

INTERVENING EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES ON THE LINK BETWEEN STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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Abstract: Contrary to empirical evidence that Strategic Human Resource Management Practices (SHRMPs) positively impacted performance of enterprises worldwide, public universities in Kenya, which are expected to apply SHRMPs have continued to perform below expectations, in terms of financial prospects, research and innovation, new programs development rate, learner enrolment rates, graduation rates, and employee promotion rates. Available empirical literature does not seem to address the role of employee outcomes in the link between SHRMPs and performance of public universities as conceptualized in this study. This study addressed this gap. The specific objective of this study was to determine the intervening effect of employee outcomes on the link between SHRMPs and performance of public universities in Kenya. The study tested the hypothesis that employee outcomes do not have an intervening effect on the link between SHRMPs and performance of public universities in Kenya. The study was anchored on the Human Capital Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design in a census approach. The target population was academic and non-academic employees of the 31 public universities in Kenya, using a sample of 155 respondents purposively selected from the three union representatives respectively; University Academic Staff Union (UASU), Kenya University Staff Union (KUSU), Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA), as well as one senior representative each from Academic Registrar and HR departments respectively. A self-administered five-level Likert type questionnaire was used for data collection. Based on the 110(71%) response rate, data was descriptively and inferentially analyzed using stepwise multiple linear regressions. It was found that there was a positive and statistically significant intervening influence of employee outcomes on the SHRMPs– public universities’ performance relationship. The study recommended that public universities in Kenya evidenced to be facing declining performance, exacerbated by dwindling government capitation ought to strategically select SHRMPs bundles that can enable them to optimize on the generation of desired employee outcomes, which would result in enhanced performance, sustainably and creatively.

Keywords: Employee outcomes, strategic human resource management and performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Long gone are the historical days of the 1970s, when controversy abounded about the role of Personnel Management, personnel managers and their impact in organizational set ups. Today, empirical literature is rich with studies which have affirmed the role of human resource management as unique approach towards employee management that pursues the

achieving of competitive advantage by applying a strategic deployment of a highly motivated and competent workforce, and usage of a combination of cultural, structural and people techniques methodologies (Storey, 1995).

More recently, and more relevant in this study, strategic human resource management has become a mainstay, constituting deliberate activities which help to distinguish one entity from its competitors (Purcell, 1999).

As aptly suggested by Hendry and Pettigrew (1986), strategic human resource management has quadruple implications, including, planning, using a streamlined approach to the designing and managing people according to a definite employment policy derived from a given philosophy, a deliberate matching of certain HRM-oriented interventions and policies to a strategic business strategy and, more crucially, a deliberate consideration and perception of the people of the enterprise as a 'strategic asset in the path towards achieving competitive edge (Armstrong & Taylor (2014) Armstrong, 2006)

It is in this context that this study arose. As varied business environment dynamics continue to impact organizations, including the Covid 19 pandemic and its ramifications in the work place, the assimilation of strategic human resource management practices by organizations worldwide continues to gain momentum at the same time. In modern organizations, the need to use a strategic cadre of people as a driver towards achieving high and sustainable performance levels requires the integration of human resource management practices into the strategic pursuits of an enterprise. To this end, typical HR practices are strategically mainstreamed into the targeted key strategic pillars of a given organization, thereby influencing that organization's processes, actions and decisions towards desired performance (Huselid, 1995; Mohammed, 2019).

In this regard, this study is particularly concerned with strategic human resource management practices and enterprise performance, in the context of employee outcomes, and the extent to which these outcomes may influence the performance of national universities in Kenya. There is research-based evidence that organization settings characterized by systems which drive high work performance (HPWS) precipitate a disconnect of the same between the existing HPWS at the organization level (organization outcomes) on the one hand, and the HPWS at the employee level (employee outcomes) Zhang, MAkhtar, Bal, Zhang and Talat (2018).

Employee outcomes has been construed as constituting personalized behaviors derived from work-related attitudes or believe systems (Ambula, Awino and K'Obonyo, 2016). Employee outcomes, therefore, refer to such states of mind on the part of employees, including level of gratification or motivation, self-drive level or commitment and empowerment, all of which affect how teamwork exists among workers (Ambula et. al., 2016). In support of this, it has been empirically suggested that employee outcomes are direct gains from the strategic human resource practices (SHRMPs) in place.

More pertinently, according to Veth, Korzilius, van der Heijden, Emans, De Lange (2019) employee outcomes have been linked to organizational performance. However, they pointed out that although it has been evident that where employees perceived the provision of SHRM practices, there was a marked increase in employee outcomes, this relationship is not necessarily proportional, given the individualized nature of employee outcomes, the levels of which may vary from one employee to another. As conceptualized in this study, varying employee outcomes result from the provision of strategic human resource practices as implemented by a given organization.. However, depending on other mainly subjective or personalized factors, given the nature of employee outcomes, the employees, either on their own accord, or as influenced by a given organization's internal circumstances, including the implemented bundle of SHRMPs, are likely to perceive and act supportively or otherwise, with respect to that organization's intentions, goals and objectives. In this respect, therefore, employee outcomes, as indicated by four elements as conceptualized in this study; level of employee motivation, commitment, empowerment and teamwork. In line with these, It is envisaged in this study, therefore, that employee outcomes arising out of an implemented bundle of SHRMPs, (conceptualized in this study as; rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management), may mediate the relationship between the implemented SHRMPs and university performance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

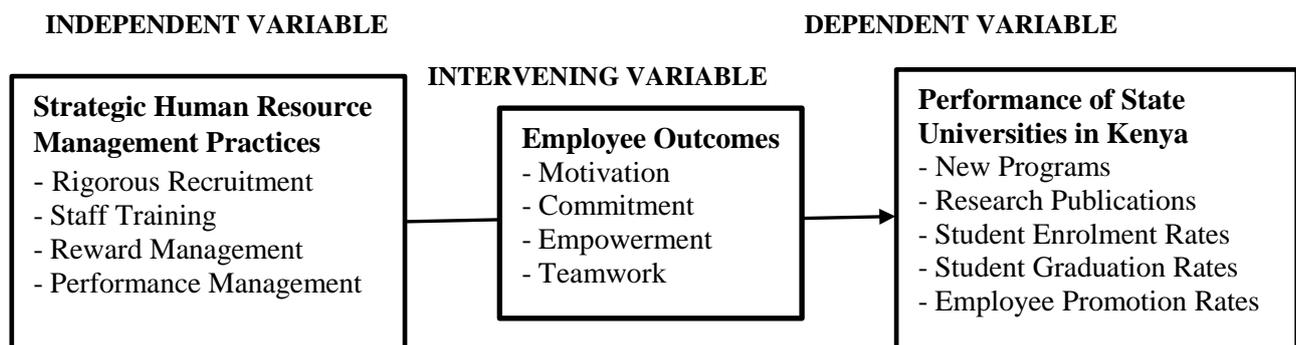
This section presents and discusses the theoretical, empirical and conceptual literature related to this study, highlighting the relevance of the theory and how the current study may be situated within the wider theoretical and empirical foundations in human resource management as a discipline. The research gaps and a summary are presented as well.

2.2 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory proposes that people in an organization constitute an asset which adds value by ensuring desired performance (Schultz, 1961). According to Dinzhanova (2021), human capital as a concept entails a mix of both human and capital, such that economically speaking, the capital element denotes factors used in production. These factors are the ones which give rise to products not directly used up in the processing (Boldizzoni, 2008). The human element refers to the subjective element which takes control in the ensuing activities of producing, consumption, and transactions. Hence, the concept human capital presents the production process aspects responsible for generating value addition via being the inputs in the process. More relevantly, this theory refers to the creation of human capital, whereby, the input of labour force is viewed alongside the input of other physical capital resources, including finance capital, equipment and so on. However, the theory proposes that for an organization, investing in physical capital may return similar efficiencies and effects to investing in educating and the training of the human capital (Little, 2003).

Fundamentally, according to this theory, human capital then conceptualizes the human element to imply the human as creating element, knowledgeable and skillful, competent, experienced and able to transverse from the own to the external environments. The relevance of the Human Capital Theory to this study is demonstrated in two ways. First, the theory is centered on the impact of employees – the human capital in an organization. Secondly, the theory links human capital to the operationalization and implementation of human resource related activities in a business enterprise, in the process of enabling employees to actualize goals and objectives therein. However, a keen study of this theory does not seem to directly reveal much which is specific to employee outcomes as conceptualized in this study. Therefore, this study potentially helped to add to, and most likely expanded the propositions of the Human Capital Theory.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



Source: Researchers (2022)

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

2.4 Empirical Review

All enterprises exist to achieve certain ends. Organizational performance is more often measured quantitatively, usually in economic terms. This performance is said to be achieved when all the efforts of individual employees and sections of an enterprise are aggregated (Zehir, Gurol, Karaboga, and Kole (2016). Empirically, the relevance of human resource management practices in the pursuit of desired performance by enterprises has been documented variously. For instance, Otoo (2019) and Moustaghfir, El Fatihi and Benouarrek, (2020).

Based on empirical literature, this study conceptualized the bundle of strategic human resource management practices as; rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management. Various studies have linked strategic human resource management practices to performance of enterprises. For instance, Al-Khaled & Al-Khaled, Sultan & Chung, Jee Fenn, (2020), who pointed out that entities that adopted strategic human resource management practices created a sustaining capacity in attaining their goals and to flourish in their respective industries. Likewise, Eneh and Awara (2016), in a descriptive study on strategic human resource management practices and organizational growth in Nigeria, found that strategic human resource management practices had significantly impacted the growth of organizations, and that such entities were able to utilize their human resources much better as a result. They added that strategic human resource management practices such as training of employees, human resource planning, prompt rewarding, and selective recruitment served as drivers of sustainable competitive advantage.

In Kenya, using a census study targeting public universities in Kenya, Mutahi and Busienei (2015) revealed that strategic HRM practices positively affected performance of public universities in Kenya, with strategic rewarding and training of employees as strategies being key. They recommended development of appropriate employment policy to encourage job security and that the government ought to base the recruitment and selection in universities on the equalizing employment opportunity principle, with periodic analysis of employee competencies and a refocusing on identification of employee training needs for employee growth among other interventions. Likewise, Naitore and Wanyoike (2019), using a descriptive survey of 13 public universities in Kenya, established that there was a positive and significant relationship linking strategic human resource management practices, in terms of HR planning and staffing and the performance of selected Public Universities in Kenya.

It is in this context that this study investigated a possible role of employee outcomes in the relationship between SHRMPs and performance of public universities in Kenya, suggesting that the declining performance of the said universities may probably be empirically attributed to the said employee outcomes. This is because, as evidenced by empirical literature, any organization seeking to create a good foundation in the management of its people towards desired performance needs to consider the fact that this could be achieved where employees are fundamentally valued by that organization, and considered as the key assets of such an organization.

Empirically, the strategic human resource practices-employee outcomes-performance nexus is well documented. For instance, Hamadamin, Halbast & Atan, Tarik (2019) used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques and Smart Partial Least square (PLS) on employees of selected universities in Iraq. They found that there was a significant influence of the SHRMPs on competitiveness through employee commitment and hence employee commitment had partial mediating impact on the SHRMPs and university performance relationship. Likewise, using explanatory design with 380 employees and managers of manufacturing concerns in Ethiopia, it was found that though hierarchical regression and structural equation modeling showed no direct SHRMPs-performance relationship, the HRM practices did initially affect employee outcomes.

This in turn affected enterprise performance and indeed, the employee outcomes had a higher impact on this performance as compared the SHRMPs, implying a mediating influence (Wubishet, [Chekole](#) and Wedajo, 2018). The potential mediation relevance of employee outcomes upon strategic human resource management vis a vis the university performance does not appear to have been addressed in current empirical literature. Indeed, even the few related studies available focused on human resource practices at a functional level, rather than strategic human resource management practices at the strategic level as envisaged in this study.

Using a cross sectional descriptive survey and a population of 60 Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) listed firms in Kenya, Sagwa, K'Obonyo and Ogutu (2014) empirically established that human resource management practices had a significant effect on employee outcomes. However, in contrast, the study found that employee outcomes did not affect firm performance nor mediate the human resource management practices-firm performance relationship. From the foregoing, there is a need to empirically address the apparent contradiction where internationally and regionally; Hamadamin, Halbast & Atan, Tarik. (2019) and Wubishet, [Chekole](#) and Wedajo, (2018), respectively determined that there was a mediating effect on one hand, while locally, Sagwa, K'Obonyo and Ogutu, (2014) established that there was no effect, and hence the need for this study.

2.5 Critique of the relevant existing literature

The potential mediating influence relevance of employee outcomes upon strategic human resource management vis a vis the university performance does not appear to have been addressed in the current empirical literature. Indeed, even the few related studies available focused on human resource practices at a functional level, rather than strategic human resource management practices at the strategic level as envisaged in this study. This can be justified empirically. For instance, using a cross sectional descriptive survey and a population of 60 NSE listed firms in Kenya, Sagwa, K'Obonyo and Ogutu (2014) established that human resource management practices had a significant effect on employee outcomes. However, in contrast, the study found that employee outcomes did not affect firm performance nor mediate the human resource management practices-firm performance relationship.

2.6 Research Gaps

There is empirical evidence that strategic human resource management practices as a bundle do indeed positively influence performance in organizations, especially in the private sector. The current evidence of declining performance in public universities seems to contradict the empirical evidence that the implementation of strategic human resource management

practices positively impact performance. This is evidenced variously, for instance, Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) (2016), and Auditor General (Kenya) Reports (2019, 2020, and 2021), all pointing out that the performance of public universities has been consistently on the decline. Yet, most of the relevant empirical studies reviewed seemed to be contextualized in the private sector rather than the public sector.

In addition, most of the studies reviewed, which contextualized strategic human resource management practices and performance in public universities were undertaken outside of Kenya. Most importantly, there does not seem to be any study, within or outside Kenya, which addressed the possible mediating influence of employee outcomes through the indicators conceptualized in this study, that is, level of employee motivation, commitment, empowerment and teamwork within the public universities on the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya, hence the need for this study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This section presents the philosophical inclination, research design, target population of the study, sampling technique and sample size, research instruments and data collection procedures, operationalization of key variables of the study, validity and reliability as well as the techniques to be used in ensuring ethical standards.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design in a census approach. This was because the study aimed to determine what existed according to the variables in question, Glass & Hopkins, (1984). The study as exemplified in the objective and hypothesis, made inferences beyond the data collected, to describe events and arrange them in logical themes, not only to describe the existing phenomenon (Borg & Gall, 1989). The study ontologically established what needed to be known about the SHRMPs-performance interaction with particular emphasis on the mediation role of employee outcomes in the relationship between SHRMPs and performance - in public universities in Kenya as conceptualized.

3.3 Target Population

This study targeted 155 representatives of academic and nonacademic staff of 31 public universities in Kenya (Commission for University education (CUE), 2016). Table 1 presents the sampling frame of the study.

Table 1: Sampling Frame of the Study

No	NAME OF UNIVERSITY	HRM	AR	UASU	KUSU	KUDHEIHA	TOTAL
1	University of Nairobi	1	1	1	1	1	5
2	Moi University	1	1	1	1	1	5
3	Kenyatta University	1	1	1	1	1	5
4	Egerton University	1	1	1	1	1	5
5	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	1	1	1	1	1	5
6	Maseno University	1	1	1	1	1	5
7	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology	1	1	1	1	1	5
8	Dedan Kimathi University of Technology	1	1	1	1	1	5
9	Chuka University	1	1	1	1	1	5
10	Technical University of Kenya	1	1	1	1	1	5
11	Technical University of Mombasa	1	1	1	1	1	5
12	Pwani University	1	1	1	1	1	5
13	Kisii University	1	1	1	1	1	5
14	University of Eldoret	1	1	1	1	1	5
15	Maasai Mara University	1	1	1	1	1	5
16	Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology	1	1	1	1	1	5
17	Laikipia University	1	1	1	1	1	5
18	South Eastern Kenya University	1	1	1	1	1	5

19	Meru University of Science and Technology	1	1	1	1	1	5
20	Multimedia University of Kenya	1	1	1	1	1	5
21	University of Kabianga	1	1	1	1	1	5
22	Karatina University	1	1	1	1	1	5
23	Kibabii University	1	1	1	1	1	5
24	Rongo University	1	1	1	1	1	5
25	The Co-Operative University of Kenya	1	1	1	1	1	5
26	Taita Taveta University	1	1	1	1	1	5
27	Murang'a University of Technology	1	1	1	1	1	5
28	University of Embu	1	1	1	1	1	5
29	Machakos University	1	1	1	1	1	5
30	Kirinyaga University	1	1	1	1	1	5
31	Garissa University	1	1	1	1	1	5
	TOTAL	31	31	31	31	31	155

Source: Researcher Data (2022)

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling constitutes the use of a certain technique in the selection of a smaller set of the total population, usually to enable a researcher to make inferences about that population or to generalize the results (Taherdoost, 2016). This study used all the 31 public universities in Kenya and hence catered for the need for generalization and inference of the results to the population is to a certain extent secondary.

Because of the large population involved, on the one hand, but the need to control the selection of the sample for validity and reliability on the other hand, Quota sampling was used as a balance between random and non-random approach to enable a deliberate choice of a sample on the grounds of ensuring that this sample has the desired array of traits that is similar to the target population (Davis, 2005; Taherdoost, 2016). Hence, this enabled stratification to create representative units of observation in each of the 31 universities; first, senior officers to represent the HR-specialized cadre of employees (HR Director/Manager/Registrar) in each university was selected. This was because it was these employees who were essentially engaged in the implementation and operationalization of SHRMPs within the human resource management units. Secondly, the dependent variable of this study – performance – was conceptualized to essentially focus on the impact of SHRMPs on the performance of universities.

This was with specific emphasis on new programs, research publications, student enrolment rates and student graduation rates. Hence, the Academic Registrar or his or her deputy in each university is able to provide data on the same. Finally, the union officials representing their respective academic as well as the non-academic staff are deemed as being knowledgeable and experienced in providing the data needed regarding the impact of the SHRMPs as conceptualized in the objectives of this study. In this case, therefore, and in each university, senior officials (Chairman/Person or Secretary General) of the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU), Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU) and Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) were selected. This made a total of five respondents in each university and the grand total of 155 for all the 31 Kenya national universities.

3.5 Data Collection Instrument

A self-administered 5-scale Likert type questionnaire was used to collect primary quantitative data from the respondents. The instrument was suitable for this study because the objective of the study related to determination of attitude-oriented information concerning SHRMPs, employee outcomes and performance of public universities.

3.6 Pilot Testing

As recommended by Doodley (2003), and Field (2009), research instruments ought to be thoroughly pre-checked to ensure accuracy and reliability of the data collected. The questionnaire was pilot-tested using 30 respondents from the target population. The respondents for the pilot were picked systematically at random, and did not take part in the actual study. The feedback enabled the reconstruction of questions and respective items to avoid ambiguity and bias.

3.7 Reliability of Research Instrument

To enhance research instrument reliability in addition to piloting the questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha Coefficients were used to determine how items of the research instruments were related to each other. An acceptable measure of reliability is where the alpha coefficients ranges from 0.6 - 0.7 and above, according to Ehlers & Clark (2000). In addition, diagnostic tests were undertaken in line with the assumptions of regression, including Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test for sampling adequacy, linearity test, multicollinearity test, normality test and homoscedasticity.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Analyzing data is about examining collected and coded data to enable inferences (Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). Once data is analyzed and inferences have been made appropriately, it is arranged and organized for presentation in a way that makes the data easy to understand. Based on the objective of this study, analysis of the raw data was undertaken after careful cleaning, sorting and coding, using SPSS software. Descriptive and inferential statistics were processed using quantitative approach to aid in describing the features of the data as per the objective (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

For this purpose, the inferential data was computed at 0.05 level of significance, such that the arising p-values and coefficients were used to determine the relationships between the variables. Ultimately, the study presented the findings on tables, using percentages, means and standard deviations.

3.8.1 Statistical Models for Data Analysis

Employee outcomes, the intervening variable was determined to be so because as conceptualized in this study, any changes in the level SHRMPs – the independent variable would considerably be attributable to changes in employee outcomes (EOs). In addition, it was proposed in this study that a given variation in EOs may substantially explain any such variation in performance – the dependent variable, such that, where EOs are absent or minimal, there is likely to be little or no effect on performance, even where SHRMPs had been implemented (Baron and Kenny, 1986). However, given that the appropriateness of an intervention assertion is dependent not on statistics and theory basis only, but on a researcher's experiential and or assumed viewpoints (Agler & De Boek, 2017).

An intervention shall be determined to exist, if there is a causal indirect effect of EOs on the relationship between SHRMPs and performance on one hand, on the direct SHRMPs– performance relationship on the other. To this end, a four-step approach to hierarchical multi linear regression was used to analyze the relationship between employee outcomes – the intervening variable, and the relationship between the independent variable – strategic human resource management practices - and performance of Kenya national universities - the dependent variable. The models in each of the steps is as follows: **Step one:** Regression analysis with Xi predicting Y was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_4 X_i + \epsilon$. **Step two:** Regression analysis with Xi predicting T was $T = \beta_0 + \beta_5 X_i + \epsilon$. **Step three:** Regression analysis with T predicting Y was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_6 T + \epsilon$. **Step four:** Regression analysis with Xi and T predicting Y was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_7 X_i + \beta_8 T + \epsilon$ where Y = Performance of Public Universities in Kenya, Xi = Composite Index of Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and T = Employee Outcomes, β_4 β_5 β_6 β_7 β_8 = Coefficients for Composite Index of Strategic Human Resource Management Practices, β_7 , β_8 = Coefficients for Employee Outcomes, β_0 = Constant, and ϵ = Error term.

Hence, step one to three were used to determine whether or not, a relationship existed among the respective variables, such that, where one or more of these relationships was non-significant the conclusion was that intervention was not present (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Progressing to step four was dependent on finding significant relationships at steps one to three. At step four the intervention was supported if the effect of strategic human resource management practices remained significant after controlling for employee outcomes. In case employee outcomes was insignificant, when strategic human resource management practices was controlled, there would be determined to be full intervention.

However, should strategic human resource management practices and employee outcomes significantly predict performance of public universities, partial mediation or intervention would be determined to exist

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Diagnostic Tests Results

This section presents all the respective diagnostic tests undertaken to verify the suitability of data for inferential statistics analysis

4.1.1 Reliability Test Results

To test for reliability, and in addition to piloting the questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to determine how items of the research instruments were related to each other. An acceptable measure of reliability is where the alpha coefficients ranges from 0.6 - 0.7 and above, according to Ehlers & Clark (2000). The results of the test are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Results of Cronbach Alpha Test

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Remarks
Strategic Human Resource Management Practices	12	.85	Acceptable
Employee Outcomes	12	.75	Acceptable
Performance of Public Universities	5	.83	Acceptable
Overall Instrument Reliability	41	.87	Acceptable

Source: Research Data (2022)

As illustrated on Table 2, all the variables had coefficients above 0.6 implying that the instrument was reliable for analysis purposes.

4.1.2 Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test for Sampling Adequacy

To determine the extent to which the sample was adequate, and therefore, fit for inferential statistics analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was undertaken. As recommended by Field (2009) an acceptable KMO DF statistic should be greater than 0.05 and between 0.6 and 1, for the data set to be considered adequately suitable for statistical analysis. The results of this test are presented in Table 3

Table 3: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test for Sampling Adequacy Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sample Adequacy	KMO Statistic	Sig
	0.824	0.000

Source: Research Data (2022)

As Table 3 indicates the KMO statistic for the sample as used in this study was 0.824, and was higher than the 0.6 threshold as recommended by Field (2009). Hence, the data collected was considered adequate for inferential statistical analysis.

4.1.3 Linearity Test

A linearity test was conducted to test one of the assumptions of regression modeling, and therefore to determine the extent to which the linearity of the variables in this study is adequate. As suggested by Cohen, West and Aiken (2003) and Field (2009), a Pearson Correlation Coefficient analysis was used to compare the p-values of all the variables at 0.001, where if p-value < 0.001, linear relationship between independent and dependent variables was determined to exist. The results of the test are presented on Table 4.

Table 4: Linearity Test Results

		Employee Outcomes	SHRMPs	University Performance
Employee Outcomes	Pearson Correlation	1	.662**	.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	109	108	109
SHRMPs	Pearson Correlation	.662**	1	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	108	109	109
University Performance	Pearson Correlation	.733**	.640**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	109	109	110

As Table 4 shows, all the relationships between the constructs within the variables are linear, with a p-value of less than $P < 0.01$ in each case. The implication of this is that the variables and the constructs within are suitable for regression analysis, and that instrument of measurement closely corresponds to the reality of the constructs being measured.

4.1.4 Multicollinearity Test Results

Multicollinearity test was undertaken to test for any possible problem in relation to undesirable inter-correlations among the independent variables under strategic human resource management practices as a single variable (Kothari, 2009; Myers, 1990). Table 5 shows the results of multicollinearity diagnostics for the study variables.

Table 5: Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Multicollinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance Value	VIF
Strategic Human Resource Management Practices	0.517	2.436
Employee Outcomes	0.530	2.342

Dependent variable: Performance of Public Universities

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 5 the tolerance values for the bundle of SHRMPs, (rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management), as well as the sub variables of employee outcomes (motivation, commitment, empowerment and teamwork), were all higher than the acceptable minimum limit of 0.1 as proposed by Senaviratna NAMR & Cooray (2019).

4.1.5 Normality Test

Using the Shapiro–Wilk, the assumption of normality was test to determine the extent of departure from normality as a prerequisite for dependable data analysis. In this test, the distribution of independent variables within a given distribution was determine to ensure that the data was normal to guard against inflated statistics and or underestimated standard errors (Brooks, 2014; Conover, 1999; Malhotra & Dash, 2011). A significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, where p-value > 0.05 would indicate that the independent variables are normally distributed and p-value < 0.05 would signify abnormality in the distribution of independent variables. The results of this test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Normality Test Results

Variable	Statistic	Df	Sig
Strategic Human Resource Management Practices	0.862	131	0.488
Employee Outcomes	0.879	131	0.738
Performance of Public Universities	0.853	131	0.413

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 6, Strategic human resource management practices, employee outcomes and performance of public universities all showed significance values which were higher than the 0.05 threshold as proposed by Norusis (2003). Hence, the strategic human resource management practices, employee outcomes and performance of public universities variables are derived from normal distributions.

4.1.6 Homoscedasticity Test Results

To test for the condition that the dependent variable reflects similar amounts of variance across the given range of values of a given independent variable, the Levene test was undertaken to check any level of homoscedasticity. One-way Anova was used to calculate the variance equality, and hence, determine homoscedasticity status (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1998; Levene, 1960). The variance would be determined as being equal if the Levene test probability statistics show a value higher than the significance level of 0.05.(Warner, 2008). The results of this test are presented in Table 7

Table 7: Homoscedasticity Test Results

Test of Homogeneity of Variance					
University Performance indicators	Levene statistic	df ₁	df ₂	Sig	Conclusion
New Programmes	1.110	2	129	0.841	P > 0.05 Equal variance
Research Publications	1.163	2	129	0.383	P > 0.05 Equal variance
Student Enrolment Rates	1.182	2	129	0.361	P > 0.05 Equal variance
Student Graduation Rates	2.503	2	129	0.163	P > 0.05 Equal variance
Staff Promotion Rates	3.651	2	129	0.263	P > 0.05 Equal variance

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 7 the Levene test df statistics for all the five indicators of the performance of public universities four indicators all had p-values above the 0.05 significance level (Warner, 2008). Hence, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was present, implying that the variance for the variable indicators of performance of public universities was constant.

4.1.7 Multicollinearity Test

The study conducted multicollinearity test to ensure that the explanatory variables strategic human resource management and employee outcomes were not correlated with one another as suggested by Myers (1990). A Multicollinearity problem exists when the independent variables are highly correlated with each other and can therefore lead to misleading results (Myers, 1990; Kothari, 2009). Table 8 shows the results of multicollinearity diagnostics for the study variables.

Table 8: Results of Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance Value	VIF
Strategic Human Resource Management Practices	0.394	2.466
Employee Outcomes	0.532	1.425

Dependent variable: Performance of Public Universities

Source: Research Data (2022)

As Table 8 indicates, the tolerance coefficients for strategic human resource management and employee outcomes were acceptably above 0.1 as recommended (Menard, 1995). Likewise, the respective VIF values for each of the independent variables are acceptable at less than 10, indicating that the independent variables were least correlated, and hence no multicollinearity among them (Kutner, Nachtshein & Neter, 2004).

4.2 Descriptive statistics on SHRMPs and University Performance

Under objectives 1, the respective independent variables within the composite bundle of strategic human resource management practices, were measured using indicators captured through statements designed to represent the respective indicators. This study specifically and purposely selected four typical strategic practices from the existing empirical and theoretical literature, including Zehir, Gurol, Karaboga, and Kole 2016; Moustaghfir, El Fatihi and Benouarrek (2020) and Ojokuku and Akanbi (2015).

In this respect, the four typical strategic human resource management practices were purposively selected based on their significance in influencing the performance of organizations as evidenced by empirical literature. These practices were; rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management. A five level Likert type scale, using statements pertaining to the four strategic human resource management practices. The findings under each of the three indicators, namely rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management are presented on

Table 9, finding that; for rigorous recruitment, 62 % of the respondents were agreeable that the university strictly adhered to the prescribed or customized recruitment and selection policy in hiring staff. This included those who were neutral, and were taken to be supportive because they did not disagree. On the other hand, 38% disagreed with the same. On whether hiring was based on elaborate job descriptions of the vacant positions by the universities, 47% were agreeable, including those who were neutral, while 53 disagreed.

On whether merit, rather than nepotism counted in the recruitment processes at the universities, 32% agreed, while 68% disagreed with the same. It was notable that except for adherence to the prescribed or customized recruitment and selection policy hiring staff, where the majority of 67% agreed, the respondent generally disagreed with the other two indicators where 53% disagreed that hiring was based on elaborate job descriptions of the vacant positions by the universities, and 68% disagreed with the suggestion that merit rather than nepotism counted in the recruitment process at the universities. On the whole, therefore, rigorous recruitment as a strategic human resource management practices does not appear to strongly implemented, based on the indicators used in this study.

However, given the 62%, 47% and 32% who agreed with the three indicators respectively, there is a good measure of implementation, though, as it appears from the responses, not as impactful as desired.

For staff training, 36% agreed with the indicator statement that there was provision of continuous professional career development for all categories of employees. However, 64% disagreed with the same. On whether Induction training was strategically provided for, 25% agreed, while a corresponding 75% disagreed with the same. Similarly, on whether continuous professional career development for all categories of employees was adequately provided by the university, 20% were agreeable, while 80% were not. As it appears from these data, the majority of respondents seemed not to perceive the staff training strategic practice as being provided or implemented adequately. However it appears, at the same time, that a sizeable number, that is, 36%, 25%, 20% respectively seemed to be supportive, implying a possible, however, moderate impact on the part of employees of the universities, from strategic staff training as a practice.

On reward management as a strategic human resource management practice, 22% agreed with the indicator statement that Job promotion as well as upward mobility were part of the rewarding mechanisms in the universities, while 78% disagreed with this. Likewise, 21% agreed with the statement suggesting that the terms of service and benefits were motivating to employees in the university. However a dissenting 79% disagreed. Concerning the statement suggesting that there were other university-driven incentive schemes other than those stipulated by the statutory government scheme, 20% agreed, but a majority 80% disagreed. Going by these statistics on reward management as a strategic human resource management practice, most of the respondents seem to perceive minimal impact from strategic staff training practice, as deductible from table 9.

On performance management as a strategic human resource management practice, the responses, based on the respective indicator statements, show that 29% agreed with the statement that communication was well done with appropriate feedback between supervisors and their subordinates. On the same statement, however, 71% disagreed. Concerning the statement that the performance appraisal system in the university was well defined, accurate, fair, objective and reliable, 25% were agreeable, while 75% disagreed.

Likewise, regarding the statement that the performance evaluation system in the university provided a link to the training and development programs as well as a mentoring system for the junior employees, The mean and the standard deviation for each item under each strategic human resource management practice seem to support the foregoing responses, with the means of under 3 in each case, seeming to affirm the majority disagreeing responses respectively. The mean and standard deviation captured respectively also seem to illustrate a normal distribution.

This is because, the empirical rule of thumb asserts that in a normal distribution, approximately 68% of scores would be within 1 standard deviation from mean, while almost 95% of the indicated scorings would deviate within 2 points from the mean. Also that approximately 99.7% of the grades would tend to fall around 3 deviations from the mean (Jim, 2019). The standard deviation of the data collected with respect to the strategic human resource management practices under investigation in this study ranged from 0.80 to 1.12. For the purpose of analysis, this range seemed to be well within the acceptable limits, and is hence considered appropriate for further analysis. Table 4.8 provides a breakdown of the respective responses per variable of the strategic human resource management practices bundle.

Table 9: Responses on Strategic Human Resource Management Practices

Variable	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES									
Rigorous Recruitment		%	%	%	%	%	%		
My university strictly adheres to the prescribed or customized recruitment and selection policy in hiring staff	110	3	40	19	26	12	100	2.95	1.12
Hiring is based on elaborate job descriptions of the vacant positions	110	2	10	35	40	13	100	2.41	.941
Merit, rather than nepotism counts in the recruitment process	110	6	6	19	43	26	100	2.37	1.04
Staff Training									
The university adheres to an elaborate training and development policy	110	2	17	17	48	16	100	2.42	1.01
Induction training is strategically provided for new and also promoted workers	110	2	6	17	58	17	100	2.14	.800
Continuous professional career development for all categories of employees is adequately provided	110	0	3	17	54	26	100	1.96	.74
Reward Management									
Job promotion as well as upward mobility are part of the rewarding mechanisms in the university	110	5	11	6	53	25	100	2.16	1.07
The terms of service and benefits are motivating to employees in the university	110	3	10	8	53	26	100	2.10	.100
There are other university-driven incentive schemes other than those stipulated by the statutory government scheme	110	0	7	13	56	24	100	2.04	.81
Performance Management									
Communication is well done with appropriate feedback between supervisors and their subordinates in the university	110	1	14	14	44	27	100	2.19	1.04
The performance appraisal system in the university is well defined, accurate, fair, objective and reliable	110	2	8	15	45	30	100	2.05	.93
The performance evaluation system in the university provides a link to the training and development programs as well as a mentoring system for the junior employees	110	2	5	13	48	32	100	1.92	.85

Source: Research Data (2022)

As illustrated on Table 9, the respondents seemed to perceive, based on the respective indicator statements used, that each of the strategic human resource management practices as conceptualized in this study, that is rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management is considerably less impactful. However, the fact that a good percentage, though a minority, of respondents were supportive of the respective practices, it may be argued that this was an indication that each of the practices have a certain amount of impact on the employees of the public universities. As conceptualized in this study, the influence of strategic human resource management practices may be hampered or promoted by the state of the human resource management unit as well as the employee outcomes which result from the implementation of the said strategic human resource management practices. Pending the analysis of the data on human resource management unit, this hypothesis seems to hold at this point.

In addition, the existence of the strategic human resource management practices in the national universities confirms Ojokuku and Akanbi (2015), who found that indeed, universities did implement certain strategic human resource management practices, with varied outcomes, with regard to the impact of the same on the said universities' performance.

Table 10: Descriptive analysis of the Responses on Employee Outcomes

Variable	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES									
Commitment									
I believe in the vision, mission, and goals of my employer	110	30	54	10	6	0	100	4.07	.81
I enjoy doing extra work without necessarily getting extra incentive	110	38	38	2	19	3	100	3.46	.96
I would prefer working at this university to any other	110	18	18	46	11	5	100	3.21	.91
Motivation									
I am highly motivated as an employee of the university	110	2	15	16	63	4	100	2.46	.86
I am willing to take new responsibility at short notice	110	8	49	13	26	4	100	3.32	1.07
Absenteeism from work is an unusual occurrence for me	110	9	48	19	21	3	100	3.40	1.01
Teamwork									
I work in an environment which promotes teamwork and collaboration	110	8	14	5	65	8	100	2.45	1.02
Given a choice, I prefer working independently	110	17	48	6	20	9	100	3.45	1.25
There is a high tendency for blaming each other when things go wrong	110	17	50	7	16	10	100	3.50	1.22
Empowerment									
I feel involved in decision making and trusted to be creative at my work	110	3	10	6	73	8	100	2.28	.85
My responsibility at work provides sufficient authority for me to act and make decisions promptly	110	5	7	12	66	10	100	2.34	.94
My work is meaningful and gives me a feeling of satisfaction and contentment in achieving my purpose in life	110	7	15	6	60	12	100	2.45	1.09

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 10, the finding appear to support the initial conceptualization of constructs as initially proposed in this study, that employee outcomes may be adversely affected. This may result from poorly implemented strategic human resource management practices, due to the poor infrastructural state of the the human resource management unit. The findings also seem to corroborate Hamadamin, Halbast & Atan, Tarik. (2019), that employee outcomes may mediate, by influencing performance of an entity, where other interventions strategic human resource management practices had been implemented, thereby positively or adversely affecting such performance.

In this case, it is possible that, given the indicators used in this study, that the public university employees seem to perceive level of commitment, motivation, teamwork and empowerment negatively, they may not be responsive to implemented SHRMPs of recruitment, training, reward management and performance management, and hence low productivity levels at the individual and organizational level. This may, therefore explain the declining levels of performance in national universities as attested by Ojokuku and Akanbi, (2015), Naitore & Wanyoike, (2019), and Mutahi & Busienei, (2015).

4.3 Regression Results on Employee Outcomes, Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and Performance of National Universities

The objective of this study was to investigate whether employee outcomes intervened in the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya. Four items, made up of three statements each, were posed to the respondents; the statements were designed to aid the respondents in perceiving the extent to which employee outcomes existed. This was measured through indicators; level of motivation, level of commitment, level of teamwork and level of empowerment, existed, as a result of the implementation of strategic human resource practices in the respective universities.

A five level Likert scale was used for this purpose. As described in Table 10 above, majority respondents agreed with the two statements indicating level of commitment, that is, believing on the mission and vision of their universities and enjoying extra work naturally without extra incentive (30% and 53% respectively). However, and interestingly, a large 46% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement on preferring to work at their current university or elsewhere. Responding to the statements on motivation, a large 69% seemed to disagree with the statement on being highly motivated, while 49% and 48% respectively seemed to agree with the statements on willingness to take new responsibility on short notice and rarely being absent from work.

The three statements on the level of teamwork, a key indicator of employee outcomes where employee tend to become cohesive partners, indicated that 75% disagreed working in a teamwork-enthusing environment. 48% and 50% respectively agreed with the statements on preferring to work independently and there being a tendency for employees to blame each other. These two responses on the two statements respectively seem to indicate an environment of low teamwork.

The responses on empowerment, another indicator of healthy employee outcomes where employees have been adequately impacted by the implemented strategic human resource management practices, almost without variation showed that the respondents disagreed with all the three statements pertaining to empowerment, that is, involvement in decisions-making 62%, meaningful work, 60% and sufficiency of commensurate authority at work, 66%.

The mean and standard deviation as captured illustrated that except for the vision and missions of the universities, on which 44% of the respondents agreed, the majority of the respondents are not supportive of their state of commitment, level of motivation, teamwork and empowerment.

The main model was $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 K + \beta_3 X_1 \cdot K + \epsilon$, Where Y = Performance of Public Universities, β_0 = Constant. β_1 , β_2 , β_3 = Coefficients for Composite Index for Employee Outcomes, Strategic Human Resource Management Practices, and Interaction variable for Strategic Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Outcomes respectively, K = Employee Outcomes and X_i = Composite Index of Strategic Human Resource Management Practices

The respective regression results at each step are illustrated in steps. **Step 1:** Regress performance of public universities on strategic human resource management practices as a composite variable without considering the influence of employee outcomes – the intervening variable. The starting model hence was: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 K_1 + e$ Where, β_0 = Constant β_1 = Beta Coefficient., where; Y = Performance of public universities, K = Composite Strategic Human Resource Management Practices. The results of the regression test are given on Table 4.9.

Table 11: Intervention Regression Results for SHRMPs and Performance

Model Summary					
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std error of the estimate	
1	0.665	0.421	.402	0.2402496	
Predictors: (Constant), SHRMPs Dependent Variable – Performance of Public Universities					
Anova					
Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	6.235	2	1.559	26.002	0.000
Residual	7.850	128	0.058		
Total	14.085	141			
Predictors: (Constant), - SHRMPs Dependent variable – Performance of Public Universities					
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	T	Sig
	B	Std Error			
Constant	1.680	0.130		12.889	.000
SHRMPs	0.425	0.049	0.552	7.795	.000
Predictors: (Constant), – SHRMPs Dependent Variable – Performance of Public Universities					

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 11, the adjusted R square is .402, implying that strategic human resource management practices accounted for 40.2% of the change in the performance of public universities. The F (2, 128) statistics was 26.002 with a P-value .000 (P value < 0.05). The indication is that the model was so significant as to warrant use in further inferential statistical analysis.

Likewise, the coefficient for the bundle of strategic human resource management practices was .425 with P-value at .000 (P-value < 0.05). The implication was that strategic human resource management practices had a positive statistically significant influence on the performance of public universities. This implied that any unit change in the bundle of strategic human resource management practices was likely to lead to .425 (43%) change in the performance of national universities. The results can be summarized as per the model: $Y = 1.680 + 0.425X_i + \epsilon$.

Step 2: Regression analysis of strategic human resource management practices on employee outcomes, excluding performance. The model of analysis was; Hence, $T = \beta_0 + \beta_1 K_1 + e$, Where, T = Employee Outcomes, K = Composite Strategic Human Resource Management Practices, $\beta_0 + \beta_3 =$ Beta Coefficients and e = Error Term. The Results are shown on Table 4.11.

Table 12: Regression Results for Employee Outcomes on Strategic Human Resource Management Practices

Model Summary					
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std error of the estimate	
1	0.344	0.558	0.234	0.311749	
Predictors: (Constant), SHRMPs Dependent variable – Employee Outcomes					
Anova					
Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	6.403	2	6.403	55.609	.000
Residual	12.050	119	.106		
Total	21.443	121			
Dependent variable – Employee Outcomes Predictors: (Constant), SHRMPs					
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std Error			
Constant	1.444	0.197		5.814	.000
SHRMPs	.725	0.084	0.640	8.605	.000
Dependent variable: Employee Outcomes Independent variable – SHRMPs					

Source: Research Data (2022)

Table 12 indicated that adjusted R square was .234. Meaning that, strategic human resource management practices may explain 23.4% of the variation in employee outcomes. The minimal change in employee outcomes implies a 76.6% attributable to other factors other than SHRMPs. This seems to reflect the very low score of approval in commitment, motivation, teamwork and empowerment in section 4.3. Above. From Table 12, F (2, 119) statistics was 55.609 with a P-value of .000 (P-value < 0.05). This shows that the analysis model is significant and fit for further statistical analysis.

Likewise, Table 4.11 indicates that the coefficient of strategic human resource management practices, .725 with a P-value of .000 (P-value < 0.05), implies that strategic human resource management practices had a positive statistical and significant influence on employee outcomes, such that a unit increase of strategic human resource management lead to a 55.609 increase on employee outcomes. Hence; $T = 1.444 + .725X_i + \epsilon$

Step 3: Regression analysis was conducted such that performance of public universities is regressed on the intervening variable - employee outcomes, while holding the independent variable – strategic human resource management practices constant. Hence, $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_1 + e$, Where, T = Employee Outcomes, $\beta_0 + \beta_3 =$ Beta Coefficients and e = Error Term. The results of the regression analysis is show in Table 12

Table 13: Regression Results for Employee Outcomes on University Performance

Model Summary					
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std error of the estimate	
1	0.654	0.428	0.426	0.2409804	
Predictors: (Constant), Employee Outcomes Dependent variable – Performance of Public Universities					
Anova					
Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	6.321	2	6.013	106.523	.000
Residual	8.072	229	0.058		
Total	14.084	141			
Predictors: (Constant), Employee Outcomes Dependent variable - Performance of Public Universities					
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std Error			
Constant	1.238	0.134		10.014	.000
Employee Outcomes	0.605	0.50	0.653	10.175	.000
Dependent variable: Performance of Public Universities					

Source: Research Data (2022)

Table 13 shows that adjusted R squared was .426 implying that employee outcomes could account for the 43% of the variation in the performance of public universities. The F (2, 229) statistics was 106.523 with a P-value .000 (P-value < 0.05). The model was therefore considered to be statistically significant for further statistical analysis. The coefficient statistic for employee outcomes was .506 with a P-value at .000, indicating that employee outcomes did have a positive statistical and significant influence on the performance of public universities. This implies that, a unit increase in employee outcomes was likely to cause a 51% increase on performance of national universities. The results were hence substitutable in the equation model as: $Y = 1.238 + .605T + \epsilon$.

Step 4: Regressed performance on employee outcomes and strategic human resource management practices as a composite variable, identifying the levels of significance of the relationships between them accordingly. The analysis model was: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1K_1 * X1T + e$. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Regression Results on Employee Outcomes, SHRMPs and Performance

Model Summary					
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std error of the estimate	
1	0.683	0.467	0.349	0.233405	
Predictors: (Constant), SHRMPs Dependent variable – Performance of Public Universities					
Anova					
Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	5.466	2	3.289	50.440	0.000
Residual	6.407	139	0.054		
Total	12.085	141			

Predictors: (Constant), SHRMPs Dependent variable - Performance of Public Universities					
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients Beta	t	Sig
	B	Std Error			
Constant	1.182	0.127		7.696	.000
SHRMPs	0.361	0.050	0.404	5.492	.000
Employee Outcomes	0.165	0.044	0.150	2.223	.001
Dependent variable: Performance of Public Universities					
Predictors: (Constant),SHRMPs and Employee Outcomes					

Source: Research Data (2022)

According to Table 14, adjusted R squared is .349. This implies that strategic human resource management practices and employee outcomes together accounted for 35% of the variation in the performance of national universities.

In addition, the F statistic was 50.440, with a P-value of 0.000 (P-value < 0.05). The regression model was, therefore, considered statistically significant and to be used for further statistical analysis. The coefficient of the composite index of strategic human resource management practices was 0.361 at a p-value of .000 (P-value < 0.05).

Employee outcomes coefficient was 0.165 with a P-value of .001 (P-value < 0.05). The results showed that strategic human resource management practices and employee outcomes would be statistically significant in predicting the performance of public universities, given that one unit change in strategic human resource management practices would result in 36% increase in performance of public universities. Similarly, one unit increase in employee outcomes would result in 17% increase in the performance of public universities.

The Table 14 also shows that the regression of strategic human resource management practices and employee outcomes on performance of public universities could explain 35% variation in the performance of national universities as indicated by the adjusted R square of .349. This was higher than when the strategic human resource management practices alone was regressed on performance of public universities, resulting in 40% as shown by adjusted R squared of 0.402 as shown in table 4.18. The conclusion, therefore, based on this analysis, was that employee outcomes had an intervening influence on the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of public universities, amounting to the difference between 40% and 35%.

The results were summarized using the following equation model. $Y = 1.182 + .361X_i + .165T + \epsilon$, Where; Y = Performance of Public Universities X_i = Composite Index of Strategic Human Resource Management Practices, T = Employee Outcomes and ϵ = Error term

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The objective of the study was to measure if employee outcomes intervened in the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya. The hypothesis was that there was no significant intervening influence of employee outcomes on the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of Kenya national universities. The results indicated a positive and statistically significant intervening influence of employee outcomes on the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the objective and findings of this study, it is concluded that strategic human resource management practices, entailing rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management have a positive and statistically significant influence on the performance of Kenya national universities. Hence, national universities which are keen to implement strategic bundles of human resource management interventions or practices are likely to achieve increased enrolment rates, increasing graduation rates, increasing research publications as well as increasing staff promotion rates.

Going by the intervention test between employee outcomes on the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and performance of public universities in Kenya, The implication is that, in spite of implemented SHRMPs, there is minimum gain, in terms of employee outcomes of commitment, motivation, teamwork and empowerment. With low levels of employee outcomes, performance is almost definitely likely to be compromised, particularly in terms of graduation rates, student enrolment and staff promotion rates. The problem of declining performance of national universities in spite of implementation of strategic human resource management practices as evidenced by empirical literature is arguably explained by the results of this study.

5.3 Recommendations

This study recommends that national universities consider strategically implementing human resource management practices, selecting the most relevant practice out of many potential practices as evidenced in empirical and theoretical literature. With respect to this study, a possible bundle, as supported the findings, may include; rigorous recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management.

A strategic implementation of this bundle, would ensure, as far as each respective strategic practice is concerned, that the universities strictly adhered to the prescribed or customized recruitment and selection policy in hiring staff, using merit, rather than nepotism. In training, that the universities would adhere to an elaborate training and development policy, embracing induction training for the benefit of new and also promoted workers, in such a way that continuous professional career development for all categories of employees would be adequately provided for. In reward management, the universities would ensure that Job promotion as well as upward mobility are part of the rewarding mechanisms, seeing to it that the terms of service and benefits readily motivated employees, and that they innovatively and creatively instituted other university-driven incentive schemes other than those stipulated by the statutory government schemes.

Likewise, for performance management, the universities would embrace the all-important communication to enhance appropriate feedback between supervisors and their subordinates.

This is such that, at the same time practicalize performance appraisal system to make it well defined, accurate, fair, objective and reliable, and not forgetting the foundational linkage from the performance appraisal to all the other strategic practices, especially training and reward management. In other words, the universities ought to creatively go beyond the statutory and regulatory provisions as provided by the CUE and the Universities Act.

At the foundational level, the national universities ought to be mindful of the need to creatively and innovatively institutionalize a well thought out policy framework on staff training. Such a policy ought to be comprehensive to provide for a mechanism for the critical induction process as well as mechanisms to enhance career growth and development of staff. This should be such that, as much as the academic staff, for instance, are recruited already trained, there is a need for continuous professional development interventions aimed at adding to the capacity of staff to deliver their mandate.

The third recommendation is that national universities ought to look towards a value adding staff rewarding policy and framework beyond the government provided incentives which are often taken for granted. There is a need for national universities to benchmark for best practices in this regard, to ensure, for instance, that university staff perceive fairness and equitability, and there is a measure of team rewarding and other competitive extra incentive schemes.

Fourthly, national universities should not overlook the critical role of performance management as a basic mechanism to drive overall performance. Hence, public universities, which are already expected to engage in performance contracting arrangements at the government level, which be creative at institutionalizing performance management best practices, including well planned and executed performance appraisal systems. Such performance management practices should be designed to promote effective performance expectation communication, linkages to the other strategic human resource management practices, like training and reward management and also the highest possible degree of objectivity and fairness in partnering with employees towards desired performance.

Fifthly, it is recommended that national universities should do a better job of human resource management practice and policy, by first and foremost rethinking, embracing and re-engineering their strategic human resource management practices. To this end, therefore, the universities need to be keen and alive to the critical role of employee outcomes, especially given that a selected bundle of number of HR personnel.

In addition, to the extent that the level of autonomy given to the universities by the provisions of the Universities Act, in concurrence with Commission for University Education provisions, will allow, the universities ought to strategically select a bundle of strategic human resource management practices that best fits the operational circumstances unique to their parastatal profiles. Needless to emphasize, this would call for a heightened level of attention and concern towards human resource management as a function.

This way, for instance, the typical bundle of strategic human resource management practices investigated in this study; recruitment, staff training, reward management and performance management is likely to be implemented with a higher level of success, given a competent human resource management unit, which is well organized, well equipped, well facilitated, driven by appropriate HR policy and HR Planning and essentially having an adequate HR staff-Employee staff ratio. This study also recommends, as a matter of policy and practice by public universities, that the criticality of employee outcomes, as linked to the typical bundle of strategic human resource management practices investigated in this study, ought to imply the need to give prominence to the same or related practices when selecting a strategic bundle of the same.

The results of this study, therefore, are likely to present valuable insights to policy makers and human resource practitioners in general, both at the government level, as well as the industry level. Indeed, as government and other related agencies make policy decisions regarding supporting university education, they are likely to find the results of this study useful.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

It is suggested that further and confirmatory studies may help to affirm or otherwise, the results of this study. In addition, it would be interesting to compare the findings of another study using the same variables, but this time, to focus on private rather than public universities in Kenya.

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