Effects of Leadership in Human Resources Succession Planning in Kenyatta University in Kenya

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Abstract: **Through the succession planning process, superior employees are recruited, their knowledge, skills, and abilities developed, hence preparing them for advancement or promotion into more challenging roles in the organization. The purpose of this study was to assess the extent of leadership in human resources succession planning in Kenyatta University within the last 5 years. It examined the organizational culture of human resources succession planning in the Public universities. This research employed questionnaires, these were distributed to the different Kenyatta university campuses, and there was use of key informants, FGDs as well as documentations to gather information for this study.**

Keywords: **Leadership, Human Resource, Succession.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Universities over the past few decades find themselves in a time in which the demand for services has increased, the expectation for quality service is high, and the accountability for results is exceptional. These Organizations for that matter are now being results-driven, person centered, and market-based. This is all in an effort to improve and drive Institutions toward becoming high performing ones, World Excellency institutions, thus, ensuring organizational effectiveness and efficiency. To become a high performing organization therefore requires an investment in the people working in the organization. Every organization or institution of that matter value its employees especially those with exceptional skills. It is generally agreed that the biggest contributors to organizational success and performance are the employees. Succession planning was first introduced by Henri Fayol who believed if succession planning needs were ignored, organizations would not be prepared to make necessary transitions (Rothwell, 1994; 2000; 2002; 2010). Succession planning allows an organization to prepare for the absence, departure, death, retirement, or termination of an individual; it provides for continuity of culture and the evolution of necessary skills for an organization (Armstrong,2005); Originally used to anticipate smooth transitions to the top levels in organizations, it has evolved into a process that many organizations view it as a critical activity for key positions across all functions and levels; succession planning refers to ensuring business continuity by keeping strategic positions filled by requisite competent and motivated workforce and strategists. While operational definitions vary, the core meaning has remained the same throughout the decades as the process of succession planning evolved. The Modern business environment requires businesses to be sufficiently robust and resilient by setting in place and implementing strategic plans that ensures continuity and avoidance and /or minimization of disastrous risks (Mullins, 2010; Armstrong, 2005; Capelli, 2000). According to Drucker (1993) the future of management is a concern to most people simply because people will not be able to tolerate as a country, as a society, as a government, the danger that any one of the major companies will decline or collapse because it has not made adequate provisions for management succession. People are the most important asset is a common phrase in the corporate environment

Succession planning has long been an active human resources strategy that has been discussed at professional conferences and within professional journals and publications (Johnson and Brown, 2004). Since the late 1990s, HR professionals and

decision makers have been aware of the need for formalized strategic planning of their workforces, especially given the pure demographics of the public service environment, at all levels. The inevitably changing workforce, driven by the steady exodus of baby boomer workers towards retirement, and converging many times with an increasing demand for public services, marked the generational HR management need for proper planning and development of thoughtful strategies in the areas of recruitment, retention and succession planning. While the HR and leadership community recognized this need for proper planning, circumstances and limited resources have prevented some agencies from instituting a formal approach to workforce planning. Succession planning embraces not only identifying qualified and motivated candidates for promotion to executive positions, but also developing their capabilities in a manner that will prepare them to perform effectively in leadership positions (Stinchcomb et al., 2010). Coaching and mentoring have become widely accepted techniques for extending such development beyond classroom training and on-the-job experience. But these strategies are only effective to the extent that they include structured activities, conducted to achieve targeted goals, by those with training to properly facilitate the process.

Succession planning process includes three main components. The first component is selection of candidate based on previous experience and background among and formation of talent pool (Rothwell, 2010). By this, we make sure that each key position has alternative potential successors and each talent has multiple potential promotion paths (Byham et al., 2002). The trend in scope of succession planning is expanding it to cover all the positions not just top managerial positions. It has shown that companies considering lower levels have better profitability (Garmen and Glaw, 2004). In case of not including all the organization, it is very important to identify critical positions which are essential for the organization, department, division, work unit, or team to achieve the necessary work results (Ibarra, 2005). Strategic plan can be a guideline for this aim. Beyond identifying what skill sets and knowledge bases are required for key positions, it is crucial that, the succession plan provides a method or plan for providing employees the opportunity for professional development. After selecting the talents, the role of development of successor as a second component of SP becomes clear. Identifying development plan and follow–up is a mandatory part of process (Rothwell, 2002). The plan should be tailored to the individual needs and interests of successor (Patton and Pratt, 2002). Best development methods include 360–degree feedback, executive coaching, mentoring, networking, job assignments and action learning (Groves, 2007). The third component of SP process is change management and process management, including function and sub–processes like strategic view of Succession Planning, management commitment, implementation considerations etc. Succession plan makes sure that, organization has access to required human resource, quantitatively and qualitatively. This plan will determine promotion opportunities and developmental needs of candidates and build management commitment (Christie, 2005). But the problem is that, while companies may have SP in place, they may fall out of sync with what the company needs to grow or expand into new markets. Therefore, it is very vital to link succession planning to business strategy to obtain need kind of people with the needed set of skills for the future. However, this linkage has not been achieved in real world even in organizations with best succession planning (Kara evil and Hall, 2003). Management commitment like any other organizational–wide program is critical for successful implementation of Succession Planning. Without the support, succession planning is not executable even if design phase is done well (Diamond, 2006).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Succession planning has become a major concern for many Institutions and especially Universities who now see aging baby boomers considering retirement (Beitler, 2005). Many of these boomers built their professional careers in a very competitive environment; they see "what they know" as a competitive asset that must be carefully guarded. Succession planning helps organizations manage their talent pipeline (Guin, 2000). Its goal is to ensure that, the quantity and quality of leaders are identified, fully capable, and ready to contribute to the effective performance of a business in future. Although, new career concepts like boundary-less careers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and protean careers (Hall, 1996) emphasize individual responsibility in career development, no successful Organization can stop career management programs like succession planning to identify and develop the right people to ensure that the important skills are present in the organization over the long term (Barnet and Davis, 2008). Some Organization trends are in favor of taking succession planning more seriously. Demographic trend in workforce toward aging and decrease in supplying workforce, tight labor markets (Busine and Watt, 2005; Naris and Ukpere, 2010); changes in values and attitudes of new generation workers toward demanding more independent, and flexible job with more training and learning opportunities (Cascio, 2006); shifting the source of competitive advantage from tangible assets to tacit knowledge stuck to the minds of employees (Barnet and Davis, 2008) which needs a mechanisms in place to avoid the risks of lost valuable human

resources and ensure continuity. Despite the fact that many studies have been carried out on succession planning, most of them have being successful carried out in Asian countries like Iran, japan, south Korea and other developed countries particularly European countries (Busine and Watt, 2005). Many studies have being carried in succession planning Like Employee retention and organizational effectiveness among some selected organizations in Ghana.(Jonathan, 2010),Mutunga (2012) worked on Factors affecting succession planning in small & medium enterprises in Kenya, while B mwemezi (2009) looked at challenges facing Human resources succession planning in Public and Private organization in Tanzania and D.wangombe (2011) ended up coming with effective of succession planning strategy on the performance in NGO's in Kenya.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Cater and Pucko (2010), while a well-formulated human resource strategy, a strong and effective pool of skills, and human capital are extremely important resources for strategy success, poor leadership is one of the main obstacles in successful succession planning. Lorange (1998) argued that the chief executive officer (CEO) and top management must emphasize the various interfaces within the organization. One key challenge in successful succession planning is ensuring employees' buy-in and directing their capabilities and business understanding toward the new HR strategy. Therefore, the need for effective leadership outweighs any other factor. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) addressed this issue from a different perspective; they suggested that in the absence of effective leadership, conflicting priorities will result in poor coordination because employees will suspect that top management prefers to avoid potentially threatening and embarrassing circumstances. Another aspect of leadership involves enhancing communication within the organization. According to Beer and Eisenstat (2000), blocked vertical communication has a particularly pernicious effect on a business's ability to implement and refine its strategy. Similarly, Janis and Paul (2005) studied the link between a company's corporate communication function and its implementation of HR strategy and found that CEOs focus on branding and reputation and prioritize internal communication.

Coordination of activities, streamlining of processes, aligning the organizational structure, and keeping employees motivated and committed to succession planning are key responsibilities of the leadership. Matthias and Sascha (2008) identified the role of the board, which is to ensure consistency among resource allocation, processes, and the firm's intended strategy. Beer and Eisenstat (2000) referred to poor coordination across functions and inadequate down-the-line leadership skills and development as killers of HR strategy implementation. Zaribaf and Bayrami (2010) categorized the leadership's importance into three key roles: managing the strategic process, managing relationships, and managing manager training. Similarly, Matthias and Sascha (2008) study on just-in-time purchasing concluded that the commitment and leadership of top-level management is essential in strategy implementation. In a study involving Zimbabwe's state-owned enterprises, Mapetere, Mavhiki, Tonderai, Sikomwe, and Mhonde (2012) found that relatively low leadership involvement in succession planning led to partial strategy success in the organization studied. The leadership style in a given organization influences how the chosen strategies will be implemented. Organizational structure, delegation of responsibilities, freedom of managers to make decisions, and the incentives and rewards systems will all be influenced by the leadership style in a particular organization. The most important point to note here is that all of the above parameters are essential in the successful implementation of HR strategies in any given organization.

According to Zakuan et al (2012) urges that managers must institute leadership to usher the succession process. Parameshwar and Srikantia (2000) discussed two types of leadership: transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Transformational leadership is leadership that is based on an ideologically anchored vision while transactional Leadership is based on reward control mechanisms and emphasizes on clarification of followers roles and goals and the way the desired outcome will follow after achievement of the set goals. Champions of innovation tend to exhibit transformational leadership behavior; they try to initiate influence through calculated tactics in their work environment. Arshida & Agil (2012) points out top management commitment as an essential element for ensuring successful succession planning. The top management must be on the fore front of the succession process starting from the initial stages. According to Omware (2012), adoption of succession policies for the first time is associated with development of new organizational policy, new procedures and new tools that must be learned. Succession plans is an organizational change process that is often associated with instability, confusion, and employees' resistance and must be carefully initiated through consistent management involvement. This was consistent with Samir (2003) that top management must develop clear mission and goals and identify succession values and communicate them to all employees. They must put in place a proper succession planning process, and a good management structure to ensure successful transition.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive design to answer the research questions. The target population of the study included 10 Schools in Kenyatta University which were subdivided into different departments in the different campuses and satellite colleges. The chairpersons of departments and head of departments were interviewed in the schools. Due to the size of the population of the dean of schools, chairpersons of departments and heads of departments, the census method of data collection will be used. The sample for the study were drawn from the sampling frame which included 10 of the campuses in Kenyatta University. Primary information was gathered by use of questionnaires coupled with informal interviews that were guided by the questionnaires. Secondary data was gathered from annual reports of the university and reports from the commission of higher education. Information was sorted, coded and input into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 for production of graphs, tables, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to determine the factors affecting successful human resource succession planning in KU. A regression model was used for establishing the relationship between the perceived factors and succession planning in KU.

5. FINDINGS

Effective leadership is a strategy used in enhancing the application of human resource succession planning. The research sought to establish if there is effective leadership in the university, in terms of enhancing good performance and being committed, Staff involvement in policies implementation and availability of organization strategies. Majority of the respondents, 66.67%, felt that performance commitment had a very strong influence on effective leadership in the university, 20% said this had strong influence while 13.33% said that this had weak influence as shown in table 1. When asked about their involvement in implementation of policies and whether it enhances effective leadership, only 50% thought this had very strong influence, followed by 23.3% who said this had a strong influence, and 26.67% who said this had weak influence on. Further interviews on this area revealed that the respondents did not feel involved in the implementation of policies in the university, hence the rating. On the area of organizational strategies 70% of the respondents indicated that this had a very strong influence on effective leadership in the university. 26.67% said that this had strong influence while 3.33% said that this had very little influence on the effective leadership of the organization.

The study findings imply that the role of effective leadership cannot be ignored for the effectiveness of human resource succession planning in any work organizations. Table 4.8 provides illustration based on the findings from the study area.

Table 1 Percentages distribution of respondents' perception on Effective leadership

Effective leadership	Weak influence	Strong influence	Very strong influence
Performance commitment	13.33%	20%	66.67%
Involvement in policies implementation	26.67%	23.33%	50%
Availability of organization strategies	3.33%	26.67	70%

6. CONCLUSION

Effective leadership has positively contributed to the Human resource succession planning in Kenyatta University. It is therefore crystal clear that effective leadership can be used to achieve far more benefits than the one previously forecasted to achieve i.e. human resource succession planning. It provide a means for achieving efficiency and control as well as good performance of the staff in the university. If human resource succession planning is adopted by other public universities, there will be increased performance and employee motivation among the staff in the universities,

7. RECOMMENDATION

The university management should do whatever possible to disseminate information to the employees on the meaning and benefits from the human resource succession planning. This is due to the fact that information received from key informants in the departments and directorates of human resource management and administration of the surveyed organizations revealed that succession planning of the human resource was new to many of them.

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