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Impact of Human Resource Management Practices on Operational Performance of Public Cooperation: A Case of Zanzibar Electricity Corporation

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the impact of human resource management practices on operational performance at Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO). The sample size for this study consists of 215 employees at Zanzibar Electricity Corporation in Unguja in Zanzibar, using questionnaire as data collection instrument. To achieve a reliable objective, a multiple linear regression technique was used to analyses the collected data from relevant respondents. The findings reveal that; the training variable has a statistically significant effect on operational performance at the 5% significance level. Also, the result indicated that there is stronger positive relationship between Information Sharing and Operational performance compared to Training. Although, selection hiring has a highly statistically significant effect on Operational Performance at the 1% significance level. Thus, the study concluded that selection hiring has the strongest positive impact, followed by information sharing and then training. All predictors are statistically significant, indicating that improvements in these areas can enhance Operational Performance. The study recommended that the organizations should thus invest in robust training programs, promote effective information sharing, and implement rigorous selection and hiring processes to drive operational excellence.

Keywords: Extensive Training, Operational Performance, Information Sharing, Selection Hiring, New Personnel.

INTRODUCTION

By Presidential Decree No. 12 of 1964, the State Fuel and Power Corporation (SFPC) was founded and placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Water, Construction, Land and Environment at the time. It was given control over the operation of the power plants and the provision of services on both islands. In order to facilitate the generation, transmission, transformation, distribution, supply, and use of electricity in the Islands of Zanzibar, sector reform under Act No. 3 of 2006 transferred regulatory issues from the utility to the parent ministry and established the Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO), thereby replacing ZSFPC. The Ministry of Land, Housing, Water, and Energy, which also serves as the Corporation's overseer, owns 100% of ZECO. The board of directors, which oversees ZECO management and makes sure government plans are carried out, is in charge of the Corporation and was nominated by the government. In order to support the social and economic advancement of the isles, ZECO is anticipated to supply Zanzibar with inexpensive, dependable power.

According to Fok-Yew et al. (2013), HR is a valuable intellectual asset for industrial firms. They emphasized that achieving operational excellence is a result of surpassing exceptional achievements that can be made by utilizing HR strategies and practices as a tool when employees are dedicated (Oo Fonk-Yew et al., 2013). An essential role in both manufacturing and service companies is the operations function. Service companies differ from manufacturing companies in that they are labor-intensive, have quicker reaction times, more customer contact, non-inventory products, and intangible output (Lee et al., 2014). Operational performance is the cooperative effort of different organizational divisions working together to accomplish major company objectives (Oke, 2022). In order to succeed, organizations are working hard to improve their operational performance. Operational performance pertains to an organization's ability to minimize administrative expenses, fulfill orders by the deadline, maximize raw material use, and improve distribution capabilities (Slack & Brandon-Jones, 2018).

Improving operational performance is necessary to provide products at the necessary quality standard, with the shortest possible lead time and on-time delivery, in order to survive in the competitive market. Thus, one of the main goals of the companies is to improve operational performance. Adams (2004). In addition to improving a company's overall human capital, HRM strategies used effectively in human resource management can provide a sustainable competitive edge. It makes sense to assume that there is a relationship between the way the company handles its employees and the results it produces. Various empirical research have investigated how particular human management approaches affect different performance measures. The important relationship between HRM strategies and overall company effectiveness is clarified by these findings.

STUDY RATIONALE

When a company is operating on thin resources, it might be challenging to attain operational performance. However, attaining operational success faces major obstacles even for high achievers (Okwanga'a et at, 2015). Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO) must always strive for development, especially for public service organizations. In order to meet consumer expectations, service quantity must expand in tandem with the daily rise in demand for services. To guarantee client happiness and preserve their faith in the organization, there is an urgent need to improve service quality. In addition to providing for the increasing number of service seekers, this proactive strategy is necessary to improve service delivery standards generally and build customer satisfaction and confidence.

Through a number of initiatives targeted at strengthening public service delivery, Zanzibar Electricity Corporation (ZECO) has made a substantial investment in improving its operational performance. Moreover, there is an ongoing need to improve operational performance even more in order to effectively meet new demands from the growing population and uphold current service standards at the greatest level of quality. ZECO is still facing challenges in improving its operational performance, nonetheless, since many institutional inadequacies in service provision have been pointed out by the public. These include infrequent power outages and hold-ups in constructing new power poles for new clients. These can be brought on by a number of issues, including inadequate labor overall, a shortage of competent personnel, and a lack of worker training. The main cause of these problems is Zanzibar's sudden and regular spike in the number of new visitors. Thus, the goal of this study is to find out how improving

human resources might improve Zanzibar Electricity Corporation's operational performance so that it can better serve the needs of its customers, both current and future. Therefore, the following objectives were drafted to meet the target of this study.

1. To examine the impact of extensive training on operational performance of ZECO
2. To examine the impact of information sharing on operational performance of ZECO
3. To examine the impact of selection hiring of new personnel on operational performance of ZECO

THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The Resource-Based View (RBV)

This theory was developed by Birger Wernerfelt in 1984. The RBV theory explained how firms can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by identifying and leveraging their internal resources and capabilities. This approach shifted the focus from external market conditions to the internal strengths and resources of the firm, marking a significant development in the field of strategic management. In the context of the research topic, "Impact of Human Resources Management on Operational Performance at ZECO the RBV theory underscores the importance of effectively managing the human resource base. Employee knowledge, skills, and expertise are intrinsic resources that contribute to the corporation's operational competitiveness. The study could delve into how Zanzibar Electricity Corporation's human resources management strategically nurtures and leverages employee knowledge to enhance operational performance. This includes examining HR practices related to talent acquisition, training, knowledge transfer, and employee development, emphasizing how these aspects contribute to the corporation's distinctive capabilities and competitive advantage in the energy sector.

Dynamic Capability Theory

Ambrosini (2009) explained on Dynamic capability theory originated from the characteristics of enterprises in order to effectively deal with the changes in market environments of the 1990s. In market dynamics such as economic globalization and diversification of consumer demand, a dynamic capability refers to the organization’s flexible capability to properly allocate internal and external resources, quickly make marketable products, effectively grasp changing business opportunities, and continuously maintain a competitive advantage. Most enterprises have implemented a digital strategy to improve competitive advantage. In the context of the "Impact of Human Resources Management on Operational Performance at ZECO the dynamic capability theory provides a relevant framework to understand how the corporation adapts to evolving market dynamics. The theory's emphasis on flexible resource allocation, swift product development, and effective response to changing business opportunities aligns with the need for human resources management practices that foster adaptability, innovation, and competitive advantage. By empirically exploring how the corporation's HR strategies enable resource optimization, encourage innovation, and contribute to seizing opportunities, the study aims to reveal the interplay between human resources practices and operational performance within the unique context of the Zanzibar Electricity Corporation.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Several empirical studies have explored the impact of human resource management practices on operational performance of public cooperation by emphasizing the role of human capital, innovation, and organizational practices. Some of these articles were;

For instance, Osei et al. (2021) examined the impact of human resource practices on operational performance in the energy sector across West Africa. Using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach on data from 200 employees, the study found that training, performance appraisal, and employee involvement were positively correlated with key performance indicators such as service reliability and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Ali and Anwar (2020) assessed the influence of innovation capability on operational performance in service firms in Pakistan. The study employed partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and revealed that innovation capability particularly in process and technological innovation was significantly linked to timely service delivery and cost efficiency.

In a study focused on utilities, Kuo and Wang (2022) analyzed the mediating effect of digital transformation on the relationship between organizational learning and operational performance in Taiwan's energy providers. Findings indicated that digitalization enhanced performance outcomes, especially in reducing lead times and improving customer service.

Alnahhal and Daboul (2023) investigated how strategic HRM practices affect operational resilience and performance in public infrastructure organizations in the Middle East. They found that employee training and leadership development significantly contributed to operational continuity and efficiency under stress conditions such as power outages. Furthermore, Sharma and Singh (2020) explored the role of employee engagement in improving operational performance in public utility firms in India. Results based on regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship between engagement levels and operational efficiency metrics, such as downtime reduction and service restoration speed.

Knowledge Gap

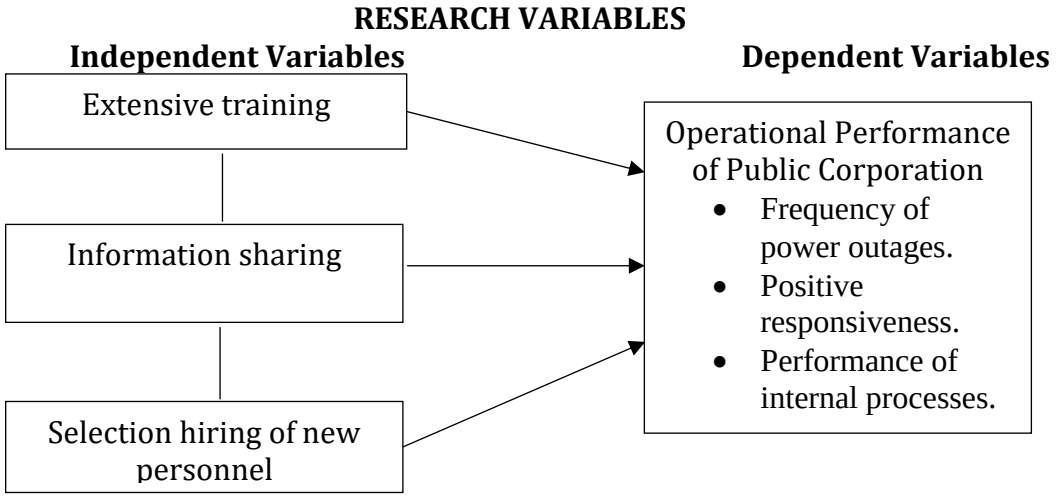

Figure 1: conceptual framework.
Source: author's creation (2024)

The framework of this study takes into consideration both conceptual ideas and available empirical studies. It is organized based on two kinds of variables, predictor variables, and the outcome variable. The predictor variables are a set of factors from human resource management practice that altogether determine impact the operational performance. The

factors considered are the demographic factors of human resources other factors that may directly and indirectly impact operational performance.

METHODOLOGY

This research study was conducted at Zanzibar Electric Corporation (ZECO) in Unguja, Zanzibar, to investigate concerns about employee engagement and the effectiveness of the employee selection and hiring process. The research design used was cross-section design, which allowed for data collection from a diverse group of participants at a single point in time. The research approach was quantitative, focusing on quantifying data collection and analysis. The target population for this study was all employees of ZECO in Unguja Zanzibar, with a total of 593 employees by July 2024. Simple random sampling was used to select sample of 215 respondents. The study used a self-administered questionnaire as the main source of data collection, ensuring high return rates and reducing time and cost. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions distributed among respondents, and collected for review and additional processing. Validity and reliability of the instrument were assessed using Cronbach Alpha, a reliable method for evaluating internal consistency. Data analysis involved examining and interpreting data to uncover meaningful insights and trends. Techniques included descriptive statistics for summarizing data and regression analysis to explore relationships and impact between variables.

STUDY FINDINGS

Demographic Findings

This section includes analysis of variables such as age, gender, educational background, job position, and years of experience. Also, demographic particular gives contextual insights by knowing who the respondents are helps contextualize their perspectives and experiences, which can influence how they perceive and report on HR practices and operational performance.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	126	58.6
	Female	89	41.4
Age	Under 20	3	1.2
	20-30	47	21.9
	31-40	82	38.1
	41-50	46	21.4
	51-60	37	17.2
Education level	Less than high school	26	12.09
	high school diploma	97	45.12
	Collage/Associate Degree	20	9.3
	Bachelor's Degree	48	22.33
	Master Degree	21	9.77
	Doctorate/ Professional Degree	3	1.4
Job position of respondents	Top Management	12	5.58
	Middle Management	36	16.74
	Supervisor/ Team Leader	26	12.09
	Operational Staff	91	42.33

	Linner Staff	37	17.21
	Other	13	6.05
Working tenure of respondents	Less than One Year	30	14.02
	1-3 Years	51	23.83
	4-6 Years	74	34.58
	7-10 Years	41	19.16
	More Than 10 Years	18	8.41

Source: Researcher, 2024

The majority of respondents at ZECO in Unguja are male, with 58.6% being male and 41.4% being female. This is advantageous for heavy operations like installing electricity poles and meters, as men are generally stronger and more capable of performing physically demanding tasks. However, only 23.1% of respondents are under 30 or 30 years old, 17.2% are about to retire, and 38.1% are aged between 31 and 40 years old. The majority of employees are well-educated, but challenges persist in the delivery of electricity services, particularly in initial service setups or addressing customer issues promptly. Top management and operational staff are the most experienced, but the services provided are perceived as inadequate due to the rapid increase in electricity demand. Despite their expertise, employee dissatisfaction persists, indicating that ZECO's services still fall short of meeting customer expectations.

Regression Analysis

A standard multiple linear regression analysis technique was employed for the inferential statistical analysis in this study. A researcher employs the multiple regression model to determine the impact of selection hiring, Training, information sharing on Operational Performance inferential. In this case, the researcher analyzes both model summary where by the R-squire was the key findings which show the total change of operational performance accounted by selection hiring, Training, information sharing.

Table 2: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.511a	0.262	0.249	0.262	20.196	0

a.Predictors: (Constant), selection hiring, Training, information sharing
b. Dependent Variable: Operational Performance

The key finding of the table is the R-squared value, which is 0.262. R-squared is a statistical measure used to assess how well a model explains the variance in the data. In this case, it indicates that the model explains 26.2% of the variance in operational performance is explained by selection hiring, Training and information sharing while 73.8% of the change of the operation performance is explained by other factor which are not included in the model.

Also, Adjusted R-square 24.9 which account for the number of predictors in the model. Because more predictors can lead to over fitting the data and artificially inflating the R-square, the adjusted R-square value is a more reliable measure of the model's fit. Furthermore, the F Statistic This value is 20.196 that is statistically significant (p-value = 0.000) which means the model is statistically significant.

Table 3: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.833	.230		7.971	.000
	Training	.130	.065	.150	1.994	.048
	Information sharing	.158	.058	.216	2.746	.007
	Selection hiring	.167	.043	.284	3.842	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Operational Performance

Based on the provided data in Table 3 the following is an analysis of the coefficients for the multiple linear regression model predicting Operational Performance of ZECO.

Constant: where B = 1.833: The intercept of the regression model. This is the predicted value of Operational Performance when all independent variables (Training, Information Sharing, Selection Hiring) are zero. Also, when t = 7.971, Sig. = 0.000: The constant is statistically significant, indicating that the mean value of Operational Performance is significantly different from zero when all predictors are held constant.

Specifically, the variable training where B = 0.130: which means for each one-unit increase in Training, Operational Performance is expected to increase by 0.130 units, holding other variables constant. Also, Beta = 0.150: This standardized coefficient indicates a moderate positive relationship between Training and Operational Performance. Although, t = 1.994, Sig. = 0.048: Training has a statistically significant effect on Operational Performance at the 5% significance level.

For the variable Information Sharing: B = 0.158: For each one-unit increase in Information Sharing, Operational Performance is expected to increase by 0.158 units, holding other variables constant. Beta = 0.216: This standardized coefficient suggests a stronger positive relationship between Information Sharing and Operational Performance compared to Training. t = 2.746, Sig. = 0.007: Information Sharing has a statistically significant impact on Operational Performance at the 1% significance level.

Finally, the Selection Hiring: B = 0.167: For each one-unit increase in Selection Hiring, Operational Performance is expected to increase by 0.167 units, holding other variables constant. Beta = 0.284: This standardized coefficient indicates the strongest positive relationship among the three predictors with Operational Performance. t = 3.842, Sig. = 0.000: Selection Hiring has a highly statistically significant effect on Operational Performance at the 1% significance level.

Thus, the multiple linear regression model suggests that Training, Information Sharing, and Selection Hiring are significant predictors of Operational Performance. Among them, Selection Hiring has the strongest positive impact, followed by Information Sharing and then Training. All predictors are statistically significant, indicating that improvements in these areas can enhance Operational Performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study demonstrates the relationship between various independent variables (Training, Information Sharing, and Selection Hiring) and the dependent variable, Operational Performance, using multiple linear regression analysis. The discussion of the findings was explained in relation to the specific objectives of the study.

Starting with the first objective, the finings revealed that the coefficient for Training is 0.130 with a standard error of 0.065. The standardized Beta coefficient is 0.150, and the t-value is 1.994 with a significance level of 0.048. This suggests that Training has a positive and statistically significant impact on Operational Performance ($p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with previous research, such as by Jeenanupan et al (2015), who found that there was a significant effect of frequency of the training Safety-driving skill on reduction of accidents without injuries per truck at the p less than 0.05 level for the three conditions. Also, there was a significant effect of frequency of the training on Safety-driving skill on reduction of accidents of fatal and injury per truck at the p less than 0.05 level for the three conditions.

Secondly, the findings for the objective two found that the coefficient for Information Sharing is 0.158 with a standard error of 0.058. The standardized Beta coefficient is 0.216, and the t-value is 2.746 with a significance level of 0.007. This indicates that Information Sharing has a significant and positive effect on Operational Performance ($p < 0.01$). This result is consistent with findings from previous studies. For instance, Jeenanupan et al (2015) showed that communication and information sharing among manager and employees has positive impact on net profit in LSPs. This means that communication and information sharing have positive influence on operational performance. Moreover, Li, Liu, and Liu (2008) found that effective information sharing enhances decision-making processes and operational efficiencies.

Thirdly, the findings for the third objective revealed that the coefficient for Selection Hiring is 0.167 with a standard error of 0.043. The standardized Beta coefficient is 0.284, and the t-value is 3.842 with a significance level of 0.000. This demonstrates that Selection Hiring has a highly significant and positive influence on Operational Performance ($p < 0.001$). Previous literature supports this finding. For example, Breaugh (2008) emphasized that rigorous selection and hiring practices ensure that the right individuals are placed in the right roles, which is critical for enhancing organizational performance. Additionally, Buthelezi (2020) worked on Factors influencing the operational performance of co-operatives in South Africa: Result concluded that the that management skills remained the key determinant of co-operative performance. Moreover, it is indicated that management skills are a significant factor in improving operational performance.

Finally, the findings from the regression analysis indicate that Training, Information Sharing, and Selection Hiring significantly contribute to enhancing Operational Performance. These results are in line with numerous past studies such Nguyen in 2022, Jeenanupan et al., in 2015 and Murwa-Igosangwa in 2014, underscoring the importance of these practices in achieving superior operational outcomes. Organizations should thus invest in robust training programs, promote effective information sharing, and implement rigorous selection and hiring processes to drive operational excellence

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the regression analysis for this study reveals that all three independent variables that means; Training, Information Sharing, and Selection Hiring have a significant positive impact on Operational Performance. Starting with training, the study concluded that there is a positive and statistically significant effect on Operational Performance which means as training increases, operational performance improves.

For the information sharing, the study concluded that there is a positive and statistically significant influence on Operational Performance which indicates a stronger impact compared to training. Finally, for the selection hiring the study concluded that this variable has the most substantial positive effect on Operational Performance which indicate that improving selection and hiring practices leads to the greatest increase in operational performance among the three factors.

Furthermore, findings underscore the critical role that human resource practices play in driving operational performance. Each of the predictors training, information sharing, and selection hiring has been shown to significantly influence operational performance, with selection hiring having the most pronounced effect. This suggests that organizations should prioritize strategic hiring practices to enhance their operational outcomes.

The significant impact of training and information sharing highlights the need for continuous investment in employee development and communication infrastructure. Organizations that foster a culture of learning and transparent information flow are likely to see improvements in their operational performance**.** Researcher found that providing relative training to employee, having best information sharing and selecting very careful new employee increase the organizational performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Researcher recommend that, ZECO should invest in training programs that are directly relevant to employee roles and operational goals. Also, ZECO should conduct a training needs assessment to identify skill gaps and develop targeted programs that address them. This could involve on-the-job training, workshops, or external certifications. Also, ZECO should Improve information flow between departments and employees has a significant positive correlation with performance. ZECO can implement better communication channels, knowledge-sharing platforms, or collaborative work structures to facilitate this. Additionally, ZECO should focus on refining its recruitment and selection methods to identify candidates with the competencies that directly contribute to achieving operational objectives. Furthermore, develop targeted job descriptions that clearly outline the required skills and experience. Utilize skills-based assessments and incorporate behavioral interview techniques to evaluate candidates' fit for the role and their ability to perform effectively.

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