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The Strategic JOURNAL of Business & Change MANAGEMENT
ISSN: 2312-9492 www.strategicjournals.com
Vol. 8, Iss. 3, pp 133 – 144. July 29, 2021. www.strategicjournals.com, ©Strategic Journals

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Accepted: July 26, 2021

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to find out the influence of employee compensation on employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya. Equity theory underpined the study. The study adopted descriptive research design. The study population involved all the employees in selected Sugar Companies in Western Kenya who were 5000 in total. The sample size for this population was 357 employees. Data was collected by use of a questionnaire and analyzed using a statistical package for social sciences. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysis of the data. The validity of the research instrument was determined by the test-retest technique. The findings of the study resulted in an understanding that employee compensation influence employee performance. The findings of this study would assist managers assess what decision-making processes could be used to increase employee job performance. The research findings contributed to formulation of human resource practice policies by the sugar firms and and human resource professionals.

Key Words: *Compesation, Employee Performance*

CITATION: Kidagisa, F. C., & Mukanzi, C. (2021). Influence of employee compensation on employees performance at selected sugar companies in western Kenya. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management,* 8 (2), 133 – 144.

INTRODUCTION

Several studies in Kenya have indicated low employee performance due to various reasons in the sugar industry. For instance, Ombayo, Otuya, and Shiamwama (2013) revealed that many sugar industries lack career counseling. Lack of this counseling resulted into low employee productivity. Furthermore, lack of funds, poor utilization of funds and misappropriations of funds has affected programs aimed at boosting employee rewards and training hence decline in employee motivation level. Consequently, the industry has experienced a drop in employee productivity. In order to increase efficiencies and boost productivity of employees, organizations invest more resources in research and development of their employees through staff training programs. It is an established fact that financial rewards boost employee performance. Despite this fact, employees in the Kenyan sugar industry continue to be subjected to low financial incentives and low fixed pay-cheque. This situation coupled with a high and ever increasing cost of living; prove to have a negative effect on employee performance in the sugar industry.

In Singapore Huselid, (2015) conducted research on the impact of human resource practices on employee performance pointed out that human resource practices is a paramount component required to perform effectively at their places of expertise. A research conducted by Partlow, (2010) on the role of core human resource practices on organizational performance, expounds that employee competence plays an important role in creating synergy between organizational units. The author points out that human resource practices plays an important role in promoting ones morale while performing his duties at the job place.

Traditionally, the core functions of the human resource department in Kenya had been hiring and retaining staff. However, these core functions of the human resource were only emphasized in the private sector. This has however changed in recent days as public servants are called upon to be more accountable in service delivery. The changing dynamics of employment terms in the civil service has led many employees to regard public service employment as less lucrative thus leading to a mass exodus of talented staff from the public service. For this to be evaded, the human resource in the various departments should come up with best practices on how to recruit and retain the right staff (Nyakundi, 2016).

The sugar sector is one of the significant contributors to the marketed production for Agricultural crops. It plays a critical socio- economic role among the sugar cane farming communities. The government aims at converting the sugar industry into a vibrant commercial enterprise in line with the National Vision 2030. In this regard several sugar factories have been established, both private and public owned. Despite these investments, self sufficiency in sugar industry has remained illusive over the years as consumption continues to outstrip supply. There however exists potential for Kenya to become and retain self sufficiency in sugar production and also produce surplus for export (Kenya Sugar Board Strategic Plan, 2009 - 2014).

Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, it has been reported that poor conditions affect employee performance in many manufacturing firms. According to the performance audit of manufacturing firms (2014), the poor working conditions of the employees put excessive pressure on the personnel and put them under severe stressful conditions hence affecting their performance. Theoretical and empirical studies have shown that there are many push and pull factors affecting employee performance among them human resource management practices such as remuneration (Munyiva, 2015), career advancement (Gupta, S., Karpowicz, I., & Tareq, 2015), work-life balance (Kar and Misra, 2013) and work environment (Winterton, 2011). Employee compensation has a significant role in the enhancement of employee performance. Organizations pursue proactively HRM practices and systems to capitalize on strength of this vital

The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management. **ISSN** 2312-9492 (Online) 2414-8970 (Print). www.strategicjournals.com

asset for sustained competitive advantage (Jackson & Schuler, 2000). The sugar sector has faced a steady decline in its growth over the years, resulting in systematic increase in poverty among farmers. Kidero, (2004) cites decline has been on a myriad of problems including policy failures; poor institutional framework and inadequate training of the human resource and un-competitiveness of local sugar given the high cost of production more so employee strikes which are inevitable. Most studies that centre on the linkage between strategic human resource management practices and firm performance have been conducted in the United States and United Kingdom (Gerhart, 2005; Ericksen & Dyer, 2005). Previous studies done in Kenya are limited and hence a need for more evidence from the Sugar Industry to support the link between human resource management practices and employee performance. Other Studies conducted in this area include: Kiboi (2006) focused on management perception of performance contracts in State Corporation. Tuitoek (2008) studied performance appraisal practices among mass media in Nairobi. Lang'at (2006) evaluated factors that are necessary for the design of good performance contracts in state corporations. Obare (2006) focused on implementation of strategic plans in the public sector with reference to personnel management of the Government of Kenya.

These studies have not considered employee compensation and performance. It was important to conduct a study to determine employee compensation in Kenya Sugar Board. For any business organization to have a sustained competitive advantage, an effective perormance management system needs to be put in place. Infusion of employee compensation is vital to improve performance. This research determined the influence of employee compensation on employee job performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya.

Study Objective

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence of employee compensation on employee job performance in selected Sugar Companies in Western Kenya. The study tested the following hypothesis;

- H_0: Employee Compensation has no influence on employee performance in Selected Sugar Companies in Western Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Equity Theory

According to Jackie (2010) equity theory states that a person's performance depends upon his perceived equity as determined by his input-output balance in comparison with input- output balance of others. Every employee compares his rewards with those of others. If an employee feels his rewards are equitable as compared to others doing similar job, he will feel satisfied and vice versa. Equity theory suggests that individuals assign weights to various inputs and outcomes according to their own perception of relative importance. Equity theory refer to a process of job satisfaction that focuses on individuals' perceptions of how fairly they are treated in comparison to others. This implies that, if employees perceive that they are treated less favourably than their colleagues, they are likely to be dissatisfied and they will not perform well. This theory therefore asserts that people compare the ratio of their outputs to inputs with the ratio of outputs to inputs of others. Equity Theory proposes that a person's performance is based on what he or she considers being fair when compared to others (Redmond, 2010).

As noted by Gogra (2010) the application of equity theory at the work place , focuses on an employee's work-compensation relationship and exchange relationship as well employees' efforts to minimize any sense of unfairness that might arise. The theory was relevant to the study because it is a real life experience because employees in the public sugar sector normally compare their terms and conditions relating their jobs as to their counterparts in the private sector.

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Employee Compensation and Employee Performance

The current employees performance can be nurtured by managing a valid performance evaluation, bonus and reward system (Bretz, *et al*., 1992). It should be considered that the amount of fringe benefits (or certain payback) and bonuses are varied among well-performing and weak-performing employees.

The motivation, which is the result of employees encouragement by cash or other things such as bonuses (e.g. car loan and payment increase), will lead to employees productivity and better performance. Therefore, it is important to recognize which rewarding strategies lead to higher employees performance. Considering the result of this study, it can be determined that different motivating elements like promotion and bonuses, and suitable payment compensation have significant connection with higher performance (Oyebanju, 2009).

Compensation is one of the physical needs that motivates which in turn will affect the employee performance. Job performance is influenced by many factors externally and internally. Compensation is output and the benefit that employee receive in the form of pay, wages and rewards like monetary exchange for the employee's to increases the Performance (Johnson *et al*., 2008).

Providing appropriate compensation within the meaning of fair and adequate to meet the requirements is one of the personnel department functions that are difficult to implement. Every organization needs a strategic compensation system for its employees that address compensation, benefits, recognition and appreciation (Kim, 2005). Compensation includes the returns to the services rendered by employees as part of employment relationships. It has a big influence in the recruitment of employees, motivation, productivity and employee turnover. The level and magnitude of compensation should be of concern because the level of compensation will determine the lifestyle, self esteem, and the value of the company.

Compensation practices plays a crucial and functional role on employee performance of different companies because it is the heart beat of human resource management. It is also vital to both employees and the employer. This is because employees typically depend on wages and salaries, and must be equivalent to the work done. However, to managers, compensation decisions influence the cost of doing business and thus, their ability to sell at a competitive price in the product market (Salim & *al.*, 2010).

In this era of global competition, where attracting effective and efficient employees has become a necessity for competing organizations. Saudi Arabia, is one of the most important international markets in the developing world, provides an ideal background for a study on the impact of compensation on employee's performance and work-family conflict of an employee, working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Compensation is output and the benefit that employee receive in the form of pay, wages and also same rewards like monetary exchange for the employee's to increases the Performance (Cadran, 2004).

Compensation is the segment of transition between the employee and the owner that the outcomes employee contract. As the prospective of employee pay is the necessary of life. The payment receives from work done on the behalf of people getting the employment. From the employee prospective one of the most important part of cash flow. Compensation is mostly equal to half of cash flow of the companies. But in the service sector it is more than half. It is the major to attract the employee and motivate employee to increases the performance (Ivanceikh & Jackson, 2009).

It is argued that most individuals that get higher education are not satisfied in their jobs and their turnover is more than such that organizations are overcome with the problem to design the compensation plan to retain the employees as well play more to attract, retain and motivate to give manpower. Compensation practices can improve the performance of employees when their institution makes them better off than worse off by contributing to employee satisfaction and development (Delaney & *al*., 2010).

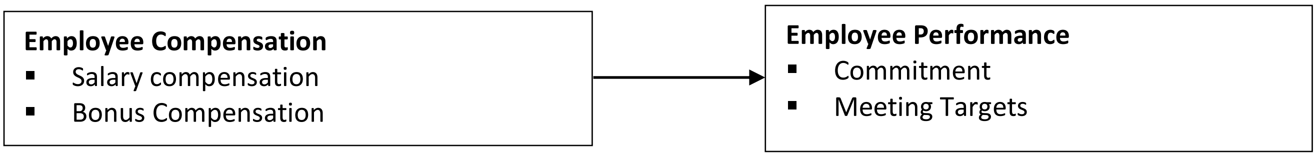
Many organizations do not give emphasis to the effective utilization of compensation practices so as to ensure employees performance in developing countries. Organization pay directly influences to employee voluntary turnover employee compare to their pay available in other organization. People stay or leave the company more reasons they are satisfied with their job promotional opportunity and work environment (Mitchall *et.al.* 2003)

When employees are owners, they act and think like owners. However, little evidence suggests that employee ownership, by itself, affects organizational performance. Rather, employee ownership works best as part of a broader philosophy or culture that incorporates other practices. Merely putting in ownership schemes without providing training, information sharing, and delegation of responsibility will have little effect on performance. Even if people are more motivated by their share ownership, they don't necessarily have the skills, information, or power to do anything with that motivation, Khatti (2013).

Bonus is an amount of money or an equivalent to money added to wages on a seasonal basis especially as a reward for good performance. According to Milkovich and Newman (2005), bonus pay is monetary reward given to employees in addition to their fixed compensation. It is based on individual's performance, Petty and Thomson, (1996). However, it doesn't increase fixed labor cost. Bonus schemes provide incentives for all individuals in organizations; Regardless of their ability; position and promotion opportunities. A properly structured bonus compensation policy at all levels in an organization can punish top executive for unprofitable expansion without degrading incentives for lower level managers. According to Obasan (2012), Bonus based incentives are more important at higher levels in the organization since the probability of the promotion is lower, for example, the Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O) is not promotable and therefore his/her financial incentives must come from bonuses. Obasan observes that bonus based motivation policy is more significant in a declining industry since there are no new jobs to feed the reward system.

H_0: Employee Compensation has no influence on employee Performance in Selected Sugar Companies in Western Kenya.

Employee performance refers to the final fulfillments of an employee with respect to meeting certain targets within the prescribed period of time. Gibson *et al.,* (2010) argue that employee performance can be perceived to be the ability of an employee to realize high profit, quality production, large market share for the product produced and the ability to survive in a competitive field. Koontz and Donnell (2013) see employee performance as the manifestation of the productivity of the employees in terms of revenue, profit, growth, development and expansion of organization. Enhancing performance requires a balance between employee motivation and achieving organization's goals and objectives. Proper human resource management practices will by extension result in managing organizational performance. It is also vital to note that employee performance determines survival of organization in a competitive world of business.



Independent Variable **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

Mutahi and Busienei (2015) did a study on the effect of Human Resource Practices on the performance of public universities in Kenya. This study sought to establish the relationship between strategic human resources management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya. Research findings suggested that strategic human resource management practices have a significant effect on the performance of public universities in Kenya. Further, findings revealed that reward management, training and development and resourcing practices respectively influenced the performance of public universities. Based on the findings, the following key recommendations were made: Management of public universities to develop employment policy that encourages employee security; invest in HR information systems to automate resourcing practices.

Studies that are linked to HRM practices and performance were done by (Gerhart & Milkovich, 1992; Arthur 1994; Huselid in 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Guest, 1997). Thereafter a large number of researches were conducted on different sectors of different countries. Most of the researches showed significant impact of HRM practices on employee's performance. Employee performance is directly linked with performance of the organization. The successful organizations consider the HRM practices as a crucial factor that directly affects the employee's performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design since it explained the relationship between the study variables. The study targeted 5000 employees working in the sugar companies namely Muhoroni, Butali,WestKenya and Nzoia sugar. The study used questionnaire as a tool for collecting the data. The primary data was gathered using questionnaire for closed-ended and open ended questions. The study assessed validity of the primary data instrument using content and construct validity. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software was used for analysis.

FINDINGS

The study used the parameters where: 1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (Ne) , 4 = Agree (A) and 5= Strongly agree (SA). A summary of the findings was as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Compensation Practices

	N	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Max	Min
Salary Compensation Plan influence employee performance	307	25 (8.3)	39 (12.5)	88 (28.7)	90 (29.4)	65 (21.1)	4.02	1.104	5	1
Salary compensation reduces employee turnover boosting employee performance	307	36 (11.8)	38 (12.5)	61 (19.7)	83 (27.0)	89 (29.1)	4.16	1.179	5	1
Bonus compensation enhances employee performance	307	53 (17.3)	81 (26.3)	107 (34.9)	52 (17.0)	14 (4.5)	3.99	1.151	5	1
Bonuses based on period of time worked adversely affects employees performance	307	31 (10.0)	43 (13.8)	76 (24.9)	100 (32.5)	57 (18.7)	4.03	1.170	5	1
Bonus compensation reduces stress in the work place and improves employee performance	307	10 (3.4)	5 (1.7)	59 (19.0)	148 (48.3)	85 (27.6)	4.15	1.063	5	1

Salary compensation plan influence employee performance (mean =4.02; std dev. = 1.104) Salary compensation reduces employee turnover boosting employee performance (mean =4.16; std dev. = 1.179) Bonus compensation enhances employee performance (mean =3.99; std dev. = 1.151) Bonuses based on period of time worked adversely affects employees performance (mean =4.03; std dev. = 1.170) Bonus compensation reduces stress in the work place and improves employee performance (mean =4.15; std dev. = 1.063)

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Employee Performance

	N	SD (%)	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Max	Min
Employees in our organization are able to meet target by producing the units allocated	307	32 (10.4)	40 (13.1)	46 (14.9)	106 (34.6)	83 (27.0)	4.21	1.142	5	1
Employee performance is indicated by the number of units produced	307	31 (10.0)	43 (13.9)	76 (24.9)	100 (32.5)	57 (18.7)	4.03	1.066	5	1
The employees time taken per task is an indicator of performance	307	35 (11.4)	54 (17.6)	86 (28.0)	91 (29.5)	41 (13.5)	4.16	0.944	5	1
Employee performance enhances profits	307	41 (13.4)	47 (15.2)	58 (18.8)	89 (29.1)	72 (23.5)	4.02	0.865	5	1

Employees in our organization are able to meet target by producing the units allocated (mean =4.21; std dev. = 1.142) Employee performance is indicated by the number of units produced (mean =4.03; std dev. = 1.066) The employees time taken per task is an indicator of performance (mean =4.16; std dev. = 0.944) Employee performance enhances profits (mean =4.02; std dev. = 0.865)

Table 3: Correlations Employee Compensation practices on Employee Performance

		Employee Performance	On Job Training Practices
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.312**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	307	307
Employee Compensation	Pearson Correlation	.312**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	307	307

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Testing Hypothesis

H_0 *Compensation Practices has no influence on employee performance in Selected Sugar Companies in Western Kenya.*

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	.265[a]	.151	.168	6.754	.006

From findings in table 4, the value of R-Square is 0.151. This implied that, 15.1% of variation of employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya was explained by compensation.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	608.972	1	608.972	10.128	.006[a]
	Residual	18939.501	306	60.125		
	Total	19548.473	307			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Compensation

b. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

From the findings in table 5, at 0.05 level of significance the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variable namely; compensation was important in predicting of employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya as indicated by significance value=0.006 which was less than 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.006 < 0.05$).

Table 6: Coefficients for the model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	32.919	1.334		24.682	.000
	Compensation	.175	.055	.176	3.183	.006

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

From Table 6; the study revealed that compensation had significant influence on of employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya (t statistic=3.183, p-value=0.006 < 0.05). Therefore at 5% level of significance the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating compensation had a positive influence on employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya. Again for every unit increase in compensation there was a corresponding increase in employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya by 0.175.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings showed a variation of employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya was explained by compensation and the ANOVA test indicated that in this model the independent variable namely; compensation practices is important in predicting of employee performance in selected sugar companies in Western Kenya as indicated by significance value.

Influence of selected human resource practices on employee job performance in selected Sugar Companies in Western Kenya was studied in terms of compensation and its influence. The study made a number of important contributions into sugar companies. The findings of the study resulted in an understanding that among the human resource practices, compensation has influence on employee job performance .

The findings of the study indicated compensation if controlled is an important driver to employee job performance. In particular, organizations need to enhance and manage their employee compensation for them to survive.

In today's dynamic market environment employee job performance is perceived to be a significant. The study therefore recommended that for organizations to be more competitive so as to cope with more highly changing environments there is need in enhancing their employee compensation.

Recommendation for Future Research

Across-boundary research on other human resource practices other than employee compensation. In future studies should collect data from a larger population and compare with other firms to further validate or extend theories and variables identified in this study.

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