dissatisfaction. According to the equity theory, expectations of justice in the activities carried out in organizations in forecasting and restructuring strategies are an indicator of varied behavioural outcomes (Adams, 1965). Justice and fairness in organizational practices and procedures lead to satisfaction, whereas a perception of unfairness leads to discontentment.

The equity theory asserts that employees' perception of a lack of fairness in forecasting and restructuring strategies causes distress. Thus, employees can take action to restore fairness. The greater the distress due to unfairness, the greater the efforts by employees to restore order (Adams, 1965). Restoration of equity can be either actual or psychological. Actual restoration manifests in employees' actions, such as working less, demanding better conditions, and destroying company assets. Forecasting and restructuring

strategies should be formal and neutral to enhance job satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

In *figure 1*, the independent variable is human resource planning strategies whose parameters are

forecasting strategy and restructuring strategy. The dependent variable is job satisfaction whose parameters are affective satisfaction and cognitive satisfaction.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Independent Variable

Hunan Resource Planning Strategies
- Forecasting Strategy
- Restructuring Strategy

Dependent Variable

Job Satisfaction
- Affective Satisfaction
- Cognitive Satisfaction
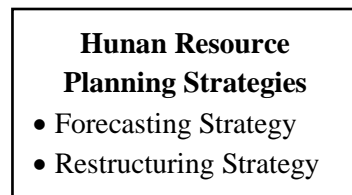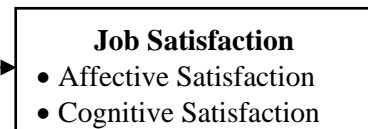
METHODOLOGY

The study employed the positivist philosophy and descriptive and correlational research designs. The study was conducted in the Lake Region Economic bloc. The bloc is the largest in Kenya and hosts up to 25% of the Kenyan population (Mwakikagile, 2010). The bloc is made of three defunct provinces namely, Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley Provinces. Under the devolved system of governance that began in 2010, the bloc is made up of the following county governments Bungoma, Busia, Homabay, Kakamega, Kisii, Kericho, Kisumu, Siaya, Migori, Nyamira, Trans Nzoia, Bomet, Nandi and Vihiga. Purposive sampling was used to select three counties that are

Kisumu, Kakamega, and Bomet counties from the defunct Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley Provinces, respectively to give a comprehensive view of the bloc. The study targeted 14,316 employees working in the three counties (County Public Service Records, 2022). Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) formula was adopted to get the sample size. The sample size for the study was 374 employees working with the county governments. Stratified sampling was used to select respondents from the categories of top management, middle management, and lower-level employees. The selection of respondents was meticulously done through stratified random sampling, ensuring a representative sample, as displayed in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Sample distribution per category

Category	Kisumu	Kakamega	Bomet	Totals
Top Management	4	3	3	10
Middle management	15	10	7	32
Lower level employees	143	112	77	332
Totals	162	125	87	374

Source: Researcher (2023)

The data was collected by use of structured questionnaires and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive measures employed were standard deviations, percentages, and frequency. To ascertain the relationship between the study variables, the regression model was used. The regression model used in the study was

$Y = \beta_o + \beta_1 X_1 + e$

Y= Job satisfaction, β_o – Contant, β_1 – Regression Coefficient, X_1 – Human Resource Planning strategies, e -Error term

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study's sample size was 374 respondents working in the three selected counties: Kisumu, Kakamega and Bomet. A total of 374 questionnaires were distributed, and 226 were duly filled out and returned. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is considered adequate. Thus, the response rate was 60.4%, which was fit for analysis.

Human Resource Planning Strategies

The study assessed the relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction. The study used a five-point Likert scale to measure the extent the respondents agreed to statements on human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction Where; 5-Very High Extent (VHE), 4- High Extent (HE), 3-Moderate Extent (ME), 2-Low Extent (LE) and 1-Very Low Extent (VLE) The results on responses are summarized in the *table 2*.

Table 2: Human Resource Planning Strategies

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
My organization evaluates the amount of work done by employees before making decisions on increasing or decreasing the number of employees	226	1	5	3.42	1.409
My organization takes into consideration the number of employees who stop working for the organization as a result of retirement or any other reasons to determine how many more employees are required	226	1	5	2.91	.921
In determining the number of staff required to perform specific tasks, my organization takes into account the number of people who need a particular service	226	1	5	3.85	1.330
The plans by my organization to fill vacant positions are enabling it to employ qualified people	226	1	5	3.08	.917
My organization changes the way we work to help us improve our performance	226	1	5	3.47	1.402
The way my organization plans the number of employees required to do various tasks contributes to a positive workplace culture	226	1	5	3.64	1.226
The human resource planning strategies in my organization are achievable	226	1	5	4.39	.490
Average Mean				**3.54**	**1.10**

Based on the results from *Table 2*, it is noted that on the statement that counties evaluated the work done by employees before deciding on either increasing or decreasing the number of staff, the mean and standard deviation were ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.409$). This indicated a strong consensus among the respondents. On the statement that their counties consider employee turnover when determining staff requirements, the mean and standard deviation were; ($M = 2.91$, $SD = .921$), indicating that most respondents to a moderate extent agreed with the statement. The findings also revealed a shared understanding among the respondents that in determining the number of staff, the counties consider the number of people requiring the service ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.330$).

Respondents also agreed that their counties' plans to fill vacant positions enable them to employ qualified people ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .917$). Most respondents further agreed that their counties changed the way they work to help them improve their performance ($M = 3.47$, $SD = .1.402$). The study findings also indicated that their counties plan on the number of employees required to do various tasks, which contributes to a positive workplace culture ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .1.226$). Respondents concurred that counties' human resource planning strategies are achievable ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .490$).

The average mean of responses on human resource planning strategies was 3.54, and the

standard deviation was 1.10. These results, in line with the mean and standard deviation averages, strongly indicate that HRP strategies influence job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya. Importantly, these findings are not isolated, but rather, they align with the research of Mondejar and Asio (2022), who found that human resource planning practices influenced teachers' job satisfaction in private academic institutions in Olongapo City, Philippines. This consistency across studies should instil confidence in the conclusions drawn.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was the dependent variable in the study. The research tested the extent aimed at finding out the extent the respondents were satisfied with statements on job satisfaction on a Likert scale of 1-5, whereby; 5-Very Satisfied (VS), 4- Satisfied (S), 3- Neutral (N), 2-Dissatisfied (D), 1-Very Dissatisfied (VD). The findings are presented in *Table 3*

Table 3: Job Satisfaction

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
My organization accurately evaluates the amount of work we do to determine the number of staff required	226	1	5	2.92	1.175
My organization replaces employees who leave as a result of retirement and other reasons to ensure that there are no shortages in staff	226	1	5	3.80	.871
My organization is keen on changing the nature of the work we do to enhance our productivity	226	1	5	3.08	1.160
My organization uses the best practices in planning for staff and the work they do	226	2	5	3.16	1.092

Table 3 shows that counties accurately evaluate the amount of work they do to determine the required staff ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.175$). This indicated that the majority of the respondents were neutral with the statement. Whether their counties replace employees who leave due to retirement and other reasons to ensure no staff shortages ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .871$) implies that most respondents were satisfied with the statement. The results also confirmed that counties were keen on changing the nature of the work done to enhance employee productivity ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.16$). Most respondents were satisfied that counties use the best practices in planning for staff and the work done ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.092$). The results imply that counties in the LREB region were keen on matters of employee satisfaction.

Regression Analysis

The study assessed the relationship between human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction in the LREB County Governments in Kenya. The hypothesis stated.

> H_{01}: *Human resource planning strategies do not have a statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya.*

The simple regression equation used in testing the hypothesis was;

$$Y = \beta o + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

[1]

The model summary is illustrated in *Table 4*.

Table 4: Model summary for human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862[a]	.742	.741	.44222

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resource Planning

The model summary in *Table 4* shows a coefficient of determination of ($R2= 0.742$), which indicates a strong and significant relationship between HRP strategies (forecasting and restructuring) and job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya. This implies that 74.2% of the changes in job satisfaction can be attributed to HRP strategies. The regression equation is suitable for making predictions since the value of R^2 is closer to 1.

ANOVA results are presented in *Table 5*.

Table 5: ANOVA for human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df		Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.262	1		126.262	645.663	.000[b]
	Residual	43.804	224		.196		
	Total	170.066	225				

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resource Planning

The results on Anova in *Table 5* indicate a significance of .000, which is less than 0.05, meaning that the model of human resource planning (forecasting and restructuring) strategies and job satisfaction is fit to make predictions. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, the relationship between human resource planning (forecasting and restructuring) strategies and job satisfaction in the LREB County Governments in Kenya is statistically significant.

The regression coefficients are illustrated in *Table 6*.

Table 6: Coefficients for human resource planning strategies and job satisfaction

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.211	.134		1.576	.017
	Human Resource Planning	.939	.037	.862	25.410	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

The regression coefficient results, as shown in *Table 6*, have significant implications. The beta coefficient, at 0.939 with a significance of .000, Suggests that a unit change in HRP strategies (forecasting and restructuring) can lead to a substantial improvement of 0.939 units in job satisfaction. The t-test value, 25.410, further confirms that Human resource planning strategies (forecasting and restructuring) have a strong relationship with job satisfaction, with its effect being 25 times relative to the standard error. These findings imply that organizations can enhance job satisfaction by focusing on HRP strategies (forecasting and restructuring). This is a practical step that can be taken to improve the well-being of employees. The regression equation is illustrated in the specific model below;

$$Y = 0.211 + 0.939X_1 + \varepsilon$$

The study results align with those of Aregawi and Vijaya (2023), who investigated organizational restructuring's effects on workers' satisfaction at the Ministry of Peace, Ethiopia. The results indicated that restructuring had a strong correlation with job satisfaction. Nevertheless, they differ from those of Muchlisa et al. (2023), who studied the effect of organizational restructuring on job satisfaction in Selayar Regency. The results showed an indirect relationship between organizational restructuring and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The descriptive results show that human resource planning strategies play a pivotal role in

enhancing job satisfaction and overall productivity. The careful assessment of employees' workload, the thoughtful consideration of factors like retirement or other reasons for employee departure, and the strategic determination of the required staff for specific tasks and services all contribute to a more satisfying work environment, fostering a sense of optimism and hope for improved job satisfaction.

From the inferential statistics, regression analysis revealed that human resource planning strategies forecasting and restructuring) positively influence job satisfaction at a beta coefficient of 0.939 and a significance level of 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between human resource planning strategies (forecasting and restructuring) and job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments in Kenya is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis that there exists a statistically significant relationship between human resource planning strategies (forecasting and restructuring) and job satisfaction in the Lake Region Economic Bloc County Governments is accepted. Therefore, the study recommends that county governments emphasize implementing forecasting and restructuring strategies objectively and rationally to enhance employees' job satisfaction.

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